



# Priority Action Report

## Disaster Victim Identification

Crime Scene/Death Investigation SAC  
Jason Wiersema, PhD, D-ABFA, D-ABMDI  
January 28, 2016





# Subcommittee Leadership

Position	Name	Organization	Term	Email
Chair	Jason Wiersema	Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences	3(*2)	Jason.Wiersema@ifs.hctx.net
Vice Chair	Dan Morgan	DC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner	2(*1)	Daniel.morgan@dc.gov
Executive Secretary	Allison Woody	Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences	4(*3)	Allison.Woody@ifs.hctx.net

\*years remaining on original term



# Subcommittee Members



#	Name	Organization	Term	Email
1	Don Bloom	U.S. National Disaster Medical System	4(3)	don.bloom@hhs.gov
2	Elissia Conlon	Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, New York	3(2)	Econlon@ocme.nyc.gov
3	Joyce deJong, D.O.	Western Michigan University School of Medicine	3(2)	joyce.dejong@med.wmich.edu
4	Dennis Dirkmaat, Ph.D.	Mercyhurst University	4(3)	ddirkmaat@mercyhurst.edu
5	Benjamin Figura, Ph.D.	Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, New York	2(1)	bfigura@ocme.nyc.gov
6	Elias Kontanis, Ph.D.	U.S. National Transportation Safety Board	3(2)	elias.kontanis@ntsb.gov
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8	Dan Morgan	DC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner	2 (1)	Daniel.morgan@dc.gov
9	Thomas Parsons, Ph.D.	International Commission on Missing Persons	4(3)	thomas.parsons@ic-mp.org
10	Aaron Uhle	U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation	4(3)	aaron.uhle@ic.fbi.gov
11	Suzanne Utley-Bobak, M.D.	District 12 Medical Examiners Office, Florida	2(1)	utleysuzanne@hotmail.com
12	Mark Wadhams	U.S. Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory	2(1)	mark.j.wadhams.ctr@mail.mil
13	Allan Warnick, D.D.S.	Wayne County (Ohio) Medical Examiner	3(2)	wtoothdoc@aol.com
14	Victor Weedn, M.D., J.D.	George Washington University	3(2)	vweedn@gwu.edu
15	Jason Wiersema, Ph.D.	Harris County (TX) Institute of Forensic Sciences	3 (2)	jason.wiersema@ifs.hctx.net
16	Allison Woody	Harris County (TX) Institute of Forensic Sciences	4 (3)	allison.woody@ifs.hctx.net
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



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



# 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

**Issues/Concerns:** None.

**Task Group Name:** DVI DNA

**Task Group Chair Name:** Timothy Zolandz

**Task Group Chair Contact Information:** 703-632-8473

**Date of Last Task Group Meeting:** 1/28/2016





# 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

**Issues/Concerns:** None.

**Task Group Name:** DVI Forensic Pathology

**Task Group Chair Name:** Joyce deJong

**Task Group Chair Contact Information:** 269-337-6173

**Date of Last Task Group Meeting:** 01/28/2016





# 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

**Issues/Concerns:** None.

**Task Group Name:** DVI Data Management

**Task Group Chair Name:** Jason Wiersema

**Task Group Chair Contact Information:** 713-796-6747

**Date of Last Task Group Meeting:** 01/28/2016







# 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

**Issues/Concerns:** None.

**Task Group Name:** DVI Fingerprint

**Task Group Chair Name:** Aaron Uhle

**Task Group Chair Contact Information:** 703-632-7137

**Date of Last Task Group Meeting:** 01/28/2016





# 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

**Issues/Concerns:** None.

**Task Group Name:** DVI Anthropology

**Task Group Chair Name:** Dennis Dirkmaat

**Task Group Chair Contact Information:** 814-397-3771

**Date of Last Task Group Meeting:** 01/28/2016





# 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

**Issues/Concerns:** None.

**Task Group Name:** DVI Scene Processing

**Task Group Chair Name:** Dennis Dirkmaat

**Task Group Chair Contact Information:** 814-397-3771

**Date of Last Task Group Meeting:** 01/28/2016



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



# Task Group/Subcommittee Action Plan

<b>Planned Actions</b>	<b>OSAC Process Stage (e.g., SDO 100)</b>	<b>Assignee</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
<b>Submit documentation to request SAC approval to initiate SDO submission</b>	SDO-100	Wiersema	1/29/2016
<b>Identify relevant SDO (AAFS ASB)</b>	SDO-200	Wiersema	Upon receipt of SAC approval of SDO-100
<b>Submit packet to AAFS ASB</b>	SDO-300	Wiersema	Upon completion of SDO-100 and 200





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<b>Priority 1 (2 of 6)</b>	<b>Standard Practices for the Forensic Pathologist in the Disaster Victim Identification Context (DVI Pathology)</b>
<b>Priority 1 (3 of 6)</b>	<b>Mass Fatality Incident Data Management: Standard Practices for the Medicolegal Authority (DVI Data)</b>
<b>Priority 1 (4 of 6)</b>	<b>Postmortem Impression Submission Strategy for Comprehensive Searches of Essential Automated Fingerprint Identification System Databases (DVI Print)</b>
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# 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)



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Crime Scene/Death Investigation SAC

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