



CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES  
Law Enforcement Branch  
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To California Hospitals, County Medical Examiners, and County Sheriff Coroners--

As California continues to cope with challenges posed by the current increase in COVID-19 infections, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) reminds hospitals, medical examiners, County Sheriff Coroners and others dealing with decedents of the resources and support available through the Coroners' Mutual Aid & Mass Fatality Management system.

To date, our state system has not experienced a mass fatality situation as a result of COVID-19 that has exceeded our capability to respond. However, we remain committed to working with our local, state and federal partners to diligently prepare should such a circumstance arise.

The California Coroners Mutual Aid and Mass Fatality program was developed under the leadership of Cal OES and the authority of the California Emergency Services Act to support the state in response to incidences that result in mass fatalities. This program, coordinated with County Sheriff Coroners, County Medical Examiners, and hospitals, has been activated to support the network of mutual aid as the state plans for and responds to the impacts of COVID-19. Following the guidance below on decedent management enables the mutual aid system, developed in the event of such emergencies, to support the people of California.

Hospitals, County Sheriff Coroners, and County Medical Examiners are to follow the specific provisions of the Mass Fatality Management Guide as it relates to decedent management, which are found below. As a reminder, the plan can also be found on the [Cal OES website](#).

1. Hospitals ("Facility") have the best knowledge of their capabilities and accommodations levels during this COVID-19 crisis and **should immediately assign an individual to continually assess** capacity management and outreach.
2. Facility(s) can/should procure refrigeration units as additional decedent space.
3. Understanding not *all* decedents are "Coroner Cases," during the COVID-19 decedent surge, Facility(s) should proactively engage with local Mortuary(s) and Funeral Home(s) now, to facilitate the transfer of decedent population(s) in an efficient and timely manner.
4. If a Facility is confronted with an "Indigent Case," it should immediately call the **County** Public Administrator or Coroner/Medical Examiner to ensure the decedent is properly transferred out of the Facility.
5. If a Facility(s) decedent capacity nears/exceeds their maximum storage, the Facility should place direct call to the County Coroner/Medical Examiner, which will begin the Mutual Aid Mass Fatality process. The in-place system already includes the Operational Area and has Regional Mutual Aid Coordinators prepared and ready to assist.

If you have any questions, please email me at [mark.pazin@caloes.ca.gov](mailto:mark.pazin@caloes.ca.gov).

*Mark N. Pazin*

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