

## BODY RECOVERY AND STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR LEADERS AND SUPERVISORS

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Physical safety and security of body handlers takes priority over providing psychological counseling. Supervision is paramount in maintaining an organized, efficient work party for recovery efforts.

Jurisdictional issues may be present and conflicts between investigative and recovery tasks may occur. Provide a management structure to direct workers to where they are needed and provide supervision. Take action to prevent losing track of the location of workers at all times.

It is difficult to predict the kinds of psychological problems that any individual will have, however, the following management plan can help minimize later difficulties:

- Limit times of exposure to the dead and to the scene and require rest periods for volunteers and professionals.
- Provide a rest area with fluids, food, and protection from news media and onlookers.
- Get people off their feet during breaks.
- Provide shade with cots and facilities for washing and showering.
- Provide some immediate change of clothing, such as socks, t-shirts, and underwear.

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- If possible, have people return home for food and sleep. Over-dedication to the task of recovery is a risk factor for disability.
- Pair workers with a buddy to help combat potential overwork.
- Allow people to vary their tasks so they can adjust their exposure.
- Engage workers in conversation of their choosing – not necessarily about their feelings or the scene. Talking about the events of life is central to health.
- Discourage identification with or personalization of the dead. Dealing with personal effects is one of the most difficult aspects of body recovery.
- Assign persons who have difficulty with recovery tasks to another task they can contribute to. These individuals often do not want to be dismissed, which may contribute to a sense of failure. Do not use the individual's desire to continue work as the sole factor for determining assignment of duties.
- Do not require the same actions of everyone. Every individual has a different way of approaching this type of scene.