

Section 9: Public Health and Multi-casualty Incidents

Public Health and Multi-casualty Incidents

Introduction

Public Health Services includes those activities associated with lifesaving; transport, evacuation, and treatment of the injured; disposition of the dead; and disease control activities related to sanitation, preventing contamination of water and food supplies, etc., during response operations and recovery operations. It focuses on health and medical problems under emergency conditions of varying scopes.

This section describes medical resources and approaches for addressing public health problems in the City of Seward.

For information on general Public Health procedures and multi-casualty incidents, see the Kenai Peninsula Borough Emergency Operations Plan

Emergency Medical Services

The Seward Volunteer Ambulance Corps emergency medical services (EMS) and ambulance transport services within the City of Seward. A mutual aid agreement exists between the Seward Ambulance Corps and the Bear Creek Fire Dept., excluding the prison population. Additional state and federal government emergency medical resources can be accessed by contacting the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and requesting assistance.

A triage system will be initiated with initial care provided in the field and secondary care provided at the Providence Seward Medical Center. The Wesley Rehabilitation and Care Center and/or the Chugachmiut North Star Clinic could serve as back-up medical facilities in cases where Providence Medical Center is overwhelmed.

Because medical resources are limited in Seward, a local emergency that involves more than 2 critically injured patients is considered a multi-casualty event.

Refer to SECTION 14 of this plan for additional information about Emergency Medical Resources in Seward.

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Fatality Management

At present, the Providence Seward Medical Center has no morgue facilities. A makeshift morgue would be necessary

Body bags must be procured through the Alaska State Troopers or other sources. The State Medical Examiner is responsible for the collection, identification, and disposition of deceased persons and human tissue from a multi-casualty incident. In addition, FEMA has the capability to provide Disaster Mortuary Assistance Teams (DMORT) to respond to the scene of a multi-casualty incident. Both the State Medical Examiner and FEMA DMORT can be accessed by contacting the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and requesting assistance.

It is important that temporary morgues be set up at a reasonable distance from human shelters, in order to avoid any negative psychological impacts associated with viewing deceased patients.

The State Medical Examiner's Office can provide assistance with fatality management and temporary morgues: 1-888-332-3273 (1-888-DECEASED)

Public Health

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services/Public Health Service has a local public health nurse in Seward. DHSS/Public Health's purpose is to assist local agencies in responding to and mitigating any type of public health event. Public health concerns during a disaster emergency include identifying and controlling environmental health hazards, issuing health advisories to the public on emergency water supplies, waste disposal, disease vectors, food monitoring at mass care facilities, immunizations and disinfections would be the responsibility of the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services which can be accessed by contacting the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and requesting assistance.

Mental Health

Mental health services in Seward are provided by Seaview Community Services, which is reachable at 907-224-5257 or toll free at 1-888-224-5257.

Other agencies such as the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, various religious clergy and private mental health professionals can provide personnel and counselors to aid in delivering mental health support to victims and families affected by a disaster emergency. In addition, state mental health services can be accessed by contacting the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and requesting assistance. Critical incident stress treatment for responders is also available through the channels identified above.

Multi-casualty Branch Organization Chart

The following organization chart shows how a Multi-casualty Branch would be organized in a large-scale emergency. In the City of Seward, it may not be possible to fill every position, so one or more functions or groups may be combined.

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