

PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

PREPARED BY THE PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT - KENNETH CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
LARGO POLICE DEPARTMENT - PINELLAS PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT - TREASURE ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT
BELLEAIR POLICE DEPARTMENT - TARPON SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT - CLEARWATER POLICE DEPARTMENT
INDIAN SHORES POLICE DEPARTMENT - GULFPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT - PINELLAS PARK FIRE RESCUE
PINELLAS COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AND FIRE ADMINISTRATION - ST. PETERSBURG FIRE RESCUE
SUNSTAR PINELLAS COUNTY SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES - PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
PINELLAS COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG POLICE



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INTRODUCTION

Mass casualty events happen anywhere, at any time, and know no boundaries. They happen in big places, small places, schools, churches, stadiums, and businesses, and they cross many interdisciplinary areas of responsibility and jurisdictional lines. Mass casualty events and some other emergency situations, whether a natural disaster or targeted violence, will likely require the formal reunification of Affected Persons with family members and friends.

Therefore, leaders of law enforcement agencies, fire/EMS agencies, county government, city governments, and schools in Pinellas County formed the multidisciplinary Reunification Taskforce to reunify Affected Persons effectively and efficiently with family members and friends after a mass casualty incident or other emergency. Having a single integrated entity responsible for reunification countywide is better than multiple entities, many with limited resources, attempting to affect the reunification process on their own. This manual establishes the Pinellas County Reunification Plan and sets forth the policies and framework for the Taskforce's implementation and operation.

This plan has been developed through a collaborative effort of the following agencies:

- Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
- Clearwater Police Department
- Largo Police Department
- Pinellas County Emergency Management
- Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services and Fire Administration
- Pinellas Park Fire Rescue
- Pinellas Park Police Department
- St. Petersburg Fire Rescue
- St. Petersburg Police Department
- Sunstar EMS
- Tarpon Springs Police Department
- Treasure Island Police Department
- Pinellas County Safety and Emergency Services
- Pinellas County School District
- Pinellas County Schools Police Department

Because all emergencies are unique, the Reunification Plan established in this manual necessarily provides a concept of operations for reunification that allows for flexibility depending on the scope, complexity, and needs of the emergency or mass casualty incident. The plan identifies potential situations for establishing a Family Reunification Center (FRC) and transitioning to a Family Assistance Center (FAC) if the incident warrants. In addition, the manual outlines the framework for establishing the Taskforce, and the staffing and organization of Family Reunification Center operations. The manual also provides resources and job aids, such as setup diagrams for pre-identified FRC locations, forms, and position checklists to guide Taskforce members in carrying out their responsibilities.



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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure quick and effective reunification between Affected Persons, family members, and friends.
2. Provide a centralized location for Affected Persons' information exchange and coordination among first responders, other stakeholders (e.g., hospitals, medical examiner, etc.), family members, and friends.
3. Provide a private and secure place for Affected Persons, family members, and friends to gather and receive information about the incident, recovery operations, the status of others, and receive death notification when necessary.
4. Aid in the identification of witnesses and collection of possible evidence (physical or electronic) brought to the Family Reunification Center. Provide a location and conducive environment for law enforcement to conduct witness interviews.
5. Provide medical and counseling services as needed and appropriate.
6. Provide food, water, and other basic necessities.
7. Ensure Affected Persons' and family members' privacy immediately after the incident.
8. Collect and analyze information on missing people and known deceased to assist the investigative components and provide timely notification to family members regarding the Affected Persons' status.
9. Centralize and coordinate missing person inquiries from family members in conjunction with law enforcement and the County Information Center (CIC) to better effect the reunification and family notification process.

If it appears the reunification process will be protracted or that there will be long-term needs by the Affected Persons, an FAC may be established at the same location as the FRC. (An FAC may also be established at a separate location.) The FAC will help coordinate long-term Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Florida Division of Emergency Management resources, such as housing and subsistence funding. This reunification plan will not address establishing an FAC as that will mostly be the responsibility of federal and state agencies.

This manual lays out the policies and procedures established by the Pinellas County Reunification Taskforce, the goal of which is to ease the pain and stress of Affected Persons and family members after an emergency situation.



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DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided to help ensure a common understanding regarding the FRC functions.

ACTIVE ASSAILANT – An active assailant is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people, usually in a confined and populated area.

AFFECTED PERSON – Any person mentally or physically injured or who dies as a result of a mass casualty incident. For the purposes of reunification, an Affected Person includes an uninjured person who was present during the mass casualty incident or other emergency situation and is a survivor who needs to be reunified with family.

AFFECTED PERSON ASSEMBLY AREA – Predetermined room or location at the FRC utilized for assembling Affected Persons after the FRC check-in procedure while waiting to be reunified with family.

CHECK-OUT AREA – A pre-established area within the FRC from which Affected Persons are checked out, with or without a family member present. All persons checked into the FRC must be checked out through this area.

COUNTY INFORMATION CENTER (CIC) – A call center at a predetermined location responsible to provide citizen information and communication about the mass casualty incident. Staff assigned to this location will receive inquiries via a published hotline number, website, and other pre-established means of communication, from the public, including family seeking incident and reunification information.

DEMOBILIZATION – The orderly, safe, and efficient return of FRC resources to their original location and status.

ENTRY AND CHECK-IN AREA – Pre-established location at FRC where Affected Persons and family arrive to begin the process of pairing with family. For most incidents, separate check-in areas will be established for Affected Persons and those individuals wanting to obtain information about or be reunified with Affected Persons.

FAMILY – In the reunification context, “family” is broadly defined as any individual that considers themselves to be a part of an Affected Person’s family even if there is not a legal familial relationship. This includes friends and partners. However, the reunification term “family” must be distinguished from the legal term “next of kin,” which means someone with a legal family relationship with a person and who is authorized to make decisions regarding an incapacitated person or decedent.

FAMILY ASSEMBLY AREA – Predetermined room or area at the FRC used for assembling family members after the check-in procedure while they await reunification with an Affected Person.



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FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER – The FAC is distinct from the FRC. The FRC is established immediately after an incident to reunify Affected Persons and their families. The FAC may be established at the same or a different location than the FRC and is a place for people to get information about long-term services, such as federal and state benefits and housing. The FAC may be established before the FRC closes and their existences may overlap but their functions do not overlap.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION CENTER – The designated place used to reunify Affected Persons and their family members immediately after an incident, or for family members of Affected Persons who were killed or injured to seek information and services.

INTERVIEW AND EVIDENCE COLLECTION AREA – An area within the FRC used by detectives from the lead investigative agency to conduct interviews of Affected Persons and collect physical or electronic evidence. The actual interview area will require separate rooms where interviews may be conducted out of sight and sound of others.

MASS CASUALTY INCIDENT (MCI) – Any occurrence or threat thereof, whether by natural causes, accident, or intentional act, that results or may result in substantial injury or harm to people, or substantial damage to or loss of property. A characteristic of an MCI is emergency service resources being overwhelmed by the number or injury severity of Affected Persons.

MEDICAL UNIT – The FRC medical unit will be a private location staffed by EMS personnel where people can obtain basic medical care.

NOTIFICATION – The process by which family members or others at the FRC are notified regarding the status of an Affected Person.

NOTIFICATION AREA – Private predetermined locations at the FRC where family members are notified of Affected Persons' status, including death notifications, notifications that a person is missing or injured, as well as other circumstances that may exist.

REUNIFICATION – The safe, orderly, and timely connection of Affected Persons with family members.

REUNIFICATION AREA – An area at the FRC that is separate from check-in or assembly areas for family, friends, and Affected Persons. This is the designated location at the FRC in which family, friends, and Affected Persons are physically reunited.

REUNIFIED WITNESS AND EVIDENCE COLLECTION WAITING AREA – A pre-established location at the FRC where Affected Persons and family wait together for further processing, including investigative interviews and forensic processing. The Reunification Area is where family and Affected Persons meet and proceed to check-out. The Reunification Waiting Area is where family and Affected Persons wait together for interviews or evidence processing.



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REUNIFICATION KIT - A kit that contains all equipment needed to establish the FRC. For the purpose of this manual, the term kit may refer to a trailer or vehicle used to store the needed equipment.

REUNIFICATION TASKFORCE - A pre-established trained team of sworn and non-sworn personnel from various governmental agencies within Pinellas County. The Taskforce is established to set up and manage the reunification process at the FRC due to a mass casualty incident.

STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM - An electronic database maintained by a school or school district that contains student demographic information, parent information, and daily attendance records.

TRANSPORTATION AREA - The area established adjacent to the Check-Out Area where people leaving the FRC are picked up by rides, including ride shares or public transportation.



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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following definitions of roles and responsibilities are provided to help ensure a common understanding of individual expectations.

FACILITY LIAISON - The person responsible for making sure that the host facility or building and associated amenities and services meet the needs of the FRC. The Facility Liaison is accountable for services such as cleaning all areas and rooms, frequent waste removal, electrical power, HVAC, tables and chairs, room configuration, power cords, etc., to make sure the environment is in suitable condition to carry out the work of the FRC and its staff.

GREETER - FRC staff member assigned to greet persons arriving at the FRC and direct them to registration check-in. These individuals may be responsible for asking predetermined questions to aid in the identification of witnesses or evidence and help route people to the correct location.

INVESTIGATIVE LIAISON - The Investigative Liaison is a supervisor from the agency responsible for conducting the criminal investigation into the incident. This person is assigned to the FRC and is responsible for overseeing all investigative functions at the FRC, including witness interviews and evidence collection. This position will coordinate with other investigative supervisors to prioritize interviews and ensure that physical or electronic evidence is preserved and collected. This person is usually not a Taskforce member but will coordinate with the Reunification Taskforce Commander.

INCIDENT COMMANDER - The individual who is solely responsible for managing an incident, including overall command, development of staff functions to control the incident, coordination of contributing agencies, ordering and releasing of resources, and the release of information about the incident.

LOGISTICS CHIEF - The Logistics Chief is responsible for ensuring all necessary equipment and supplies needed for the FRC are present and operational including food and beverages. These duties include coordinating with the Operations Chief to ensure any previously unidentified pieces of equipment are obtained. It will be the responsibility of the Logistics Chief or designee to ensure pre-staged reunification equipment arrives at the FRC as needed.

MEDICAL UNIT SUPERVISOR - The Medical Unit Supervisor is responsible for ensuring people at the FRC receive appropriate medical care for injuries and medical conditions. The supervisor must ensure the unit is always staffed and that there is continuity of on-scene operations even when a patient has to be transported to the hospital. The supervisor will be responsible for all FRC Medical Unit operations.



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OPERATIONS CHIEF - The Operations Chief oversees all FRC functions and areas and coordinates with staff members to ensure that all operational objectives are met. The Operations Chief also requests and releases resources, makes situational changes to the operational plan as necessary, and reports changes to the Reunification Taskforce Commander.

PATIENT TRACKER - This person is employed by FD/EMS and tracks the names and other identifying information regarding patients transported by ambulance to area hospitals. The Patient Tracker will be overseen by the Pinellas County EMS/Fire directors and works closely with the Identification and Notification Section.

PLANNING CHIEF - The Planning Chief creates and documents all plans relating to FRC operations, ensures a scribe is present to track all FRC operations including demobilization and information needed for the after-action report, and is responsible for the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information related to the incident within the FRC.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO) - The PIO is responsible for ensuring that the public is made aware that the FRC has been established, its location, mission, and purpose. The PIO must clearly and accurately convey FRC operational details to avoid confusion and to help ensure only the proper individuals proceed to the FRC.

REUNIFICATION TASKFORCE COMMANDER - The Reunification Taskforce Commander is appointed by the sheriff and is responsible for the overall management of the FRC, including implementation of strategic goals and objectives, and establishing and releasing resources. The Reunification Taskforce Commander must communicate closely with the Incident Commander.

REUNIFICATION SUPERVISORS - Taskforce members appointed by the Reunification Taskforce Commander to oversee various FRC functions. Reunification Supervisors may be sworn or non-sworn Taskforce members. Reunification supervisors report to Section Chiefs.

REUNIFICATION REGISTRARS - Taskforce members who staff the FRC's Affected Person and family check-in areas. Registrars are responsible for obtaining required information from Affected Persons and family, and entering it in the reunification software.

RUNNERS - Sworn or non-sworn personnel assigned to move Affected Persons and family from pre-established assembly areas to the reunification area. Runners will only move Affected Persons and family to the reunification area after the check-in of both have been verified, and movement approval granted by a Reunification Supervisor. Runners are also responsible for the movement of witnesses to and from the investigations area as directed.

SECTION CHIEFS - Taskforce members appointed by the Reunification Taskforce Commander to oversee sections of the FRC operation. Section chiefs may be sworn or non-sworn Taskforce members.



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SCHOOL LIAISON - If the event is a school-based incident, the School Liaison will be an administrator from the affected public, private, or charter school who is assigned to the FRC command team. This person will be responsible for assisting FRC staff in connecting students with a parent or guardian.

VICTIM ADVOCATE - Victim advocates are responsible for providing counseling and other grief services to Affected Persons and family members, especially family members of seriously injured and deceased individuals. Victim advocates will come from a variety of victim service agencies, and they must work closely with other community-based counseling providers.



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ESTABLISHING THE PINELLAS COUNTY REUNIFICATION TASKFORCE

The FRC requires multidisciplinary participation by law enforcement, fire/EMS, emergency management, victim advocates and other victim assistance personnel, social service entities, mental health professionals, and others. Law enforcement agencies will provide command and supervision for the Pinellas County Reunification Taskforce and primary staffing of the essential FRC posts (e.g., check-in, check-out, etc.). The FRC posts and supervisory positions will be staffed by sworn and non-sworn personnel.

It will require approximately 100 people to staff the minimum required posts upon activating the Taskforce and establishing an FRC. The Taskforce will be comprised of at least 150 people to allow for rotating personnel allocations from the Pinellas County law enforcement agencies that have committed to participate on the Taskforce:

| AGENCY | NUMBER OF MEMBERS |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Pinellas County Sheriff's Office | 100 |
| St. Petersburg Police Department | 30 |
| Kenneth City Police Department | 5 |
| Largo Police Department | 11 |
| Pinellas Park Police Department | 12 |
| Treasure Island Police Department | 5 |
| Belleair Police Department | 1 |
| Tarpon Springs Police Department | 5 |
| Clearwater Police Department | 25 |
| Indian Shores Police Department | 1 |
| Gulfport Police Department | 3 |
| USF St. Petersburg | 2 |
| Pinellas County EMS/Fire Director | 1 |

In addition to the permanent Taskforce members, the FRC will require staffing by other multidisciplinary entities, including representatives from the following:

1. Fire/EMS (Medical Unit Supervisor and Staffing)
2. Pinellas County Emergency Management
3. Schools (public and private as applicable)
4. Hospitals
5. Medical Examiner's Office
6. Public Information (PIO)
7. Victim Advocates
8. Clergy/Chaplains
9. CISM Team Members



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The Reunification Taskforce Commander or designee will be responsible for advance coordination with representatives from these other disciplines to ensure they have personnel available who are trained to participate in FRC operations upon activation. Representatives from these disciplines will respond in a timely manner to the FRC or be available for coordination, as applicable upon notification of an activation.

Representatives of these entities responding to the FRC will be integrated with Taskforce members in applicable functions.

The commander of the Reunification Taskforce will be appointed by the Pinellas County Sheriff. The Reunification Taskforce Commander will report to the event's Incident Commander for coordination purposes; however, the Reunification Taskforce Commander is ultimately responsible for command of the FRC.

Each participating agency will select its own personnel for assignment to the Taskforce. The assignment shall be for at least two years to ensure continuity of operations. Reunification supervisors will be appointed by the Reunification Taskforce Commander from the personnel assigned by the participating agencies and supervisors shall include personnel from the various participating agencies—both sworn and non-sworn. The selected staff members must agree to respond upon being notified that the Taskforce has been activated.

The Reunification Taskforce Commander is responsible for periodic training and operational readiness of the Reunification Taskforce. Taskforce team members will attend training at least two times per year after their initial training. All Taskforce members will participate in training as required by the Reunification Taskforce Commander. Representatives from the other disciplines that are integral to FRC operations should be incorporated into Taskforce training.

The Pinellas County Reunification Taskforce and its parent agencies are responsible for maintaining this Reunification Plan. This plan should be reviewed after each implementation, training, or exercise and updated accordingly. The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office will be responsible for tracking reviews of the plan, ensuring updates are completed, inclusion of this plan into tabletop exercises and drills, and the distribution of a revised plan when needed.

Initial Response to a Mass Casualty Incident

The FRC will align under the national Incident Command Structure with staffing for each section based on the size and scale of the event. Every available Taskforce member will be activated for every callout. Once the size of the response is determined, the Reunification Taskforce Commander will determine appropriate staffing.

Taskforce personnel must be mindful that Affected Persons and families alike will be under stress and will display a wide range of emotions regarding the status of their family members prior to the formal reunification process commencing. Therefore, once the decision is made to activate an FRC, Taskforce members must work diligently to open the FRC as quickly as possible.



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Decision to Activate the Family Reunification Center

When an MCI occurs, one agency will assume operational command of the initial response until a unified command is formed. Even after a unified command is established, one agency will remain the lead agency. The lead agency will remain responsible for the duration of the response and recovery operations, and for coordination with all responding local, regional, state, and federal agencies. The lead agency will be responsible for deciding whether to establish an FRC and activate the Reunification Taskforce.

The lead agency deciding to activate the Reunification Taskforce will notify the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) communications center supervisor who will notify the Reunification Taskforce Commander. The Reunification Taskforce Commander will instruct the communications center supervisor on the scope of the Taskforce activation and the communications center supervisor will send the activation notice to applicable Taskforce members via the Everbridge system.

Establishing an FRC requires mobilizing personnel and equipment, so once the Taskforce is activated it will take time to open the center. Taskforce personnel must be mindful that this will likely result in on-scene commanders establishing a reunification post at the scene or another location until the FRC is open. People will be redirected to the FRC after its opening and this needs to occur as quickly as possible.

Family Reunification Center Location

The Taskforce will utilize portable shelter systems for the FRC location. Shelter locations will be determined by the Reunification Taskforce Commander and there will be preset diagrams of assembly areas and other locations within the FRC to facilitate setup. If the portable shelters are not available, the Reunification Task Force Commander, working with the Logistics Chief, will identify a structure or structures to meet the needs of the FRC.

The FRC will be established as close as operationally appropriate to the MCI site. However, the FRC should not be established so close to the incident site that families or Affected Persons can view the site from the FRC. Only due to exigent circumstances will more than one FRC be established for each incident. Having more than one FRC will lead to confusion and will require duplicate resources. The FRC site must allow for numerous functions to occur simultaneously.

The shelter design should allow for controlled access and allow for a perimeter to be established. The FRC must have abundant parking nearby with separate entrances for Affected Persons and family. The site location must allow for sight and sound separation between individuals when necessary. The FRC shall conform to all local, state, and federal regulations pertaining to occupancy capacity, Occupational Safety and Health Administration facility requirements, and be Americans with Disabilities Act compliant, or modifiable to be compliant. When possible, access to public transportation should be considered as to the FRC's location.



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The PIO will establish a media staging area outside the FRC. It should not be near the Affected Person or Family Member arrival areas. No media will be allowed inside the FRC without approval from the Reunification Taskforce Commander.

County Information Center

When the Reunification Taskforce is activated, the Reunification Taskforce Commander will activate the CIC through Pinellas County Emergency Management. The CIC will be staffed with a combination of Reunification Task Force members and Emergency Management personnel. The Reunification Taskforce and Pinellas County Emergency Management will establish the CIC as soon as possible and it will serve as the single, centralized call center for the public to contact about information regarding the incident, missing persons, and reunification. All public use phone numbers, web addresses, or email addresses for the CIC will need to be shared with all affected agencies' public relations personnel, the Pinellas County 911 center, and the media as soon as the CIC is operational. Calls to the county 911 center and other agencies inquiring about Affected Persons and the FRC will be routed to the CIC.

In addition to Pinellas County Emergency Management personnel, the Operations Chief will assign at least one Reunification Supervisor to the CIC. The Reunification Taskforce Commander will determine from the Incident Commander what information CIC staff may provide to the public. The Reunification Taskforce Commander will provide that information to the Reunification Supervisor who will share it with CIC staff so that they may help family members locate Affected Persons, identify missing persons, refer appropriate callers to the FRC once it is established, and refer callers to appropriate services.

School-Based Event

In the event the Reunification Taskforce is activated because of an MCI at a public, private, or charter school, specific student information will need to be obtained to assist in the reunification process. This information is best obtained from the school's student information system (SIS). The Operations Chief will immediately assign a Reunification Supervisor as the School Liaison to quickly establish communications with the affected school and obtain access to the SIS. The School Liaison should work directly with the mass casualty Incident Commander or designee before the FRC is operational to assist in obtaining as much identifying student information as possible. Once the FRC site is identified, the School Liaison will proceed to the FRC and report to the Reunification Taskforce Commander. The School Liaison should ensure there is access to SIS information at the FRC.



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FAMILY REUNIFICATION CENTER OPERATIONS, STAFFING, AND AREA FUNCTIONS

This portion of the manual will identify FRC Taskforce member responsibilities and establish the FRC's operational process. Some of these responsibilities need to be accomplished before an activation, some are ongoing, and others occur at the time of activation.

The FRC will be divided into different functional areas, many of which will be designated as assembly areas. There will be many separate areas, such as different check-in and registration areas for family and Affected Persons. The FRC processing flow will ultimately result in family and Affected Persons being reunified and then checked out of the FRC together.



The Facility Liaison will be responsible for FRC equipment and maintenance.

Taskforce personnel activated to establish the FRC will respond to the designated FRC site upon being notified of a Taskforce activation. The Operations Chief will have Taskforce personnel begin setup upon arrival at the FRC location. The Operations Chief will stage resources until the FRC is established by the Logistics Chief and will then commence setup.

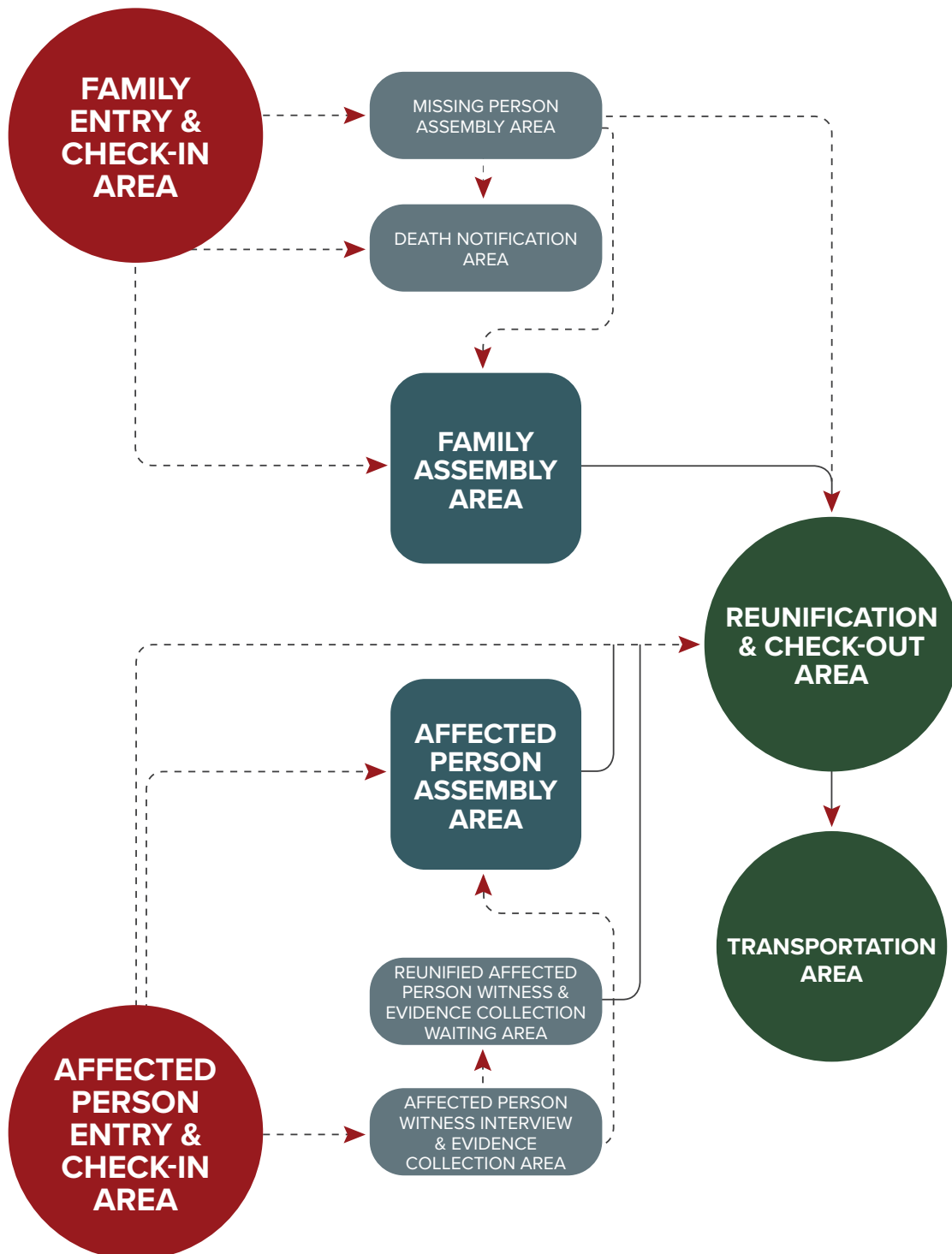
The following section will outline positional tasks and responsibilities within the FRC.



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Family Reunification Operational Flow

The following organizational chart displays the reunification flow beginning at check-in and throughout the reunification process.





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Reunification Areas

Command Area

One of the first areas to be established at each FRC will be a designated command area. The command area will be the centralized location for all FRC command and control, communication, and decision-making. It should be separate from other FRC operational areas. Personnel in the command area should be limited to section chiefs and other essential personnel as deemed necessary by the Reunification Taskforce Commander.

Affected Person Entry and Check-In Area

Affected Persons will often arrive at the FRC via mass transportation (buses, etc.) but they may arrive by any means. As Affected Persons arrive at the FRC from the incident location they should be directed by greeters to a check-in location that is sight and sound separated from family members. Registrars at check-in will use the reunification software and obtain the Affected Person's name, date of birth, and cell phone number. To assist with identification of people in the FRC, Affected Persons may be photographed at check-in with their consent and the photo entered into the reunification software. All Affected Persons will be fitted with a clearly identifiable wristband for ease of identification within the FRC. The person's name will be written or printed on all wristbands, which may also contain additional information.

The registration personnel should confirm that the Affected Person was at the incident location and determine whether they witnessed the event, have information on a potential suspect, or other evidentiary or relevant information, including whether they have any physical, cell phone, or other electronic evidence. This will help determine whether the person needs to be interviewed by detectives or processed to retrieve evidence. A series of pre-approved questions in Appendix C will be utilized to help determine if the Affected Person needs to be interviewed or has evidence. A detective will be assigned to the Affected Person Entry and Check-In Area to monitor the Affected Persons' arrival. Forensic science personnel will also be present at the check-in area to assist with the collection of any non-electronic physical evidence that needs to be immediately collected.

If the Affected Person is an adult who does not need to be interviewed and does not require evidence processing, registrars should determine whether the person desires to wait at the FRC for family to pick them up or whether they want to proceed directly to check-out and leave the FRC. If the person wants to leave, then they will be immediately escorted to the check-out area after the registration process is complete. If the person is remaining at the FRC for reunification, then a runner will escort them to the Affected Person Assembly Area. For adults and juveniles waiting for reunification at the FRC, registrars should obtain the identity of their family member who will likely be arriving at the FRC to pick them up and that information will be entered in the reunification software.



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If during the registration process a determination is made that an Affected Person needs to be interviewed or have evidence collected from them, runners will assist the Affected Person to the Witness Interview and Evidence Collection Assembly Area (see below).

There may be adults who are not witnesses and are not awaiting the arrival of family for reunification, but who do not have transportation from the FRC because their vehicles have not been released at the incident location. These Affected Persons may wait in the Affected Person Assembly Area until they have a ride, or their vehicle is available at the scene. These individuals will also be fitted with a clearly identifiable wristband. Once these individuals have transportation or their vehicle is available at the scene, a runner will escort them to the Check-Out Area where they will be released to the Transportation Area for transport back to their vehicles at the incident site.

If at any time an adult decides they no longer wish to remain at the FRC for any reason they will be escorted to the Check-Out Area, their wristband will be removed, and they will be checked out.

| STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE AFFECTED PERSON ENTRY AND CHECK-IN AREA: | |
|--|---|
| 1 | Affected Person Entry and Check-In supervisor |
| 6 | Greeters |
| 10 | Registrars |
| 10 | Runners |
| 4 | Law enforcement officers and forensic specialists |
| 2 | Detectives from investigating agency |

Family Entry and Check-In Area

The family check-in process is the first step for families entering the FRC; they will be greeted and directed to registration for check-in. Registrars will ask family members for their name, date of birth, address, and cell phone number, along with the name of the Affected Person they are seeking information about or need to reunify with. Family members will be requested to present a government-issued photo identification to ensure the identity of all FRC visitors. Individuals without a form of identification will have their identity verified to the extent possible before proceeding to an assembly area. Registrars will enter all this information in the reunification software.

Registrars will need to use their best efforts at check-in to determine whether the Affected Person with whom the family member is there to reunify with has been accounted for or is missing. Family members who do not know the status of the Affected Person they are there to see will be anxious and should not be assembled in the same area as family who know that the Affected Person they are there to see is alive and well.



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If the Affected Person has been accounted for and is at the FRC or likely enroute, then upon completion of the registration process runners will escort the family member to the Family Assembly Area to await reunification. If the Affected Person is missing or unaccounted for, then runners will escort the family member to the Missing Person Assembly Area. Information from the family member (e.g., whether they have been in communication with the Affected Person), independent knowledge regarding the Affected Person's status, and information contained in the reunification software will help determine whether family should be directed to the Family Assembly Area awaiting reunification or to the Missing Person Assembly area awaiting status information.

| STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE FAMILY ENTRY AND CHECK-IN AREA INCLUDE: | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Family Entry and Check-In Section supervisor |
| 6 | Greeters |
| 10 | Registrars (staff to effectively and efficiently register family) |
| 10 | Runners (escort family to the applicable assembly area) |
| 3 | Law Enforcement Analysts (from the Identification and Notification Section) |
| 3 | Law Enforcement Officers |

Missing Person Assembly Area

Taskforce personnel will establish and staff a Missing Person Assembly Area so that family members of missing persons are separated from others in the FRC. Family members in this area will be anxious about their family members' status and should be provided with regular updates on identification efforts.

If an Affected Person is later identified and it is appropriate to do so, the family member should be moved from the Missing Person Assembly Area to the Family Assembly Area to await reunification.

There needs to be an adequate number of victim advocates and other counselors present in the Missing Person Assembly Area as family members in this area will often move to the Death Notification Area. Care must be taken in how family members are moved from this area to the Death Notification Area and under no circumstances shall the two areas be within sight or sound of each other.

| STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE MISSING PERSON ASSEMBLY AREA INCLUDE: | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Missing Person Assembly Area supervisor |
| 5 | Victim advocates or other victim services personnel |
| 2 | Taskforce members |
| 4 | Runners |



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

Deceased Victim Identification Section and Death Notification Area

The function of the Deceased Victim Identification Section is to collect information from families who have arrived at the FRC and work with the Identification and Notification Section to identify deceased victims who remain at the incident scene, are at a hospital, or have been moved to the Medical Examiner's Office. This information collection will often occur with family who are in the Missing Person Assembly Area.

Interviewing these families is one of the most sensitive aspects of the FRC process, but also one of the most critical. The interviewers will gather specific information from families of the missing or deceased to include:

- Detailed physical description of the individual
- Description of clothing and jewelry
- Description of unique characteristics (e.g., tattoos, scars, birthmarks)
- Dental records, medical records, and fingerprint records
- Photographs of the individual
- Military service records

The District 6 Medical Examiner's Office is generally responsible for the forensic identification of victims and notifying the next of kin of the identification. Scientific methods of identification (e.g., fingerprint, dental, medical/radiographic, or DNA) are often necessary for MCIs because of the number of fatalities and the fact that remains are often difficult to identify due to injury.

These methods require the comparison of information collected from the remains of the victim (i.e., postmortem data) to information available for the victim when he or she was alive (i.e., ante mortem data). Because this process can be lengthy, it may be necessary to make tentative notifications or notifications based on probable matches. The family's need to know the status of the Affected Person must be balanced against the consequence of providing inaccurate information. Therefore, when it is appropriate, the family should be informed of a decedent's tentative or probable identification.

The Identification and Notification Section will collaborate with the Deceased Victim Identification Section on whether there is a tentative or probable identification match of a deceased person and the final decision whether to make a notification based on a tentative or probable match will be made by the Deceased Victim Identification Section supervisor.

If approved by the supervisor, the family will be informed of the tentative or probable match; however, the family must be explicitly told that it is a tentative or probable match, and that the final determination of identification is still pending. Generally, detectives from the primary investigating agency experienced in making death notifications will be responsible for the death notification.



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Death notifications made at the FRC must be done in a separate and private dedicated area that is sight and sound free from others, especially the Missing Persons Assembly Area.

Death notifications will be made with assistance from victim advocates and families will not be left alone after the notification unless they so request. If necessary, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) personnel may be used to supplement victim advocates.

STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE DEATH NOTIFICATION AREA INCLUDE:

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Deceased Victim Identification Section supervisor |
| 4 | Runners |
| 4 | Law enforcement officers for security |
| 4 | Detective interviewers (staff to effectively and efficiently interview family) |
| 2 | Clergy/Chaplains (Non-Taskforce Members) |
| 10 | Victim advocates |

Family Assembly Area

Family members will remain in the Family Assembly Area until moved to the Reunification Area.

It will be the responsibility of the Family Assembly Area staff to match family with Affected Persons who have arrived at the FRC. The Family Assembly Area staff will use the reunification software to match family members in the Family Assembly Area with Affected Persons in the Affected Persons Assembly Area or Interview and Evidence Collection Area and reunite them at the appropriate place. Family Assembly Area staff will coordinate with Affected Persons Assembly Area staff to have runners escort Affected Persons and family to the Reunification Assembly Area or Reunified Witness and Evidence Collection Waiting Area as soon as the match has been made.

STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE FAMILY ASSEMBLY AREA INCLUDE:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Family Assembly Area supervisor |
| 2 | Victim advocates or other victim services personnel |
| 2 | Taskforce members |
| 4 | Runners |

Affected Person Assembly Area

After check-in and registration, Affected Persons other than those proceeding immediately to check-out or identified for an investigative interview or evidence processing, will remain in this area until they are matched for reunification with family. Victim advocates and other counseling service providers should be present in this area to address any Affected Persons' emotional well-being needs.

Affected Persons should be provided with appropriate updates regarding the incident while waiting in this area. Television and other electronic media broadcasting updates regarding the incident should not be present. Food and beverages should be available.



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

Staff in the Affected Persons Assembly Area should monitor the reunification software and coordinate with the Family Assembly Area staff to determine that an Affected Person's family is in the Family Assembly Area so they can all be reunified in the appropriate area.

| STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE AFFECTED PERSONS ASSEMBLY AREA: | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Affected Persons Assembly Area supervisor |
| 5 | Staff members |
| 6 | Victim advocates |
| 4 | Runners (escort Affected Persons to and from the assembly area) |
| 3 | Law enforcement officers |

Witness Interview and Evidence Collection Assembly Area

An Affected Person who was identified as needing to be interviewed or has evidence to be collected during the check-in process will remain in this area until called for an interview, evidence processing, or reunification. The person will either remain in this area until they are interviewed, evidence is collected from them, they are moved to the Reunified Witness and Evidence Collection Waiting Area to meet their family and await an interview or evidence collection, or they refuse to wait any longer and are checked out of the FRC.

There will likely be a backlog of Affected People waiting to be interviewed. Therefore, staff in this assembly area should monitor the reunification software and when it is determined that an Affected Person in this area has family in the Family Assembly Area, they should all be moved to the Reunified Witness and Evidence Collection Waiting Area where they will be reunified and wait together to be interviewed or have evidence collected. (See below regarding Reunified Witness and Evidence Collection Waiting Area.)

All investigative interviews and evidence collection will be conducted in designated private interview rooms near the Witness Interview and Evidence Collection Assembly Area.

If a person completes the interview and evidence collection process while "assigned" to the Interview and Evidence Collection Area without being reunified, the interviewing detective or person collecting the evidence will have them escorted to the Affected Person Assembly Area by a runner where they will await reunification. Parents or guardians of a minor shall be permitted to be present during the interview or evidence collection if they so request.

If there is a delay in conducting interviews and the Affected Person, or a minor's parent, does not want to remain at the FRC, the person's information will be collected and maintained on the "evidence collection needed" list. No witness will be required to remain at the FRC for the interview process. If a person wants to leave, they should be escorted to the Check-Out Area.



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE WITNESS INTERVIEW AND EVIDENCE COLLECTION ASSEMBLY AREA SECTION INCLUDE:

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Investigative Liaison |
| 1 | Witness Interview and Evidence Collection Assembly Area supervisor |
| 3 | Runners |
| 6 | Digital forensic specialists |
| 10 | Detectives from the primary investigating agency |
| 4 | Forensic science specialists |

Reunified Witness and Evidence Collection Waiting Area

As indicated above, an Affected Person who is waiting to be interviewed or processed for evidence will be reunited with their family, when possible, by moving the Affected Person and the family to this waiting area. If it is a criminal incident, individuals in this area should not be able to view media reports before being interviewed by law enforcement.

When it is time for the person to be interviewed by detectives or for any evidence collection, it is preferred that family not accompany the Affected Person. However, if the Affected Person requests to be accompanied by a family member, or the parent or guardian of a minor child requests to be present, it should be allowed, or the interview postponed until a later time.

Just as with the Affected Persons in the Witness Interview and Evidence Collection Area, if there is a delay in conducting interviews and the Affected Person in this waiting area does not want to remain at the FRC, the person's information will be collected and maintained on the "evidence collection needed" list. If a person wants to leave, they will be escorted to the Check-Out Area.

If the Affected Person completes the interview or evidence collection process, upon conclusion the family and Affected Person will be moved to the Check-Out Area and processed out of the FRC.

STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE REUNIFIED WITNESS AND EVIDENCE COLLECTION WAITING AREA:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Reunified Witness and Evidence Collection Waiting Area supervisor |
| 4 | Taskforce members |
| 5 | Victim advocates |
| 6 | Runners |
| 4 | Law enforcement officers |



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Reunification and Check-Out Area

Affected Persons and their family will arrive at this area from their respective assembly areas, or an Affected Person may arrive directly from check-in if the person does not want to remain at the FRC for reunification. When both Affected Persons and family are present at the FRC they will be reunified in this area. Runners escorting minors, or when deemed necessary in other cases, will verify the person's name on their wristband and conduct a secondary identification check to ensure proper reunification.

Upon completion of reunification, the Affected Person and family will have their wristbands removed and they may be checked out. The family will then be escorted together to a pre-designated exit location.

| STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE REUNIFICATION AND CHECKOUT AREA: | |
|--|--|
| 1 | Reunification and Check-Out supervisor |
| 4 | Taskforce members |
| 10 | Check-Out personnel |
| 2 | Law enforcement officer |

Transportation Area

The Logistics Chief will appoint a Transportation Supervisor who is responsible for ensuring that Pinellas County Schools has a sufficient buses available to transport people from the incident location to the FRC. The transportation of Affected Persons will be coordinated with the Incident Commander.

The Logistics Chief is also responsible for ensuring that transportation is available to transport people checking out of the FRC who need rides.



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

Family Reunification Center Operational Sections

Technology Section

The Technology Section is another key operational FRC component. The Technology Section will have responsibilities before and during an FRC activation. Section members will be on call and shall have staff on-site for the duration of FRC operations. The Technology Section is responsible for installing and maintaining an information technology infrastructure that is sufficient to support all FRC operations. Technology support includes access to the Internet from all workstations and telephone access.

The Technology Section must test all systems and equipment not only upon activation but on a routine basis to ensure functionality. The Technology Section will participate in planning training exercises and operational readiness activities under the guidance of the RTF Commander throughout the year.

| STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TECHNOLOGY SECTION INCLUDE: | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Technology Section supervisor |
| 2-4 | Info Techs for initial setup |
| 2-4 | Info Techs rotating for the duration of the operational period |
| 1-2 | Radio Communication Specialists |

FRC Identification and Notification Section

It is imperative that the Identification and Notification Section be established as soon as possible upon FRC activation because this section serves as the FRC's analytical hub. It is responsible for establishing an initial list of Affected Persons so that family and Affected Persons can be reunified. This section is also responsible for all data acquisition, management, and sharing. This section will be supervised by a law enforcement analyst supervisor and staffed by Taskforce-assigned law enforcement analysts.

Developing a comprehensive list of Affected Persons will be challenging for a myriad of reasons, but developing an accurate list is essential. In some mass casualty incidents, such as at schools, it may be easier to determine who was on campus at the time of the incident because of daily attendance rosters and School Information System access. On the other hand, an incident at a public place where people attend anonymously, such a mall or stadium, will create unique challenges in attempting to identify who was on-site at the time the incident occurred.

A mass casualty incident in which neither the number of Affected Persons nor their names are known, requires a process for soliciting, collecting, identifying, and managing Affected Persons' identities. Missing person reports are then generated and investigated by law enforcement to further refine a master list of Affected Persons, which then allows authorities to initiate the family reunification and notification process.



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Regardless of where the incident occurred and how much identifying information about Affected Persons is available, developing a master list of Affected Persons is most effectively accomplished by collaboration among the Identification and Notification Section supervisor, Check-In Supervisor, CIC, and detectives at the incident scene and hospitals.

For unidentified Affected Persons, especially deceased or seriously injured persons at hospitals, the FRC Patient Tracker (Sunstar representative), analysts, and detectives will coordinate, collect, and track all information on possible Affected Persons and compare it to specific information about unaccounted for persons received from family members and law enforcement.

The public will be encouraged to contact the CIC if they believe a family member, friend, or co-worker is missing and may have been involved in the incident. That information will be shared with the Identification and Notification Section by the CIC. That information will be compared to a known survivors list and known and unknown casualties to help make identifications, notifications, and reunifications, as applicable.

In addition to assisting with Affected Person information collection, section members will help facilitate the electronic transfer of information to and from the incident command, Medical Examiner's Office, and local hospitals.

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND NOTIFICATION SECTION INCLUDE:

| | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Identification and Notification Section supervisor |
| 4 - 6 | Law enforcement analysts |
| 1 | Data analyst |

Site Security/Traffic Section

The Taskforce will be responsible for security inside and outside the FRC, as well as all traffic control surrounding the facility because there will be a large number of people coming and going to and from the FRC.

The Operations Chief will designate a law enforcement supervisor as the Site Security and Traffic Section supervisor and this person will be responsible for ensuring adequate and proper security and traffic control.

Whenever possible, traffic flow should be established so that families arriving at the FRC are directed to a separate entrance not viewable from the Affected Persons' entrance. It is also imperative that two-way traffic be maintained in and out of the FRC to allow for the entry and exit of emergency vehicles.

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SECURITY/TRAFFIC SECTION INCLUDE:

| | |
|---------|---|
| 1 | Security/Traffic Section supervisor |
| 10 - 15 | Uniformed law enforcement officers for security and traffic control |



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

Medical Unit Section

Affected Persons or family will likely need some medical assistance at the FRC due to injury, reactions to stress, grief, or emotional trauma. A medical area will be established at the FRC, and medical care will be provided by Sunstar EMS.

Patients will be assessed and treated according to Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services protocols. If a family member or Affected Person is transported by EMS from the FRC, the Reunification Taskforce Commander or designee will be notified. The Medical Unit supervisor will also notify the Investigative Liaison if an Affected Person is transported so a detective at the hospital can be notified to monitor the person's condition and take any necessary investigative action. The person's changed location should be updated in the reunification software.

STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE MEDICAL UNIT SECTION INCLUDE:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Medical Unit supervisor |
| 2 | Paramedics |
| 1 | Sunstar Ambulances with crew (Relief is needed if a patient is transported as an ambulance must be on site at all times.) |

Resource Section

Resource Section personnel are assigned under the Planning Chief and will assist with mobilizing resources and equipment to and from the FRC.

STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR THE RESOURCE SECTION INCLUDE:

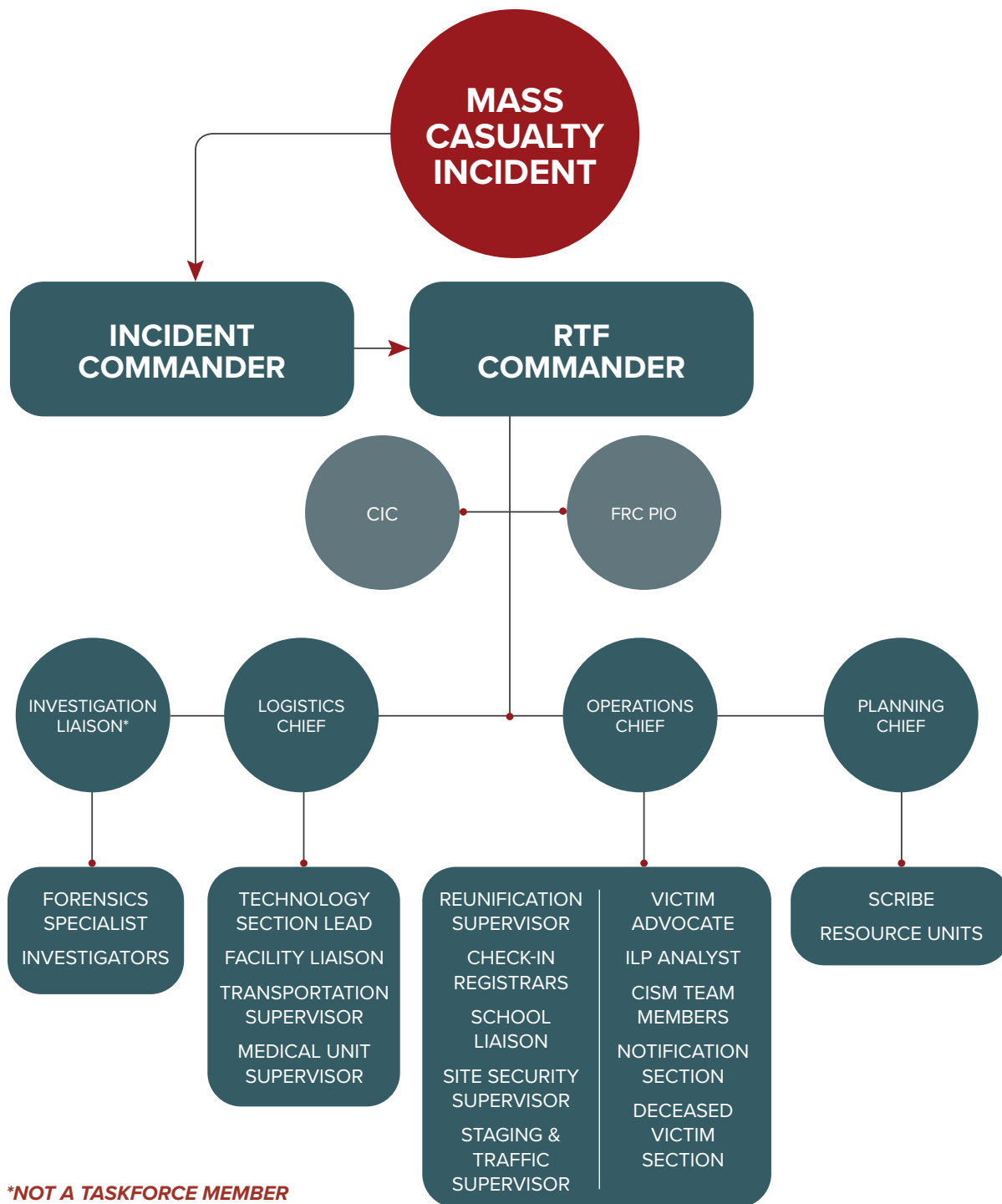
| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Resource Section supervisor |
| 5 | Resource Unit personnel |



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

Family Reunification Center Operational Structure

The following organizational chart outlines a full family reunification center activation. Depending on the size of the MCI, individual operational sections may not be fully activated or required, and combining operational section responsibilities may address the needs of the reunification process for a specific operation.





PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

FAMILY REUNIFICATION CENTER DEMOBILIZATION

The Reunification Taskforce Commander, after consultation with the Incident Commander, will make the determination when to close the FRC. The Reunification Taskforce Commander will make the closure notification over the radio.

The demobilization process ensures the appropriate, efficient, and orderly cessation of FRC operations. Demobilization is a formal planned process created by the Planning Chief and consideration for demobilization should begin upon the FRC opening. Demobilization is usually a scaled process that occurs over a period of time.

Before and during demobilization, the Operations Chief will account for all Taskforce personnel, family, and Affected Persons. The Operations Chief will verify that the reunification process has been completed and that the Investigative Liaison or designee has concluded all investigative needs at the FRC.

Once all individuals have departed the FRC, the Operations Chief or designee will determine if any damage has occurred at the FRC. A damage report will be completed and provided to the Reunification Taskforce Commander as part of the after-action document.



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

APPENDIX A - REUNIFICATION KIT CHECKLIST

| INCIDENT NAME: | CASE NUMBER: | DATE / TIME PREPARED: | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Equipment | Location Stored | Requested Time | Arrived Time | Operational Time |
| Portable Table | Trailer / Spec Ops | | | |
| Folding Chairs | Trailer / Spec Ops | | | |
| IPAD / Keyboard / Case | TBD | | | |
| Power Strip w/100 ft Extension Cord | Trailer / Spec Ops | | | |
| Wristbands | TBD | | | |
| Smart Cell Phones w/ Chargers | TBD | | | |
| ICOM Radios | TBD | | | |
| Green Lanyards | | | | |
| White Lanyards | TBD | | | |
| Blue Lanyards | TBD | | | |
| Red Lanyards | TBD | | | |
| Caution Tape | TBD | | | |
| Duct Tape | TBD | | | |
| Heavy-Duty Zip Ties | TBD | | | |
| Rolls of Paper / Blockers | TBD | | | |
| Pre-Printed Room / Area Signs | TBD | | | |
| Pre-printed Alphabetized Room Letters | TBD | | | |
| Portable Wi-Fi Case / 250 Capability | TBD | | | |
| Pod Runner COW | County EM / SAB | | | |
| Non-perishable Snacks | TBD | | | |
| 3M Post It Pads | TBD | | | |



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Traffic Wands | TBD | | | |
| Traffic Cones | TBD | | | |
| C Cell Batteries | TBD | | | |
| Traffic Vests | TBD | | | |
| Bug Spray | Cone Trailer / Spec Ops | | | |
| Sunscreen | | | | |
| RTF Operational Booklets | TBD | | | |
| Pens | TBD | | | |
| Pads of Paper | TBD | | | |
| Reams of Paper | TBD | | | |
| Large Clipboards | TBD | | | |
| Safety Scissors | TBD | | | |
| First Aid Kit | TBD | | | |
| Heavy Duty Trash Bags | TBD | | | |
| Coolers | TBD | | | |
| Cases of Water | TBD | | | |
| Victim / Resources Pamphlets | TBD | | | |
| Trucks | TBD | | | |
| Trailers | TBD | | | |
| Plastic Rolling Containers | TBD | | | |
| Scrubs / Clothing | TBD | | | |
| A-Frame Sign Boards | TBD | | | |
| 75 kW generators | TBD | | | |



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

APPENDIX B - REUNIFICATION WRISTBANDS

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PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

APPENDIX C - AFFECTED PERSONS QUESTIONS FOR CRIMINAL INCIDENTS

Purpose

The purpose of questioning Affected Persons after a criminal MCI is to gather information about the event, including the number and identity of Affected Persons, the location and nature of injuries, and any other pertinent details that can help inform the response efforts of emergency responders and medical personnel. This information can be used to triage patients, allocate resources, and coordinate the overall response effort, with the ultimate goal of providing the best possible care to those affected by the incident. Additionally, questioning Affected Persons can also help identify potential suspects or causes of the incident, which can aid in the investigation and prevention of future incidents.

Questions to ask upon entry for Affected Persons:

1. Did you witness the event?
 - If they are determined to be an eyewitness or earwitness, refer them for an interview.
2. Do you know the suspect?
3. Have you changed clothing or discarded any items since learning about the event?
 - Necessary to identify items of evidentiary value and identify subjects on video.
4. Do you have anything in your possession that you think would be evidence we should collect?



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

APPENDIX D - REUNIFICATION PAPER FORM SAMPLES

Purpose

The reunification forms are designed as a backup in the event of a technology failure. They were created as a paper copy of the electronic version. They are to be used at the Family and Affected Persons check-in sites at the FRC.

There are two forms, one for the family members to fill out and a second for the Affected Person to fill out. The instructions are listed with each form.

All completed forms should be loaded into the reunification software for historical purposes and reporting when available.



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

Family Reunification Form

YOUR LEGAL NAME _____

NAME YOU GO BY IF DIFFERENT _____ GRADE (IF SCHOOL BASED) _____

DOB _____ PHONE NUMBER _____

YOUR ADDRESS _____

PHOTO IDENTIFICATION PRESENT: YES OR NO

AFFECTED PERSON'S NAME _____

TIME REUNIFIED _____ INITIALS OF REUNIFIER _____

Reunification

First, we want to thank you for your patience during this reunification. We share the same goal during this process: getting you and your family member back together as quickly as possible.

Instructions

1. Please complete the information on the card.
2. Provide identification if you have it available.
3. After check-in, staff will escort you to an assembly area.



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

Affected Persons Form

YOUR LEGAL NAME _____

NAME YOU GO BY IF DIFFERENT _____ GRADE (IF SCHOOL BASED) _____

DOB _____ YOUR PHONE NUMBER _____

ADDRESS _____

FAMILY MEMBER NAME _____

FAMILY MEMBER PHONE NUMBER _____

PHOTO IDENTIFICATION PRESENT: YES OR NO

PERSON'S NAME WHO MAY BE COMING TO MEET YOU _____

TIME REUNIFIED _____ INITIALS OF REUNIFIER _____

Reunification

First, we want to thank you for your patience during this reunification. We share the same goal during this process: getting you and your family back together as quickly as possible.

Instructions

1. Please complete the information on the card.
2. Provide identification if you have it available.
3. After check-in, staff will escort you to an assembly area.



PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

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PINELLAS COUNTY FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

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PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

10750 ULMERTON ROAD LARGO, FL 33778 (727) 582-6200 www.pcsoweb.com