



Priority Action Report

Disaster Victim Identification

Crime Scene/Death Investigation SAC
Jason Wiersema, PhD, D-ABFA, D-ABMDI
January 23, 2017





Subcommittee Leadership

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Executive Secretary	Allison Woody	Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences	4(*2)	Allison.Woody@ifs.hctx.net

*years remaining on original term



Subcommittee Members



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17	Timothy Zolandz	U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation	2(1)	timothy.zolandz@ic.fbi.gov

Discipline Description



The Subcommittee on Disaster Victim Identification will advance the scientific basis for disaster victim identification by assembling multi-disciplinary professionals from the DVI community in a collaborative effort to develop consensus standards, guidelines and best practices supporting mass fatality/casualty management for use by domestic and international medicolegal and emergency management practitioners.

Summary of Standards/Guidelines Priority Actions



Priority	Working Title of Document
Priority 1 (1 of 6) Continued from 2016	Standard Practices for DNA Analysis for Human Identification in Mass Fatality Incidents (DVI DNA)
Priority 1 (2 of 6) Continued from 2016	Standard Practices for the Forensic Pathologist in the Disaster Victim Identification Context (DVI Pathology)
Priority 1 (3 of 6) Continued from 2016	Mass Fatality Incident Data Management: Standard Practices for the Medicolegal Authority (DVI Data)
Priority 1 (4 of 6) Continued from 2016	Postmortem Impression Submission Strategy for Comprehensive Searches of Essential Automated Fingerprint Identification System Databases (DVI Print)
Priority 1 (5 of 6) Continued from 2016	Forensic Anthropology in Disaster Victim Identification: Standard Practices for the Medicolegal Authority (DVI Anthropology)
Priority 1 (6 of 6) Continued from 2016	Mass Fatality Incident Scene Processing: Standard Practices for the Medicolegal Authority (DVI Scene)
Priority 2 New	Human Identification by Comparative Dental Analysis in Disaster Victim Identification
Priority 3 New	Standard Practices for Mass Fatality Incident Management

Standards/Guidelines Development Priority 1 Document (1 of 6)

Document Title: Standard Practices for DNA Analysis for Human Identification in Mass Fatality Incidents (DVI DNA)

Scope: This document addresses the application of DNA testing to a DVI incident response. It provides guidance to medicolegal authorities for the appropriate establishment and management of DNA operations

Objective/rationale: There is no existing standard pertaining to DNA collection and management in the DVI setting

Next Steps: Document complete, submitted to SDO

Task Group Name: DVI DNA

Task Group Chair Name: Timothy Zolandz

Task Group Chair Contact Information: 703-632-8473



Standards/Guidelines Development Priority 1 Document (2 of 6)

Document Title: Standard Practices for the Forensic Pathologist in the Disaster Victim Identification Context (DVI Pathology)

Scope: The intended scope of this document is to provide standard practice guidelines regarding postmortem data collection by forensic pathologists during a mass fatality incident response

Objective/rationale: There is no existing standard pertaining to postmortem data collection by forensic pathologists in the DVI setting

Next Steps: Document complete, submitted to SDO

Task Group Name: DVI Forensic Pathology

Task Group Chair Name: Joyce deJong

Task Group Chair Contact Information: 269-337-6173



Standards/Guidelines Development Priority 1 Document (3 of 6)

Document Title: Mass Fatality Incident Data Management: Standard Practices for the Medicolegal Authority (DVI Data)

Scope: The intended scope of this document is to provide standard practice guidelines for the management of DVI data (antemortem and postmortem)

Objective/rationale: There is no existing standard pertaining to the management of DVI data

Next Steps: Document complete, submitted to SDO

Task Group Name: DVI Data Management

Task Group Chair Name: Jason Wiersema

Task Group Chair Contact Information: 713-796-6747



Standards/Guidelines Development Priority 1 Document (4 of 6)

Document Title: Postmortem Impression Submission Strategy for Comprehensive Searches of Essential Automated Fingerprint Identification System Databases (DVI Print)

Scope: The intended scope of this document is to provide standard practice guidelines regarding postmortem fingerprint impression evidence during a mass fatality incident response

Objective/rationale: There is no existing standard pertaining to postmortem fingerprint collection that adequately addresses the mass fatality context

Next Steps: Document complete, submitted to SDO

Task Group Name: DVI Fingerprint

Task Group Chair Name: Aaron Uhle

Task Group Chair Contact Information: 703-632-7137



Standards/Guidelines Development Priority 1 Document (5 of 6)

Document Title: Forensic Anthropology in Disaster Victim Identification: Standard Practices for the Medicolegal Authority (DVI Anthropology)

Scope: The intended scope of this document is to provide standards regarding the application of forensic anthropological methods in the mass fatality context

Objective/rationale: There is no existing DVI specific standard pertaining to the application of forensic anthropological methods in the mass fatality context

Next Steps: Document complete, submitted to SDO

Task Group Name: DVI Anthropology

Task Group Chair Name: Dennis Dirkmaat

Task Group Chair Contact Information: 814-397-3771



Standards/Guidelines Development Priority 1 Document (6 of 6)

Document Title: Mass Fatality Incident Scene Processing: Standard Practices for the Medicolegal Authority (DVI Scene)

Scope: The intended scope of this document is to provide standards for the management of human remains recovery from a mass fatality incident scene

Objective/rationale: There is no existing standard pertaining to management human remains recovery following a mass fatality incident

Next Steps: Document complete, submitted to SDO

Task Group Name: DVI Scene Processing

Task Group Chair Name: Dennis Dirkmaat

Task Group Chair Contact Information: 814-397-3771



Priority 1: 6 documents identified as Priority 1 (DVI DNA, DVI Path, DVI Data, DVI Print, DVI Anthropology, DVI Scene)



Task Group/Subcommittee Actions (documents 1-6)

Actions	OSAC Process Stage	Assignee	Date
Document packets submitted to SAC for approval	SDO-400	OSAC DVI	1/29/2016
OSAC DVI Subcommittee approves submitting documents to ASB	SDO-600	OSAC DVI	1/29/2016
Wiersema assigned liaison to ASB	SDO-500	OSAC DVI	6/8/2016
ASB DVI Consensus Body populated	SDO-625	ASB DVI CB	6/8/2016
First meeting of the ASB DVI Consensus Body	SDO-625	ASB DVI CB	6/21/2016
Document packets approved by SAC for submission to ASB DVI CB	SDO-450	OSAC DVI	7/29/16
New Work Proposals submitted to ASB DVI CB	SDO-700	OSAC DVI	7/22/16
New Work Proposals approved	(in SDO process stage)	ASB DVI CB	8/18/16
Submitted documents to ASB DVI CB for review and approval	(in SDO process stage)	OSAC DVI	8/22/16
Submitted project scopes to ANSI for 30 day review and approval	(in SDO process stage)	ASB DVI CB	10/4/16
ASB DVI CB populated Working Groups for review of OSAC DVI documents	(in SDO process stage)	ASB DVI CB	10/16-12/16
ASB DVI CB Working Groups reviewing documents	(in SDO process stage)	ASB DVI CB	1/2017

Standards/Guidelines Development Priority 2 Document

Document Title: Human Identification by Comparative Dental Analysis in Disaster Victim Identification

Scope: The intended scope of this document is to define the forensic odontological aspect of identification to be integrated into the overall disaster victim identification process.

Objective/rationale: There is no existing standard pertaining to the application of forensic odontology in the DVI context

Next steps: Draft completed, requires SAC approval for submission to SDO (ASB)

Task Group Name: DVI Odontology

Task Group Chair Name: Raymond Miller

Task Group Chair Contact Information: ray2thdoc@aol.com



Standards/Guidelines Development Priority 3 Document

Document Title: Standard Practices for Mass Fatality Incident Management

Scope: The intended scope of this document is to provide best practices for the management of a large scale forensic DVI response

Objective/rationale: There is no existing standard pertaining to the appropriate management of DVI incidents

Next Steps: Draft completed

Task Group Name: DVI Management

Task Group Chair Name: Elias Kontanis

Task Group Chair Contact Information: elias.kontanis@ntsb.gov



Research Gaps Identified (3)

1. There is a lack of understanding of the degree of cognitive bias that may be associated with high throughput disaster victim identification operations. There are two closely associated research needs:

- Determine if cognitive bias exists in current DVI operations
- Develop effective mitigation strategies

2. There is currently no means to anticipate the volume and variety of data that result from, and must be managed following a mass fatality incident. The existing assumptions are anecdotal and based on a small number of incidents. The volume of data (missing persons call centers, victim information centers, hospitals, law enforcement etc.) available from previous incident after action reports should be used to systematically develop reliable expectations for medicolegal operations

3. There is currently no means to quantify the individualistic value of contextual identifiers, and thus no measure of confidence associated with contextual decedent identifications. There is a need for development of population-level likelihood values for human characteristics/circumstances that are regularly used in support of scientific identification methods (including scars/marks/tattoos, body location, etc)



