MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL

MASS CASUALTY PLAN

December 2023

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Introduction

A mass casualty incident (MCI) plan aims to standardize the processes and procedures of first responders and emergency management personnel in Larimer County. This will improve coordination and life-saving services during the chaos of an event. The MCI plan will be flexible in nature to fit the differing first response, dispatch, and emergency management agencies that operate in Larimer County. The plan addresses emergency notification, transportation, resource ordering, interagency coordination, and the transition to recovery.

Purpose

The purpose of this mass casualty plan is to outline the authorities, policies, organizational arrangements, operational concepts, and procedures that are in place to ensure efficient and effective emergency medical services, transportation, and resource allocation, regardless of jurisdiction or agency, for a mass casualty incident.

Objectives

1. To minimize the loss of life, disabling injuries and human suffering by providing effective emergency medical assistance through the efficient utilization of medical and other resources in the event of emergencies resulting in multiple casualties.

2. To ensure the provision of adequate and integrated resources needed to mobilize teams to effectively manage casualties while also maintaining the capability and resources to respond to other emergency situations within the community

Authorities and References

- Larimer IGA for Emergency Management
- Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, CRS 24-33.5-700, as amended
- Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Resource Management Annex
- Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, ESF 6a – Human Services
- Larimer Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan - Reunification
- Northern East Colorado RETAC Mass Casualty Plan

Scope

This plan was developed in coordination with personnel in Larimer County who are responsible for various aspects of emergency response to large mass casualty incidents. This plan should be used for any mass casualty incident that occurs within Larimer County borders.

For this plan, a mass casualty event is defined as an incident where the number of casualties involved exceeds the immediate resource availability of our local public services providers. This annex provides a framework for how first responders and public service workers should respond to a mass casualty event and further expands upon this definition later in the plan.

Situation

Larimer County is complex, with both rural and urban environments, mountainous areas flowing into the plains, and a wide range of hazards from major waterways to a large wildland-urban interface. It is also growing rapidly with a strong economic base from industry diversity, agriculture, and good quality of life. With this complexity and growth, the challenges of emergency management are expanding.

Larimer County and its municipalities face unique challenges due to its combination of factors, including tourism, large events, a growing population, and the associated risk of mass casualty events. As a popular destination, Larimer County attracts a significant number of visitors who attend festivals, concerts, and other major events. The influx of people, combined with the expanding population, increases the potential for incidents that may result in mass casualties. Recognizing this dynamic, it is essential for the county and its municipalities to diligently plan for such events.

Concept of Operations

Accountability and Safety

To ensure responder safety, an Incident Command System (ICS) should be established by the first arriving emergency responder. This will provide a common organizational structure to accomplish set objectives and provide a means to interface with all agencies in any type of major emergency. A responder accountability system will be established to ensure the safety of all emergency personnel.

Jurisdiction and Command

Each agency shall retain full command authority within its jurisdiction at all times. Agencies that are assisting in support of a single jurisdiction will function under the direction of that jurisdiction's designated Incident Commander and ICS for effective use of resources. In multijurisdictional incidents, Incident Commanders will establish a Unified Command by planning and coordinating strategies for controlling resources and the overall incident at a single location command post.

Mass Casualty Incident

A "mass casualty incident" refers to an event or situation in which the number of victims exceeds the capacity of available first responder resources to effectively provide immediate care and response. The definition places emphasis on the availability of first responder resources, rather than solely focusing on the quantity of victims. In such incidents, the overwhelming number of casualties surpasses the capabilities of local emergency services to adequately treat and manage the situation, potentially resulting in a strain on resources and a need for additional support from neighboring jurisdictions or external agencies. The critical factor in identifying a mass casualty incident is the disparity between the magnitude of the event and the available resources, highlighting the need for coordinated and efficient response efforts to mitigate further harm and ensure the best possible care for the affected individuals.

Response

The initial response to a mass casualty incident (MCI) is crucial in mitigating the immediate impact and saving lives. First responders, including law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services (EMS), and other pertinent agencies, will rapidly mobilize and deploy to the incident location and establish incident command/unified command. The primary objectives of the initial response are to ensure scene safety, conduct a rapid assessment of the situation, initiate life-saving interventions, and notify additional pertinent agencies. Emergency medical personnel will triage and provide immediate medical care to the injured, utilizing standard triage systems per medical director guidelines that categorize patients based on the severity of their injuries. Additionally, resources such as ambulances, medical supplies, and equipment will be coordinated and deployed to support the on-site response efforts via dispatch centers or Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) as needed. The initial response to an MCI will be guided by agencies' established protocols, emphasizing a coordinated and rapid response to stabilize the situation and provide critical care to those affected.

Investigation

Law Enforcement, Coroner's Office staff, and other emergency services play a critical role in the investigation process of a mass casualty incident (MCI). Immediately following the incident, they will focus on securing the scene, identifying and triage victims, and providing medical care. Once the scene is secured and the immediate needs of the victims have been met, law enforcement and other agencies will begin the investigative process.

The investigative process of an MCI can be complex and challenging. There may be a large number of victims, witnesses, and pieces of evidence to collect and analyze. Law enforcement will need to work quickly and efficiently to gather as much information as possible to identify the cause of the incident and the responsible parties.

Activation/Notification

As part of Larimer County's mass casualty plan, the communications centers have established a critical task to promptly notify a customized list of individuals once a reported incident meets the defined criteria of a mass casualty event. This notification, conducted through the communications center paging system, serves the purpose of situational awareness, ensuring that the identified stakeholders are promptly made aware of the unfolding situation. The individuals on the MCI paging group play vital roles in emergency response coordination, decision-making, and resource allocation, making their awareness of the mass casualty incident crucial for effective and efficient response efforts. By promptly disseminating this notification, All Larimer County response agencies aim to enhance communication, facilitate coordinated actions, and enable timely decision-making to mitigate the impacts of the incident and provide the necessary support and resources to those affected.

Hospitals will be notified through EM Resource

Communications

Effective communication is paramount in managing and responding to mass casualty events. Timely dissemination of critical information to responders, victims, and the public is crucial for efficient coordination of resources, deployment of aid, and ensuring public safety. Clear and regular communication enhances situational awareness, enabling responders to make informed decisions, adapt strategies, and prioritize actions based on real-time updates and changing circumstances.

Additionally, communication fosters coordination among various response agencies, facilitating seamless collaboration, resource allocation, and a cohesive response to the evolving situation. In the context of Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), Joint Information Centers (JICs), and Reunification Centers, effective communication ensures centralized coordination, consistent messaging, and the safe and efficient reunification of families and loved ones, providing crucial support and assistance to both responders and affected individuals. It is imperative that clear communication channels are established as soon as possible and are communicated to all who need them.

Public Information

In recognition of the importance of effective public information management during a mass casualty incident, Larimer County's mass casualty plan highlights the necessity of a coordinated approach among all agencies involved or supporting the incident response. It is crucial to emphasize that the agency having jurisdiction retains control over the messaging process, ensuring consistency and accuracy in the information provided to the public. The agency having jurisdiction takes the lead in crafting and disseminating official statements, updates, and instructions. Other agencies involved or supporting the incident should align their messaging efforts with the jurisdictional agency, amplifying and reinforcing the shared information to

enhance public understanding and facilitate a cohesive response. This coordinated approach aims to prevent confusion, minimize conflicting messages, and maintain public confidence by ensuring that necessary and accurate information reaches the community promptly and consistently. By parroting the jurisdictional agency's messaging, the supporting agencies contribute to a unified and reliable public information strategy, fostering a sense of trust, reassurance, and understanding among the affected population and stakeholders.

EOC

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is responsible for supporting all incident operations affecting the community as well as supporting the community as a whole. When referring to the EOC this could either be the Larimer County Regional EOC or any EOC operated by a municipality in Larimer County. The EOC is the coordination point for all consequence management activities – those events that are outside the incident footprint or scope but affect community members. This may include public information management, air quality reporting, mass sheltering, feeding operations, medical surge at hospitals, resource management, county-wide situational awareness, policy direction, etc. The priority is to coordinate between multiple agencies and jurisdictions to ensure the needs of the community are met. Several EOC activities may include:
- Evaluating new incidents
- Ensuring resource and situation status is current
- Determining specific resource requirements
- Determining resource availability and allocating resources to incidents based on priorities
- Anticipating future resource needs
- Communicating decisions back to agencies / Incident Commanders
- Reviewing policies/agreements for resource allocations
- Reviewing the need for other county or community involvement in the EOC
- Providing the necessary liaison with external facilities and agencies as appropriate.
- Coordinating reunification efforts during a mass casualty incident

The EOC will work with the American Red Cross to help reunite individuals affected by the event with displaced individuals. Please see Larimer County's Reunification Plan for further information on the reunification process.

Resource Ordering

During MCIs, communications centers will be responsible for processing and prioritizing a higher volume of calls. Additionally, they will be coordinating and ordering the deployment of resources to the field. Resource orders will come from authorized personnel, and communications centers will be responsible for verifying and sourcing the resources to the scene. They will need to maintain situational awareness of the incident and effectively communicate with the other agencies involved in the response.

In the event of a mass casualty incident, the 911 system may become overwhelmed with the volume of 911 calls and the demands for resource support. In such a case, they have the option to request the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to assist with resource ordering. The EOC aims to alleviate the pressure on the communications centers, allowing them to focus on emergency call handling and incident coordination. This shift in responsibilities enables the EOC to effectively support the incident by ensuring efficient resource acquisition via local and regional mutual aid throughout the response and recovery phases. The EOC will also act as the single point of ordering for Reunification operations.

The logistics section of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be responsible for tracking, ordering, and demobilizing resources. During a mass casualty incident (MCI), the activated EOC will share a Resource Request form with all involved parties to allow for proper documentation and tracking of incident needs. All requests must go through the standard process of the Resource Request form to be filled in a timely manner. Emergency management can assist responding agencies and dispatch agencies with early involvement in resource needs to have direct awareness of possible future needs. Additionally, OEM can be used as a single-point order location for the event to reduce duplication of efforts or resources in the field.

Mass Casualty Specific Roles

Hospital Resource Officer

In the context of Larimer County's MCI plan, the Hospital Resource Officer (HRO) is a specialized role specifically designed to enhance communication and collaboration between field response agencies and hospitals during mass casualty events. The HRO typically holds a high-ranking position, such as a Battalion Chief, within the fire agency. Their primary responsibility is to serve as a liaison and facilitate effective coordination between the incident scene, EOC, and the healthcare facilities involved in the response.

The HRO plays a critical role in bridging the gap between field responders, Incident Command, and hospital personnel, ensuring seamless information flow, and promoting a cohesive approach to patient care and resource allocation. They act as a central point of contact for both the field response agencies and the hospitals, facilitating real-time communication, timely exchange of critical information, and collaboration on patient distribution and status, and resource needs.

Transportation Officer

While a Transportation Officer is not necessarily unique to Mass Casualty events, it is absolutely imperative to have a successful mass casualty response. The Transportation Officer is a designated role responsible for coordinating and managing transportation-related activities during an incident. This officer plays a crucial role in ensuring the efficient movement of personnel, equipment, and resources to and from the incident site.

The Transportation Officer's primary responsibilities include:

Coordinating transportation resources: The officer works closely with various agencies and organizations to identify and coordinate available transportation resources, such as vehicles, buses, helicopters, or other means of transportation required for the incident response.

Managing transportation logistics: The officer develops transportation plans and strategies, considering factors like route selection, traffic management, and logistical support to ensure safe and timely transportation of personnel, equipment, and supplies.

Tracking and reporting: The Transportation Officer maintains records and tracks the movement of transportation resources, documenting arrival and departure times, routes taken, and any issues or delays encountered. This information helps in maintaining situational awareness and efficient resource allocation.

Liaising with transportation providers: The officer interfaces with external transportation providers, such as public transportation agencies or contracted services, to coordinate their involvement and ensure their compliance with incident response objectives and protocols.

Ensuring safety and compliance: The Transportation Officer emphasizes adherence to safety protocols and regulations during transportation operations. They work in collaboration with safety officers and other relevant personnel to address any safety concerns and promote safe transportation practices.

Hospital Interagency Transfers

Patients originating at local or regional facilities during events that are identified to need transfer, the hospitals will follow their day-to-day processes for establishing transportation assets. If the hospital system is unable to fill the resource request, the hospital incident command will coordinate with the jurisdictional EOC to assist with resource support.

State and Federal Assistance

In the event of a large-scale extended MCI, state and federal support would be requested including, but not limited to, resources such as Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), and Disaster Mortuary Teams (DMORT). This would be coordinated through the Larimer Regional EOC and the State Office of Emergency Management.

Recovery

EOC Transition

First responders and medical staff will gain control of the scene and work to stabilize the event through life-saving services. Once the scene has been stabilized and the patients have been transported to hospitals Emergency Operations (EOC) staff will work on coordinating the transition from response into short-term and eventual long-term recovery. At this time the EOC may transition to a Recovery Coordination Center (RCC).

EOC staff are responsible for gathering information from first responders to gain situational awareness of the current status of the event. This transition process will include the development of a recovery plan that addresses the needs of the affected community. The initial EOC recovery plan will address possible tasks such as reunification, implementing a Disaster Assistance Center (DAC), feeding and sheltering displaced people, restoring infrastructure, and connecting resources to the community via a coordinated public information strategy.

Long-term recovery encompasses the ability of the community to remember and work through the trauma of the event. RCC staff can be utilized to help assist in the planning of government-led memorial services or vigils if needed or can assist volunteers and community-led organizations that may step forward to complete this task.

Memorialization

The memorialization process after a mass casualty incident (MCI) is often an important part of the healing process for the community. It provides a way for people to come together to remember the victims and to reflect on the tragedy.

There is no one right way to memorialize an MCI. The process should be community-driven and should reflect the unique needs and values of the community impacted. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) can play a supportive role in the memorialization process by providing logistical assistance and guidance or may play no role at all.

Victim/Survivor Support

Victim advocates can play a vital role in providing support to survivors and their families following a mass casualty event. They offer emotional support, provide information and referrals to available resources, offer crisis intervention, assist with practical matters, coordinate with relevant agencies, provide long-term support and advocacy, and engage in community outreach and education. By offering a range of services, victim advocates help survivors navigate the aftermath of the event, access necessary resources, and find emotional healing and stability in the face of trauma.

Additionally behavioral health services agencies play a crucial role in supporting survivors and their families. These services aim to address the short and long term psychological and emotional trauma experienced by individuals and communities affected by the event.

The Larimer County Mass Critical Victim Response Plan defines the actions and roles necessary to provide a coordinated response among city, county and state agencies for incidents involving a mass number of victims and survivors. This plan provides guidance to agencies within and supporting Larimer County with a general concept of potential emergency assignments before, during, and after an event. For more information, please refer to the Larimer County Mass Critical Victim Response Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

Behavioral Support Services

- Provide Crisis Intervention and Counseling support to survivors, their families, and the community
- Provide Case Management and Referrals to survivors, their families, and the community

Coroner

- Provide appropriate representation for Reunification efforts
- Provide Coroner's Office representation at the scene of the incident in order to provide identification and deceased recovery services
- Provide death notifications as necessary
- Provide referrals to resources and services to those impacted as needed
- Establish and operate a temporary morgue if necessary
- Postmortem investigation

Dispatch Centers

- Receiving and dispatching emergency resources to the scene
- Providing pre-arrival medical instructions to callers
- Providing ongoing situational updates to the responding agencies
- Coordination of emergency activities and maintaining situational awareness
- Sending any imminent threat to life alerts as requested by Incident Command

Emergency Management Agency

- Activate and Staff the EOC
- Activate the Reunification Plan and notify Reunification Center Agencies

- Set up the call center
- Provide EOC support to the Reunification Center, IC, JIC, etc.
- Support with resource ordering as needed

EMS Agencies

- Responds to the incident and provides triage, treatment, and transport
- Emergency Medical Services agencies are responsible for the care and transport of all patients or injured parties within the County
- Support incident command in coordination with responding agencies
- Coordination with hospitals and medical facilities to establish resource needs for medical surge planning and transportation
- Designate a Transportation Officer as needed

Fire Agencies

- Initial response and scene management and stabilization including fire prevention and suppression, extrication and rescue operations, medical aid, and treatment
- Act in a support capacity for all EMS and support law enforcement services as needed or requested
- Support incident command in coordination with responding agencies
- Establish a liaison (HRO) to the hospitals as necessary
- Designate a Transportation Officer

Hospitals

- Provide medical treatment and stabilization to those arriving at the facility
- Assign a Reunification Coordinator and document those individuals coming into the hospital from the incident in the shared Reunification Tracker
- Patient reception and triage
- Tracking surge capacity and managing hospital resources
- Identification of a liaison officer to assist with coordination between the hospital facilities and on-scene personnel
- Plan for and provide traffic control resources

Human Services and Mass Care Branch

- Provide human services support according to agency guidelines
- Designate, respond to, set up, and operate the Reunification Center as needed
- Reference the Reunification Plan for additional information

Law Enforcement Agencies

- Respond to an incident to provide law enforcement assistance including scene security and safety and threat elimination as needed
- Provide medical aid and transportation as necessary
- Investigation and evidence preservation
- Transport unaccompanied minors who are not injured and unable to find parent/guardians to the Reunification Center
- Support incident command in coordination with responding agencies
- Support traffic control and security at hospitals and reunification centers as necessary
- Provide SRO support to support with reunification/identification as needed

Public Information Officer

- Gather and verify accurate information about the incident from authoritative sources, including first responders and incident commanders
- Establish a reliable information flow between various agencies involved in the response effort
- Disseminate timely and accurate information to the general public through various channels, including press releases, social media, websites, and emergency alerts
- Collaborate closely with incident commanders, emergency management agencies, and other stakeholders to ensure that all communications align with the overall response strategy
- Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions or agencies if the incident crosses boundaries
- Craft and disseminate clear, consistent, and reassuring messages to help manage public perception and prevent panic
- Liaise with Victim Advocates to support survivors and media coordination management

Victim Advocates

- Provide emotional support and crisis intervention
- Provide support to victims related to criminal cases, victim compensation, etc.
- The Victims Compensation Unit is responsible for the provision of services to victims as guided by the Colorado Crime Victim Compensation Act, C.R.S. 24-4.1-100
- Provide ongoing support to victims while criminal cases work through the Justice System
- Reference the Mass Victim Critical Response Plan for additional information
- Respond to the scene of the incident and provide support to victims
- Support the Larimer County Coroner's Office in death notifications as requested

VOAD

- Support Reunification Center operations including the provision for unaccompanied minors
- Reference the Reunification Plan for additional information

Plan Maintenance

Larimer County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for updating this plan as needed to remain current. All revisions or additions will be approved by all signatories to this plan.

Signature Page

The Multi-Jurisdictional Mass Casualty Plan has hereby been reviewed and approved by the following partner. The Multi-Jurisdictional Mass Casualty Plan is a coordinated effort throughout Larimer County and will be added to the Larimer County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

PARTY: Larimer County OEM

By: Lori R. Hodges

Title: Director, Office of Emergency Mgmt

Date: 3/13/2024