

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
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North Dakota Emergency Preparedness & Response Assembles Disaster Fatality Team



The North Dakota Disaster Fatality Team participated in a field recovery exercise at Ft. Lincoln State Park earlier this week.

Bismarck, N.D. – The Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) section of the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) held a news conference Thursday, May 4, at 10:30 a.m. to highlight the development of a new emergency unit, titled the North Dakota Disaster Fatality Team (DFT).

The following speakers participated in the news conference:

- Mike Nathe, North Dakota Representative
- Tim Wiedrich, North Dakota Emergency Preparedness and Response Section Chief
- Russ Korzeniewski, North Dakota Human Services Risk Manager
- Lance Peterson, Disaster Mortuary Operations Advisor

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The DFT team, consisting of over 60 individuals from various disciplines including emergency responders, law enforcement, public health and forensic professionals participated in a three-day intensive training exercise this week including:

- A hands-on search and recovery field exercise
- Preparing and processing a temporary morgue facility
- Family assistance support operations
- Human remains decontamination procedures
- Victim and personal effects identification
- Critical incident stress management

Although infrequent, disasters that result in mass fatalities can and do occur. It is important that North Dakota has the necessary emergency management response systems in place to address them.

“We hope the team remains at the ready with little to no use,” said Wiedrich. “We are grateful for the personnel who have stepped forward to be trained and equipped to deal with this difficult but needed response capability.”

For more information about the event, or to obtain b-roll footage, contact Jennifer Skjod, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.220.7852.

A high-resolution photo of the event may be downloaded at <https://flic.kr/p/TfHwXv>. This photo is available for public use.

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