



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
ATTORNEYS GENERAL

Responding to Mass Violence Incidents

A Checklist for State and
Territory Attorneys General



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Foreword



In 2012, the National Attorneys General Training and Research Institute (NAGTRI) published the first edition of “Preparing for the Unexpected,” a manual and resource guide specifically designed for state and territory attorney general offices to develop policies and procedures in the event of a disaster, keeping their offices operating during a disaster and dealing with the aftermath of that disaster. The second edition, published in September 2014, included lessons learned from devastating natural disasters, such as Hurricane Sandy, as well as catastrophes caused by man, such as the Boston Marathon bombing.

Since those publications were released, our country has experienced a wave of mass violence incidents, the majority of which have been mass shootings in our schools, our workplaces and our houses of worship. Clearly, a different type of resource was needed to assist state and territory attorney general offices in responding to this violence, and that resource had to be made available to the community quickly.

In December 2017 NAGTRI convened a meeting with members of the attorney general and district attorney community who had experienced mass violence incidents firsthand. This NAGTRI Mass Violence Response Checklist was developed from that meeting discussion. Staff members from many attorney general offices, as well as from a district attorney office, as listed in the credits, provided substantive information, with Checklist development by Hedda Litwin, NAGTRI program counsel, and editing by Judy McKee, NAGTRI program counsel.

This Checklist is designed to be a living document. If your office confronts issues not discussed or develops best practices in responding to mass violence incidents, please forward them to NAGTRI so that the next edition of the Checklist can be even more useful to the attorney general community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Toth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Toth
Executive Director
National Association of Attorneys General

March 2018

Pre-Incident Preparation Checklist

- If your state or territory has an emergency management/victim services team, have you met team members and/or attended team meetings? If so, does your office have a designated role in the event of a mass violence incident?
- Has your office considered the pros and cons of having one private designated fund vs. several private funds to handle donations? If you decide to utilize GoFundMe, have you reached out to the website to establish a relationship prior to an incident occurring? Have you designated and/or appointed people to oversee the donation process?
- Have you or your state emergency management team considered engaging the support and participation of community foundations and mental health organizations to provide long term support in the event of a mass violence incident?
- Does your office have a staff person responsible for grant writing? Has your office explored the law enforcement and victim services and compensation grants available and their associated application procedures? For FEMA-based grants, see <https://www.fema.gov/grants>.
- Have you developed a list of locations in or near major cities that could serve as temporary recovery centers or family assistance centers, if there isn't one already available?
- Have you assembled contact information for (a) key state emergency management contacts; (b) office victim services and other personnel to be deployed in a mass violence incident and (c) victim services contacts in each county? See Appendix A – Local Resources Worksheet.
- Does your victim services/compensation staff have prepared kits or boxes of office supplies prepared so they can respond quickly? See Appendix B1 - Suggested Bag Contents Checklist and Appendix B2 – Suggested Box Contents Checklist.
- Have you considered hosting a training for office staff on response to a mass shooting incident, such as showing the film, “Run, Hide, Fight?” Have you considered hosting a training(s) for schools or the community at large, perhaps in partnership with other agencies? For “Run, Hide, Fight” video, see <https://www.fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-resources/responding-to-an-active-shooter-crisis-situation>.

Immediate Aftermath Checklist

The implementation of this checklist will vary depending on the scale of the mass violence incident, including the number of victims and whether the perpetrator is alive and captured.

Communications

- Have you coordinated public information announcements with all other agencies to ensure a consistent message?
- Have you considered setting up a web page with updated information, including information for victims of the violence?
- Have you considered referring to the perpetrator in communications to the public as “the defendant” instead of using the actual name?

Assisting Victims

- If your office is responsible for the victim compensation effort, are you coordinating with the agency assigned to verifying the identity of the victims and their injuries and creating a resulting police report?
- Have you designated a lead person to communicate with victims? If another agency is responsible for victim assistance, are you coordinating with that agency?
- Is there a location on your list of potential recovery centers/family assistance centers that can be utilized (perhaps temporarily if a family assistance center is determined necessary) for immediate victim services?
- If there are a very large number of victims, and a family assistance center (FAC) has been established, please review the following questions.
 - Have you designated a team to work at the FAC? Have you or the agency operating the FAC set up a list of staff people working at the FAC and their role or responsibilities? See FBI protocol for Family Assistance Operations at <https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/Mass%20Fatality%20Incident%20Family%20Assistance%20Operations.pdf>.

Immediate Aftermath Checklist

- If victims have been hospitalized, have you sent representatives to the hospital(s) to assist them in completing applications for victim compensation? Have you a list of hospitalized victims and their associated hospital(s)? Is there a means to relay communications from the hospitals to the FAC if victims are unable to go to the FAC?
- Considered working with Legal Aid organizations to provide pro bono services to victims?
- Have you considered designating a victim advocate for each victim family or several families?
- Have you set up a designated area for victims to report fraud?
- Is there a list of airlines and hotels/Airbnb that can help victims and their families who are not local?
- Have you considered organizing a blood drive and getting information about it to the public?

Coordination and Organization

- Have you ensured that the Governor's Office or another agency have applied for an emergency declaration to facilitate federal funding? See information on the disaster declaration process at <https://www.fema.gov/disaster-declaration-process>.
- Have you developed an assignment list describing the task to be done, the person(s) who will perform the task and contact information for them?
- Has your Consumer Protection Division ensured that tips regarding how to identify fraudulent fund accounts are released to the public?
- Have you or the agency operating the FAC ensured that only authorized people, including victims and their families, may enter the FAC and that the media are strictly barred?
- Have you considered establishing, or suggesting to the agency operating the FAC, contact information for local transportation, such as airlines, taxis, Uber and Lyft, and lodging, such as hotels and Airbnb? A booth at the airport could be set up to assist incoming families.
- If you have reached out to other AG offices through the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) or individually, have you designated a staff member to monitor your email as you may be too involved in the incident response?

Post-Incident Checklist

- Is your office responsible for collecting and/or categorizing victims' personal effects that may have been left at the scene of the mass violence incident? If so, have you established a means by which victims or victims' family members can recover their effects?
- Have you considered requesting the presence of therapy or comfort dogs? See contact information for comfort dogs at <https://www.lutheranchurchcharities.org/k-9-comfort-dogs-about.htm> or for therapy dogs at <https://www.tdi-dog.org/>.
- Has your office conducted or participated in a debriefing about the mass violence incident and your role?
- Is your office required to prepare and file a report to the state Executive Branch on the incident?
- Have you or your state emergency management team considered providing mental health support/counseling for staff who worked on the incident?
- Have you written letters of acknowledgment to thank all of the staff members who worked on the incident?

Appendix A

Local Resources

Police Department:

Detective Name:

Victim Advocate:

Victim Assistance:

Chaplain:

**Medical Examiners and/or
Coroners Officer:**

Crime Victim Compensation:

Counseling Referrals:

Adults _____

Children _____

Local Resources

Police Department:

Detective Name:

Victim Advocate:

Victim Assistance:

Chaplain:

**Medical Examiners and/or
Coroners Officer:**

Crime Victim Compensation:

Counseling Referrals:

Adults _____

Children _____

Local Resources

Police Department:

Detective Name:

Victim Advocate:

Victim Assistance:

Chaplain:

**Medical Examiners and/or
Coroners Officer:**

Crime Victim Compensation:

Counseling Referrals:

Adults _____

Children _____

Local Resources

Police Department:

Detective Name:

Victim Advocate:

Victim Assistance:

Chaplain:

**Medical Examiners and/or
Coroners Officer:**

Crime Victim Compensation:

Counseling Referrals:

Adults _____

Children _____

Appendix B1

Go Bag Checklist

- Identification from employer (work badge)
- Office Identification clothing (if applicable)
- 3-5 days of comfortable/work clothes
- Small bag with toiletries
- Glasses/contacts/associated supplies
- 3-5 day supply of medications
- Jacket/boots– know the climate where going
- Sunblock, insect repellent, lip balm
- Umbrella
- Flashlight & batteries
- Cell phone/lap top chargers
- Work Expense Card (if applicable)
- Maps of destination area (GPS/phone)
- Personal & Professional Emergency phone lists (paper/phone)
- Business cards
- Backpack with small notebook (use same one for all deployments to same crisis, separate notebook for each crisis)
- A dark suit and shoes that can be worn for a dressier look for professional events/funerals.

Appendix B2

“Go-Box” Checklist

- Binder dividers
- Binders
- Flashlight
- Large Mailing Envelopes
- Alphabetical accordion file
- Highlighters
- Sharpies
- Box of Pens
- Scotch Tape
- Lysol
- Large Index Cards
- Small Binder Clips
- Large Binder Clips
- Glue Stick
- First Aid Kit
- Pushpins
- Paperclips
- Legal Notepad
- Hand Sanitizing Wipes
- Travel Information Forms
- Staples
- Rubber bands
- Three-hole punch
- Large Log Book
- Clipboard
- Pocket Folders
- Manila Folders
- Phone Chargers

Office in a Box

- Post-it Notes
- Paperclips
- Rubber Bands
- Staple Remover
- Tape
- Wooden Ruler
- Letter Opener
- Ballpoint Pen
- Pencil
- Highlighter
- Writing Pad
- “While You Were Out” notes
- Stapler
- Staples
- Clam Clip Dispenser
- Clam Clips
- White Correction Tape
- Mechanical Pencil
- Lead Refills
- Scissors