RESTORING FAMILY LINKS IN DISASTERS

FIELD MANUAL

RESTORING
FAMILY LINKS

ICRC

RESTORING FAMILY LINKS IN DISASTERS

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

When disaster strikes, the need to know where and how relatives are – if they have survived, if they need help – is a priority. Beyond this immediate need in the acute phase of a disaster, the psychological, physical and social recovery of individuals and communities depends heavily on the family. For the majority of people affected by a disaster, family is perhaps the most essential 'coping mechanism' of all.

The International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement is uniquely placed to address these needs in the field of disaster management. Under the *Restoring Family Links Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Cross Movement 2008–2018*, all the Movement's components pledged to strengthen their RFL capacity, including in natural disasters. This Field Manual is one contribution to that effort. It is published with the 'Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters: a Field Manual for First Responders', which provides essential complementary guidance.

What are RFL activities?

RFL is the generic term for activities that aim to prevent separation and disappearance, restore and maintain contact between family members and clarify the fate of persons reported missing. These activities are often connected to the psychological, legal and material support provided to the families and persons affected, resettlement or reintegration programmes and social welfare services. The management of human remains and forensic identification are related activities. All these can be part of the RFL response in a disaster, as set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: RFL activities

Situations causing family separation

Conflict and other situations of violence, natural and man-made disasters, international migration and other situations requiring humanitarian response

RFL activities	Activities interconnected with RFL
Prevent disappearances and separation	Development and promotion of international and national law
Restore contact between families	Material, legal, psychological and other support to the families and persons affected
Maintain contact between families	Forensic identification and the management of human remains
Clarify the fate of the missing	Social welfare
	Resettlement and integration services

The RFL activities of the Movement's various components are grounded in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols, the Movement's Statutes and resolutions of International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the Council of Delegates. The Movement's strength lies chiefly in its potential to provide a worldwide Family Links Network.

Who is the Field Manual for?

The Field Manual is aimed primarily at those who manage the RFL response in a disaster. It may also serve as a useful reference for staff and volunteers working in RFL and for those responsible for disaster management in National Societies and ICRC delegations. It has therefore been written with RFL specialists in mind, but may also be useful for those who have to respond to RFL needs without specialist knowledge.

What is the Field Manual for?

The Field Manual is intended mainly to help those responding to RFL needs in disasters to plan and carry out their work. It provides operational guidance on RFL in disasters, based on field practice and outlines the potential role of the Movement's components. As conditions can differ significantly between countries and disasters, so the Movement's specific role varies. The Field Manual therefore does not provide a "how to" guide for each and every disaster and context.

The Field Manual is a useful complement to *Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters: A Field Manual for First Responders*, a 2006 joint publication issued by PAHO/WHO, the ICRC and the International Federation. The management of dead bodies and their identification is closely linked to the need to clarify the fate of those missing as a result of a disaster.

The Field Manual may also be used as a guide for activities to strengthen the preparedness of a National Society and/or ICRC delegation.

How is the Field Manual to be used?

The Field Manual's sections correspond to the phases of disaster response, as laid out below. Users should read the whole Manual when preparing for a disaster. However, in the emergency phase of a disaster, assessment, planning and response may be virtually simultaneous: they should refer to different sections as required.

RFL in Disasters Field Manual: Structure

Sections 1 – 3: PRINCIPLES, BASIS OF MOVEMENT RESPONSE AND OVERVIEW OF RFL NEEDS IN DISASTERS

PREPAREDNESS PHASE: **SECTION 4**	→	ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING **PHASE: SECTIONS 5 – 8**
↑		↓
LEARNING PHASE: **SECTION 12**	←	IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: **SECTIONS 9 – 11**
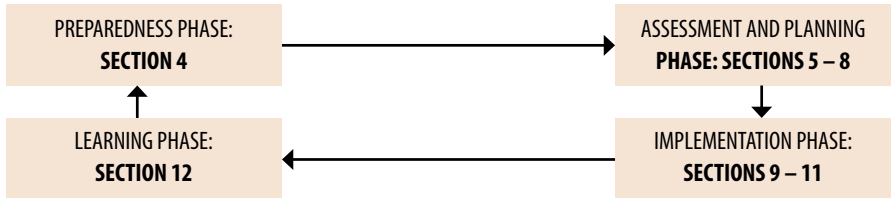
In addition to the 12 Sections laid out above, there is a set of Annexes which provides reference and guidance on specific operational challenges. This Field Manual is accompanied by a CD Rom which provides further guidance and tools to be used in the RFL response to a disaster.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

GLOSSARY

1949 Geneva Conventions	Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, 12 August 1949
	Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea, 12 August 1949
	Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 12 August 1949
	Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949
1977 Additional Protocols	Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977
	Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977
CTA	Central Tracing Agency, ICRC, Geneva
Fundamental Principles	The Movement's Fundamental Principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, universality
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
International Federation	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Movement	International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, comprising the ICRC, the International Federation and the National Societies
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
RCM	Red Cross message
RFL	Restoring family links
Seville Agreement	The Seville Agreement of 1997 provides a framework for effective cooperation and partnership between the Movement's members
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization

Section 1 PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE RFL RESPONSE

The key operational and ethical principles guiding all RFL activities.

Rapid, timely and relevant response

The RFL response is flexible and solution-oriented. It comprises a range of RFL activities. It starts as quickly as possible and lasts as long as justified by the needs and conditions.

Accountability

Those who are separated from or have lost contact with family members are at the heart of RFL action and its humanitarian accountability. Their participation in identifying needs, setting objectives, carrying out activities and evaluating the result is key to success. They are informed about the action that will be taken on their behalf and told they can access RFL services.

Do no harm

RFL operations strive to do no harm. They must be conceived and implemented with the utmost concern to ensure that individuals are not harmed by the processing of their enquiries or personal data.

Respect for the individual

The RFL response prioritizes individual needs without discrimination. Priority is given to the identification of the most vulnerable or people who are at risk of becoming separated from their families or disappearing, in order to assist and protect them. The RFL response is conducted with all due respect for each individual's dignity and best interests, including their religious and socio-cultural needs.

Data protection

The use of personal data (i.e. all data pertaining to a person's name, family, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, etc.) is given careful consideration. The security and safety of individuals is of primary importance and no data is used or published that could cause harm to individuals (See Annex 1, Data protection principles).

Adherence to the Movement's policies and Statutes

The RFL response is conducted in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, the Movement's Statutes, the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures, the Principles and Rules of Disaster Relief and the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief.

Coherence with the global RFL network

Any disaster can have an impact on relatives in another country; the ICRC and the National Societies form the Family Links Network, the basis of a coherent international response. The Central Tracing Agency (CTA), ICRC, Geneva promotes consistency within the Network and provides the National Societies with technical advice and operational support. In natural disasters requiring an international effort, the CTA coordinates the activities of National Society Tracing Services to ensure the most effective possible response to RFL needs.

Section 2 RFL ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND COORDINATION

The roles and responsibilities of the different actors (authorities, other agencies, private sector, etc.) in the field of RFL, and guidelines for coordinating activities with them.

Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Responsibilities of the authorities

Under international law, everyone has the right to know what has happened to missing relatives and to communicate with family members from whom they have been separated. Primary responsibility for ensuring that these rights are respected lies with State authorities (including armed security forces) and, in situations of armed conflict, any other organized armed groups. When the authorities (or organized armed groups) do not fulfill their responsibilities, the National Societies or the ICRC may offer their services based on their respective roles and responsibilities, the relevant legal provisions and in compliance with Movement resolutions (see below) and agreements. This offer may range from limited support to authorities to acting as a substitute for them (see 2.6 below).

Whatever activities the Movement carries out, the role and ultimate responsibility of the authorities with regard to the population and the rule of law must be fully respected.

2.2 The role of the ICRC

As a neutral and independent organization, the ICRC protects and assists the victims of international and non-international armed conflicts and other situations of violence. Article 5.3 of the Movement's Statutes expands this role to include other types of situation, and establishes a permanent basis on which the ICRC can take any humanitarian initiative compatible with its status as a specifically neutral and independent organization and intermediary.

The ICRC has the important task of reminding the authorities of their obligations under international humanitarian law and other relevant bodies of law with regard to family links, and carrying out activities when and for as long as required and possible.

In addition to its operational responsibilities the ICRC, through the CTA, coordinates, advises and strengthens the capacity of its partners within the Movement in RFL matters, promotes consistency within the Family News Network and provides the National Societies with methods and guidelines.[1]

The ICRC decides what RFL action is to be taken in armed conflicts or other situations of violence. In other circumstances requiring an international effort, it coordinates the activities of the global Family News Network to ensure the most effective possible response to RFL needs.

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[1] For example, *Restoring Family Links: A Guide for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* (ICRC, November 2000) and the *Recommendations and Conclusions of the International Conference of Governmental and Non-Governmental Experts on the Missing and their Families* (2003).

2.3 The role of National Societies

The functions of the National Societies are set out in Article 3 of the Movement's Statutes. National Societies carry out their humanitarian activities in conformity with their own statutes and national legislation and act as auxiliaries to their national authorities in the humanitarian field. Their role is in particular to assist the victims of armed conflict as stipulated by the Geneva Conventions, and the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies who need help (Articles 3.1 and 3.2). As outlined in Resolution XVI of the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross, National Societies have an important role as components of the international network for tracing and reuniting families.

National Societies maintain their response as long as needs exist, and this may extend well beyond the end of a conflict, natural or man-made disaster, or other emergency. They are responsible for incorporating RFL activities into their overall plans. National Societies may need to draw the attention of the public, humanitarian agencies and governments to the existence and significance of their RFL activities.

Individual National Societies are responsible for establishing an effective national RFL network. They determine what action is to be taken during national disasters, and may call on the CTA when the RFL response requires an international effort.

2.4 The role of the International Federation

The *Restoring Family Links Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Cross Movement 2008–2018* states that the Federation Secretariat will ensure that assessments take account of RFL needs and that it will strive, in coordination with the ICRC, to ensure disaster preparedness and response plans emphasize the role and importance of RFL.

2.5 Roles and responsibilities of other actors

The number of organizations conducting RFL activities is growing, especially in respect of unaccompanied and separated minors. The private sector (especially technology companies) is increasingly undertaking RFL activities, or supporting others during high-profile natural and man-made disasters.

It is important to map the specific roles and responsibilities of other organizations (NGOs, international organizations, the private sector) providing similar or related services, particularly if they are identified in national disaster plans.

Coordination

2.6   Coordination with the authorities

Their specific role and responsibilities make the authorities the key partner in any RFL response in a disaster: a close relationship should be established with government services in order to avoid delays in the response.

While the choices presented below may coexist, there are basically three roles the Movement can play in respect of the authorities in a disaster:

SUBSTITUTION	Taking action to fill a role that the authorities would normally undertake
SUPPORT	Acting as an auxiliary, or in support of the authorities, so that they can carry out their role
PERSUASION	Persuading the authorities to take certain actions

The Movement's role(s) in RFL is determined in discussion with the authorities. In situations of armed conflict, these discussions are based on international humanitarian law. For National Societies, their statutes and their responsibilities in national disaster plans and response mechanisms are critical in deciding what role(s) they undertake.

2.7   Coordination within the Movement

The RFL response is conducted in compliance with Movement resolutions and rules, including the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures, which emphasize the importance of coordinating the efforts of the Movement's components to optimize assistance. The RFL Strategy for the Movement 2008-2018 emphasizes the need to harmonize the Movement's efforts to provide an internationally consistent response over the short, medium and long terms and to have all components participate in those efforts. An important element in the coordination of responses to disasters is the Federation Disaster Management Information System, which incorporates RFL as a potential need and provides a means of requesting support from the Central Tracing Agency. DMIS can be found at www.ifrc.org/dmis. As noted, when RFL responses require an international effort, the CTA acts as a channel for both resources and information.

2.8   Coordination with other actors

It is important to understand the role(s) allocated to non-governmental and international organizations in national disaster plans and to ensure coordination through agreements and referral protocols with them, in advance of a disaster. In the absence of such agreements, it may be essential to draw them up in a specific disaster.

The following guidelines may be helpful in this regard during the assessment, planning and implementation phases:

Identify the actual RFL role and capacity of other agencies to avoid duplication

This includes national and international agencies, even those which have no prior defined responsibility, but are prompted by the disaster to address RFL needs (e.g. an agency focused on unaccompanied minors that has not previously worked in the country concerned). The basic aim is to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts on behalf of the same groups or individuals.

Protect the Movement's identity and image

Take into account the Movement's Fundamental Principles and policies in any operational agreements with the UN system (including the cluster system) or others. The Movement's "Minimum elements to be included in operational agreements between Movement components and their external operational partners" (see Annex 14) must be respected. Closely monitor the use of the name and the description of Movement activities in documents produced by other organizations in order to protect the principles of independence and neutrality.

Allocate time for communication with other agencies and share understanding

This includes attending coordination meetings to monitor developments and cooperate on unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups, in particular. This is an essential element in monitoring the situation (see Section 12). Other agencies may focus on different needs, have different methodologies, collect different data on individuals, etc. It is important to understand these differences in order to avoid misunderstandings while carrying out activities or making public statements.

Confirm shared objectives and principles

Cooperation with other agencies depends on whether they share the Movement's objectives and comply with its data protection principles (Annex 1). Compliance with the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief may also be a consideration. (See CD Rom for a Model agreement on sharing data with other agencies and guidance).

Protect data
Whether with the authorities or with other agencies, the final use and ownership of any shared data must be clarified. It is important to ensure that the authorities or agency concerned apply the data protection principles (Annex 1).

Share data
It is in the best interests of those seeking news of relatives that information collected by different agencies be shared. This may not always be possible for reasons of principle or practicality, but it remains a desired outcome.

Section 3   RFL IN DISASTERS: OVERVIEW

A brief overview of the types and patterns of RFL needs occurring in disasters and the phases of the RFL response. It includes a brief summary of the challenges specific to disasters that strike in the midst of a conflict or other situations of armed violence.

3.1   Impact of the disaster in terms of RFL needs

Even within a single disaster, different RFL needs can be generated, as shown in Figure 1 and described below.

The means of communication are disrupted in the affected area
The disruption of communications prevents people from contacting their relatives within or outside the affected area. Many people, both inside and outside the affected area, are anxious to obtain news of and re-establish contact with their loved ones, especially if they were not at home when the disaster occurred and have no news of their relatives.

People who have moved from the affected area
Displaced persons (or those taking care of them) need to reassure their relatives, inside or outside the affected area, about their state of health and whereabouts. They may have been evacuated from the affected area and accommodated in shelters or privately, and may find it difficult to let their families know where and how they are.

Injured persons who have been evacuated
People who have been injured in the disaster may have been transferred to hospitals, possibly out of the affected area, without their families knowing.

Vulnerable individuals who are separated from their families
Whatever the disaster or context, there are vulnerable groups and individuals. These include all those who rely on their families, the authorities and others for support. They are particularly at risk if they are separated from their families or caretakers in a disaster and may include: unaccompanied children, elderly people living on their own, those with chronic illnesses, those with disabilities requiring support, those who rely on institutions for the material conditions of life (prisons, orphanages, homes for the elderly, etc.), those who have become dependent as a result of the disaster (particularly those who have been hospitalized), foreigners who may lack diplomatic representation or the means to access it and other groups of individuals who are vulnerable in the specific context (see Section 6 for further guidance). Vulnerable individuals may have complex and urgent needs including protection,[1] and material and medical needs that are compounded by their separation from their sources of support.

Information about the dead
Natural disasters can cause a large number of deaths. The deceased may be transferred to morgues or buried, without their relatives even knowing about their

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[1] Protection in this context refers to "ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law" (*Strengthening Protection in War*, ICRC, 2001).

death. Particular needs may exist in relation to the collection and management of information on the dead and their identification.

Missing persons
People who fail to appear at their usual address after the disaster, and do not contact their families despite communications being restored, are considered missing. They may be lost and in shock, injured or dead: their families need to know their fate and whereabouts.

Figure 1: Impact of a disaster showing RFL consequences
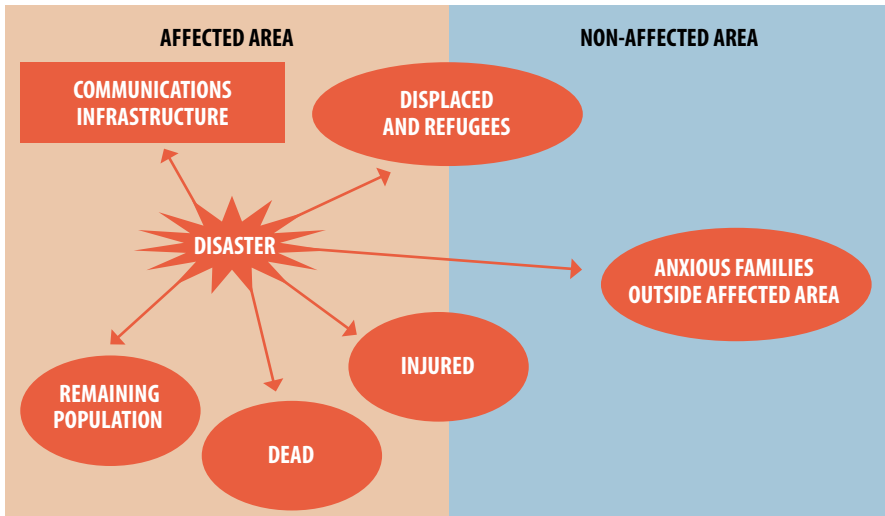
Affected area: area directly hit by the disaster, where communications infrastructure has usually collapsed.

3.2   Urgency of needs and continuity

Figure 2 shows the typical pattern of RFL needs, with a sharp rise in the immediate aftermath of a rapid-onset disaster, followed by a "tail" of more complex RFL needs subsequently. It emphasizes the need for a swift response.

After the acute phase of a disaster, when communications are restored, the challenge is to sustain activities on behalf of those who remain without news of their relatives and to clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing persons. The Movement may also have activities on behalf of vulnerable groups and individuals, and play a direct role in helping survivors of the disaster to mourn the passing of their relatives.

Figure 2: Typical pattern of RFL needs and response phases in a disaster
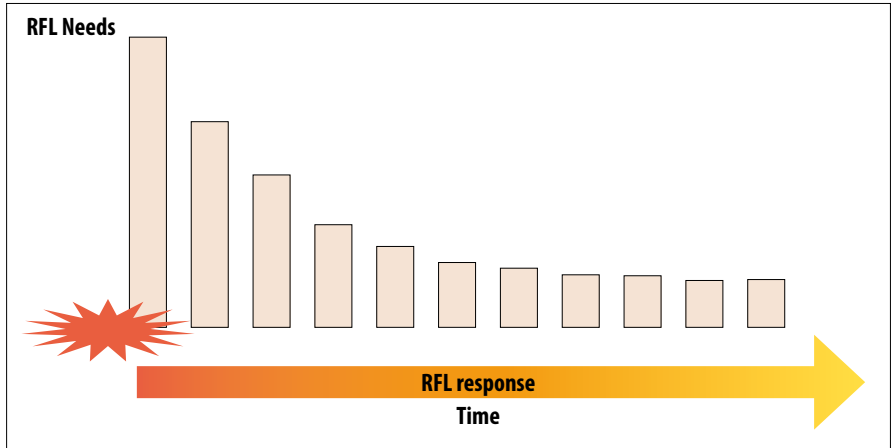
3.3 Typical phases of an RFL response

EMERGENCY PHASE: FIRST RESPONSE

The **first response** identifies actions that take priority during the emergency phase, when time and resources are limited. Communications systems are often not functioning and information is limited.

EMERGENCY PHASE: SECOND RESPONSE

The **second response** identifies more actions that can be added during the emergency phase as conditions stabilize and more resources and information become available.

RECOVERY PHASE

The **recovery phase** is marked by the re-establishment of normal means of communication, or the return of displaced persons/refugees. During this phase, the authorities typically take over most of the tasks that may have fallen to the Movement during the emergency phase, and the Movement may shift its focus to actively tracing persons who remain unaccounted for and identifying human remains.

There is no clear dividing line between the phases, which are based on an analysis of typical, as opposed to universal, patterns of need and response. Note how these responses build on and complement each other and how activities begun in the first and second response may continue into the recovery phase.

Refer to Section 8.2 for a more detailed overview of the RFL phased response.

3.4 Disasters and conflict

Disasters may occur in conflicts or other situations of internal violence. When this happens, both the needs and the RFL activities undertaken are more complex and sensitive because of security and other concerns. Protection needs are more acute and the situation of vulnerable individuals and specific groups at risk should be even more closely monitored and considered a priority. RFL activities may be more complex as there may be more than one possible cause of separation or disappearance.

The role of the Movement's components will be determined in agreement with the authorities and other parties to the conflict and in application of international humanitarian law. In conflicts and other situations of internal violence, the legal framework is set by the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols and/or applicable international human rights law (see Annex 13 for specific references).

From an RFL perspective, particularly as concerns the delivery of family news and family reunifications across lines of conflict and borders, a neutral intermediary is needed that can perform these tasks and is acceptable to all the parties. The ICRC is uniquely well placed to carry out this role.

Securing and maintaining the consent of all the parties requires careful negotiation not only at the national level, but also in the affected area. Activities must be carried out in an explicitly impartial, transparent and predictable manner in order to maintain consent.

The protection of individuals and the security of staff and volunteers are likely to be the overriding concerns when prioritizing, planning, choosing RFL tools and implementing activities. Risk assessment must be ongoing and all risks weighed against the humanitarian needs.

Section 4   PREPAREDNESS

Recommendations for improving disaster preparedness. National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC have taken a number of initiatives in terms of preparedness and contingency planning. Such initiatives clearly need to integrate RFL activities into their broader disaster response mechanisms, including risk assessment, contingency planning and preparedness exercises. Disaster preparedness is not separate from medium-term planning and other capacity-building measures, but this section only highlights those aspects relevant to stronger disaster preparedness.

The following information should be collected prior to deciding what steps need to be taken to strengthen preparedness.

4.1   Context

A. Country profile
- Total population
- Population by gender
- Population by age group
- Rural/urban population (density and distribution)
- Literacy rate
- Languages spoken
- Income per capita
- Estimated population outside the country (numbers and location)
- System used to register individuals in the country
- Estimated population of foreign residents/regular and irregular migrants
- For countries affected by conflict or other situations of violence
  - Areas and population affected, and since when
- For countries prone to natural disasters
  - Areas and population affected (list previous disasters)
- Cultural and social factors related to RFL
  - Most frequently used means of communication (telephone, mail, Internet, other)
  - Structure of the family (nuclear/extended)
  - Naming system(s)
  - Most popular medium (radio, TV, newspaper, other)
  - Handling of the dead according to culture(s) or religion(s), funeral rites and mourning practices

B. Infrastructure
- Percentage of the country covered by the telephone network
  - Fixed-line network in urban/rural areas
  - Mobile network (including number of providers, costs, etc.)
  - Percentage of population with access to the Internet (urban/rural areas)
- Coverage of postal service in the country
- Transportation
  - Geographical reach of transport routes (throughout the country or limited to some areas)
  - Means of transportation available and most frequently used by the population
- Location of institutions for vulnerable persons (homes for the elderly, orphanages, homes for disabled persons, reception centres for migrants, prisons, hospitals, etc.) and for the dead (morgues)

C. Potential RFL beneficiaries and needs

In addition to the general population, identify specific groups that may need RFL services in a disaster:
- Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, separated/unaccompanied children/individuals in institutions for vulnerable persons/others and their location
- The diaspora population outside the country in question: numbers and location

For these groups, identify:
- What might cause them to lose contact
- Their potential RFL needs
  – Telephone or mail communications (Red Cross Messages, etc.) with their family
  – Tracing
  – Family reunification
  – Other

It is also important to gather information on any coping mechanisms the population may have used in previous disasters.

D. Other providers of RFL services

Map potential RFL stakeholders, with a list of contact persons and a brief description of their activities (programmes for unaccompanied children or other vulnerable groups, psychological support, telecommunications, management and identification of dead bodies, etc. Record if the stakeholder is part of the national disaster plan; see below):
- Governmental authorities
- NGOs
- Private companies
- Civil society (associations, religious institutions, etc.)

E. RFL response capacity and coordination

The following information is essential in order to decide the potential role of National Societies and delegations and future steps:
- Coordination with the authorities is essential and most countries have a national disaster plan identifying:
  – the role and responsibilities of the authorities (collecting this information with respect to RFL enables the Movement to have established contacts with government departments such as the Ministries of Health, Social Welfare, Family Affairs, Communication, Police);
  – and, if appropriate, the Movement components' roles and mandates, including RFL services (registering individuals, centralizing information to respond to relatives' enquiries, etc.).

If the Movement has no specific RFL role, gathering this information at least enables it to refer enquirers to the correct authorities in a disaster.

It is essential to understand the legal context including:
• Existing national laws and regulations in relation to the collection, processing, storage and publication of information (data protection)
• Coordination with other providers of RFL services

As well as mapping the capacities and roles of other providers of RFL services, it is important to gather information on any existing protocols, agreements and formal roles they may have in the national disaster plan.

4.2 Strengthening the Movement's preparedness

Taking into consideration the context, the likely needs and actual capacities (both within the Movement component and of other actors), concrete steps may have to be taken to strengthen preparedness, including:
• ensuring that RFL is included in the component's broader planning and training exercises to reinforce disaster preparedness;
• identifying how RFL can be integrated into other disaster responses (medical, relief, shelter, etc.);
• building relationships with key stakeholders – other agencies, media, community networks, etc. In addition to mapping the role of organizations, contacts should be established and referral protocols on respective roles drawn up in advance of a disaster (see Section 2.8);
• ensuring that the RFL core team and its roles are identified (see Annex 7);
• if it seems likely that a disaster will require extra staff from abroad, identifying and taking the necessary preparatory steps – visa procedures, briefing procedures, job descriptions, etc.;
• developing training material that can be used in a disaster for newly recruited staff and volunteers (see Annex 9 and CD Rom);
• preparing equipment and materials: office equipment, forms, list formats, website lists that can be used in a disaster, telecommunications, etc. (see Annex 10);
• establishing what logistical support is likely to be required.

4.3 Strengthening the preparedness of the authorities and other actors

National Societies and delegations may have to provide technical advice and bolster awareness so as to ensure that other actors, including the authorities, know about RFL needs and are able to respond. This can include, among other things,

registration during medical evacuations and advice on the legislation applying when relatives are missing and it is impossible to identify individuals. States have certain responsibilities in this regard under the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols that apply in times of armed conflict or violence.

4.4   Strengthening the preparedness of the general population

The Movement can promote key messages, including recommending that people, particularly young children, have the contact details (postal and e-mail addresses and telephone numbers) of close relatives with them at all times and that they carry some form of identification.

Section 5   ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

This section focuses on how to arrive at the best possible assessment and plan of action under pressure of time and lays out logical steps to help those making operational choices in a disaster.

5.1   Overview

This section focuses on how to arrive at the best possible assessment and plan of action under pressure of time and lays out logical steps to help those making operational choices in a disaster. However, it is seldom possible in real conditions to follow these steps in a neat linear sequence.

Assessing, responding, prioritizing, planning and monitoring: these are all essential tasks in a disaster. They are usually carried out simultaneously. This section should therefore be used as a guide to performing these tasks and to the linkages between them, rather than as a set of procedures all of which flow neatly one from the other. The tasks are illustrated in the project cycle below.

Figure 1[1]

The project cycle

REVIEW /EVALUATION

ASSESSMENT

CONTINUOUS MONITORING

IMPLEMENTATION

PLANNING/PROGRAMMING
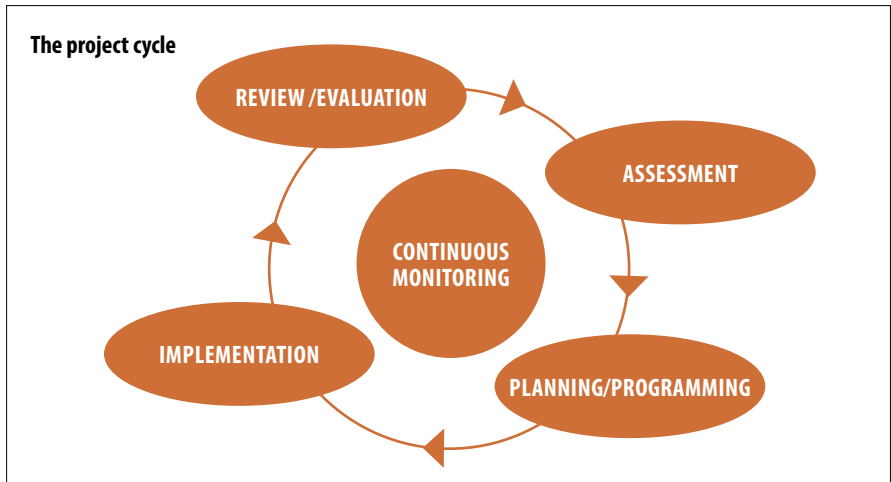
Emergency response and rapid assessment have to be carried out at the same time. Detailed assessment makes more information available to determine next steps and the desired outcomes for the affected population, taking into account the operational context, needs and capacities, including the Movement's capacities and its planned role.

In planning, it is also important to refer to Section 8, which provides guidance on the phases of the RFL response and the typical RFL activities undertaken on behalf of different groups of the affected population and their relatives.

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[1] Guidelines for Emergency Assessment, International Federation and ICRC, 2008.

Five tasks are described in this section:
• **Assessment**
• **Analysis**
• **Prioritizing**
• **Choosing the strategy and setting objectives**
• **Planning activities**

Throughout all five tasks, from the time the first information is received until the plan of action is drawn up, assumptions have to be made about RFL needs and the most appropriate response and then tested against the actual situation and needs. All five tasks involve continuous monitoring and review, as information becomes clearer and needs change.

All assessment and planning formats provided in this Section are available on the CD-ROM.

5.2 Assessment
The aim of an assessment is to understand a situation by identifying the problem(s), the sources and consequences, and to recommend a response. Assessment is key to responding in the best possible way to the actual needs of the beneficiaries throughout the various phases of the disaster (emergency phase/recovery phase).

An initial assessment is also essential in order to have baseline information against which to monitor and evaluate progress towards achievement of results. Ideally, a detailed assessment of needs should always be carried out. In reality, and especially in the emergency phase, often only a rapid assessment is possible and baseline data may be incomplete.

It is essential when carrying out a rapid assessment to provide a basic emergency response, for example in the form of telephones (mobile or satellite) and Safe and Well messages, or by registering unaccompanied children.[2]

5.2.1 Primary and secondary information
To identify the RFL needs of the affected population, primary information (information from direct sources, based on observations made on the spot or gathered directly from the affected population by staff or volunteers) and secondary information (information from indirect sources such as reports from the media, the government and other organizations) have to be collected and analysed. If there is no direct source (which is often the case at the very start), secondary information and

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[2] Generally, unaccompanied children are registered at the same time as their accommodation and care needs are being addressed.

past experience of similar situations will have to be used to make assumptions on the expected RFL needs. At this point, it is also important to gauge the reliability of the sources of secondary information and of the information itself.

A preliminary analysis of the information available provides the basis on which to decide whether an RFL response is required and what kind of assessment should be carried out. Rapid response and assessment are always desirable, but access, security or other constraints may result in delays.

Once the decision to carry out an assessment is made, the next step is preparation.

5.2.2   Preparation of the assessment

The first task is to compile and analyse the information available on the general situation in the affected area(s). In so doing, it is important to consider the quality of the information available (how was it collected, by whom, what was their aim, is the source reliable or biased, is the information recent, is it based on opinion or facts, etc.) and to set the objectives of the assessment to be carried out accordingly.

Setting the objectives and choosing the methods to be used

This can be broken down into the following tasks:
- Identify the reasons for carrying out the evaluation
- Identify the main objectives of the assessment (there may be only three or four)
- Identify who will receive the results of the assessment (RFL coordinator, senior National Society management, ICRC, International Federation, donors, other organizations)
- Choose the type of assessment (rapid or detailed) in view of the emergency and the constraints (access and security)
- List the questions to be addressed (see Annex 2)
- Identify the geographical areas to be covered, in order of priority
- List the activities the assessment implies
- List the human and logistic resources needed
- Estimate the duration of the assessment
- Decide if the assessment will be done with partners (from the Movement or outside it)

Organizing the collection of information

To ensure the assessment meets its objectives, draw up an initial checklist for the assessment team:

> **Checklist**
> - Issues to check: these are drawn from the assessment checklist in Annex 2
> - Methods of collecting the information (interviews, observation, secondary sources, etc.) (see 5.2.7)
> - Key informants (see 5.2.7)
> - Sites to visit (camps, shelters, hospitals, mortuaries, special institutions such as orphanages, homes for elderly, etc.)
> - List of materials and equipment needed (including telecommunications)
> - Logistics and administration (transportation, accommodation, cash advance)
> - Security rules (if required)

The initial checklist is an important aide mémoire, but it should not stop those carrying out the assessment from remaining open to other information obtained during the assessment and adjusting their focus accordingly.

Selection of the assessment team

Sometimes the assessment is carried out by only one or two persons. When selecting who will carry out the assessment, it is important to consider the following:
- RFL experience and knowledge of the team leader
- Languages spoken in the affected area
- Gender issues– the team may have to comprise men and women
- The team members' nationality, religion or ethnic group, which may be a concern, especially in areas affected by conflict, in terms of security, access and the population's perception of the team
- Allocation of tasks to each member of the team

> It is important to recognize the value of working with other assessment teams. Other teams carrying out their own assessments may be able to gather information of value to the RFL assessment. It may also be advisable to carry out multidisciplinary assessments, not least in relation to vulnerable groups that may have a range of needs (see Section 6.1)

5.2.3   Carrying out the assessment

The following basic principles apply when carrying out the assessment:

- Consult the people directly affected to understand their real needs. Outside the affected area, the views of families anxious for news can also be collected via the Family News Network.
- Consider the RFL needs of different groups (men, women, the elderly, children, foreigners or marginalized groups).
- Consider the reliability of the information. Facts, opinions or rumours?
- Consider bias (of the informants and those carrying out the assessment).
- Look out for the unexpected. Be prepared to have assumptions challenged.
- Consider the impact of RFL needs on the broader population. For example, some households in the affected population may have to support individuals and children who are separated from their families, but lack the resources to do so.
- Schedule field visits around times when people are particularly busy (for example, during a food distribution).
- Consider how the information will be used: what sort of programme(s) and RFL tool(s) might be appropriate – or not (see 5.3 below).

5.2.4   Vulnerable groups and individuals

In an RFL response, it is essential to assess the needs, including the assistance and protection needs, of vulnerable individuals and groups,[3] especially children, and to respond rapidly (see Section 6 for more guidance). Here are some guidelines for the assessment of vulnerable groups and individuals.

- Vulnerable groups and individuals may have shelter, health and protection as well as RFL needs which require urgent assessment and response.
- The needs of vulnerable groups and individuals are complex and require a multi-disciplinary assessment.
- The assessment must take into account the role of the authorities and local communities in particular, as well as the activities of other agencies.
- The assessment must not stigmatize.
- The assessment must respect the views of all those affected, including vulnerable individuals, and not treat them as passive recipients.
- Interviews are best carried out by those experienced in working with vulnerable individuals.

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[3] Vulnerable individuals may include: unaccompanied and separated children, elderly people living alone, the chronically ill, those with disabilities requiring support, those who rely on institutions for the material conditions of life (prisons, orphanages, homes for the elderly, etc.), those who have become dependent as a result of the disaster, particularly those who have been hospitalized, foreigners who may lack diplomatic representation or the means to access it, and other groups of individuals who are vulnerable in the specific context.

5.2.5   Management of the dead and RFL

In a disaster, it may be necessary to assess how human remains are to be managed. Please see Section 7 for further guidance on this important issue.

5.2.6   How to collect information

The analysis of the information which is available at the earliest stage, combined with previous experience, forms the basis for determining which areas and categories of the population require priority assessment. Prioritization must take into account the impact of the disaster on family unity and vulnerable individuals (see Section 5.6).

> The guidance provided here focuses on the collection of information in the affected area(s). It is worth noting that information will continue to be gathered from other sources outside the affected area (national authorities, other actors), regarding their assessments and plans, and that such information will form part of the overall RFL assessment. It is important that information on needs outside the country, that is the needs of anxious relatives, are also considered.

There are two methods of collecting information: through direct observation in the field and through interviews.

Observation

This is important and allows RFL practitioners to obtain rapid answers to questions such as:

- Are telecommunications available for the affected population (e.g. displaced persons in camps or shelters)? Are they easy to use (access, cost)?
- Has the population spontaneously put up posters, with pictures or messages, in order to look for relatives?
- Are certain groups of vulnerable or marginalized persons lost or not taken care of?
- Are the dead being collected or not?
- Can the assumptions made prior to assessment be confirmed by direct observation?

Interviews

The information collected through observation can be compared with that collected through interviews. Interviews are often carried out with key informants.

> **Key informants**
> These are people who have specific knowledge about certain aspects of the affected population, typically health staff, government officials (local and national), members of women's groups, community leaders, faith leaders, other NGOs, institutional staff (prisons, orphanages, homes for the elderly), social workers and telecommunications staff.

Interviews can be based on either random or purposive sampling.[4] The purposive approach focuses on the target population and identified key informants: this is an advantage when a rapid assessment is needed.

Interviews are an essential part of any assessment, whether in the affected area or not. They require decisions on whether to conduct group or individual interviews, what questions to ask and how to conduct the interview.

Group interviews
Encouraging an atmosphere of constructive discussion allows the interviewer to cross-check information and probe issues. In order to get an overview of the problems, it is preferable to bring together people of both sexes and of different ages and social levels. It is important to encourage everybody to speak freely, but also to ensure that participation will not cause problems for the members of the group or their families. If this is the case, specific group or individual interviews will have to be organized.

Individual interviews
These are recommended when the questions to be asked are sensitive, for example, regarding a complex family situation, or if RFL needs are linked to security/ protection issues, etc. They may be useful with key informants, or when questions focus on a specific issue (unaccompanied minors, management of the dead, etc.).

How to conduct the interview
The interview should not start with direct questions on RFL, but rather with general questions on conditions in the affected area. However, if relief assessments have been made or are taking place, it is recommended that the interviewer move on quickly to questions on RFL needs, after having introduced the team and explained the objectives of the interview. Questions should be open,[5] in order not to limit or bias the answers. The recommended approach is to refer to the checklist in Annex 2, and to remain flexible and open-minded when raising questions.

5.3   Analysis
This process, during which recommendations are made as to the RFL priorities and the most appropriate response, marks the start of the more deliberate planning process. The information collected is continuously analysed during the assessment, but there comes a point when it needs to be compiled and considered.

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[4] In random sampling, every possible element (village, individual or household) needs to have an equal chance of being selected from the population: this may require efforts to counter result-distorting biases (access, gender, etc.). Purposive sampling, in this case, means deciding to interview either key informants or, importantly, vulnerable groups or individuals in order to obtain specific information.
[5] An open question gathers information and usually begins with "Who," "What," "Why," "Where," "When," "How", or, more subtly, "Tell me about…"

Using the information collected, the following questions are addressed:
- What are the main RFL needs (in order of priority)? (see Table 2)
- Who is affected by these needs and where?
- Is the affected population using coping mechanisms to address these needs?
- Has the affected population received RFL services from other actors?
- Is the response of the Movement's RFL network required?
- If so, what type of response is required?
- Which RFL tools/approaches might be appropriate?

> It is important to analyse the information continuously throughout the assessment. Particular attention should be paid to possible contradictions or inconsistencies that may need further exploration. Do not leave analysis until the end of the assessment.

Summarizing the information will be essential for decision-making and to start the planning process. The example below shows how to summarize the information collected from different sources (direct and indirect) and is used for the remainder of this section.

Table 1   Example summary of the information collected per area

Date and place of the field assessment	District A, 1-4 January
Team	A Person, B Person, C Person
Assumptions on RFL needs (prior to the assessment)	Lack of communications Vulnerable individuals in need of RFL Numbers of unaccompanied minors
Number and type of interviews	15 interviews with key informants among local authorities, local civil society, other NGOs 3 group interviews with displaced persons (one group only women)
RFL needs identified during the interviews (in order of priority[6])	Numbers of unaccompanied and separated children unknown, but 40 identified in 4 days and more assumed to exist Lack of communication outside affected area a major concern for population
Estimated number of persons with RFL needs[7]	Unknown, but assumption is 10% of 100,000 persons have relatives outside affected area
Coping mechanisms identified (yes/no, if yes which ones)	Signs are being put up spontaneously for missing persons Local businessperson setting up satellite phone in district capital
Other actors involved	Local authorities 2 local NGOs 1 international NGO Telecommunications company
Information collected matches direct observation (Yes/no, if not, give reasons)	No telecommunications established yet for majority (5 to 10 days for restoration) Signs observed for missing children
Identified RFL needs not covered by other actors	Telecommunications Centralized registration of unaccompanied children and vulnerable adults
Local RFL response capacity of National Society and/or ICRC delegation	Local branch very busy with relief distribution Two trained RFL volunteers Can mobilize new volunteers urgently Office exists in district capital
Proposed RFL tools	Satellite phones Registration of unaccompanied and separated children Publication of lists of survivors and missing

If more than one area has been affected, the information on all the affected areas has to be compiled in one table, as in the following example.

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[6] See Section 5.4.
[7] If no exact figure can be stated, provide relevant data, for example, the number of camps/shelters and the number of persons accommodated in each of them.

Table 2   Example summary of the information collected (based on needs in order of priority):

Identified RFL needs not covered, in order of priority	Identified beneficiaries	Affected areas	Movement response recommended	Recommended RFL tools/ approaches	Response capacity (National Society and/or delegation)
Family separation	Unaccompanied minors	District A District B District E	Yes Yes Yes	Registration of unaccompanied and separated children	2 trained volunteers in District A 1 trained staff member in District B
Lack of means of communication	Affected population inside and outside area	District A District B District S		Satellite phones Publication of list	4 trained volunteers in District S No transportation available in Districts A,B and E District S has shared access to 1 vehicle for RFL

Example alternative model, based on areas in order of priority:

Affected areas In order of priority	Identified RFL needs not covered	Identified beneficiaries	Movement response recommended	Recommended RFL tools/ approaches	Response capacity (National Society and/or delegation)
District A	Family separation	Unaccompanied minors and relatives. Minimum 40	Yes	Registration of unaccompanied and separated children	2 trained volunteers in District A No transportation available in District A
District B	Lack of means of communication Family separation	Estimated up to 10,000 Unaccompanied minors and relatives. Estimated 30	Yes Yes	Satellite phones Publication of list Registration of unaccompanied and separated children	1 trained staff member and 2 trained volunteers No transportation available in District B
District E	Lack of means of communication	Estimated 5,000	Yes	Satellite phones	

The next step is to combine this summary with other elements of analysis and to draw up a strategy and a plan of action that also take into account strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints (SWOC). An example is provided below.

Table 3   Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints (SWOC) Example

Strengths	Weaknesses
Capacity to mobilize volunteers Network of contacts	Lack of trained staff/volunteers No logistical means in Districts A, B and E
Opportunities	**Constraints**
Authorities' support	Weak coordination with authorities Access to District B is poor

5.4   Setting Priorities

Setting priorities is a management task undertaken to provide the most effective response, not a way to overlook people in need. Priorities can evolve over time, and once the most urgently required steps have been undertaken, others can be started. The assessment points to priorities, but, clearly, decisions have to be taken as to what is the most important of a set of competing priorities.

Not all unmet needs have to be considered equally important and not all actions start simultaneously. The SWOC analysis also obliges those in charge to prioritize. It is essential to plan the response by focusing on the most critical needs in the earliest phase, while developing other responses in due course.

The recommended criteria for the prioritization of needs are:

• Gravity of needs and the potential impact of not taking action
• Urgency of needs and the potential impact of delaying response
• Vulnerability of beneficiaries and their need for protection and assistance
• Numbers of people affected

5.5   Setting the strategy and objectives

Points 5.5 and 5.6 focus on drawing up a formal plan of action. There are two phases in planning a disaster response:

• planning based on a rapid assessment in order to respond to the immediate and highest priority needs: this relates to the emergency phase, first response (see Section 8);
• planning based on a detailed assessment: this is more likely to guide the response during the emergency phase, second response and the recovery phase (see Section 8).

RFL IN DISASTERS FIELD MANUAL

Points 5.5 and 5.6 focus on the emergency phase, it being understood that the plans drawn up will change as the situation and needs evolve.

The strategy
The strategy identifies the combination of roles (substitution, support, persuasion) and activities needed to deliver the most appropriate response, given the Movement's capacities and roles and the potential for humanitarian action in the context.

Example
To re-establish family links in the affected area by providing phone services and publishing lists (of persons sought and those registering as safe and well).
To identify the most vulnerable individuals in the affected area and ensure their rapid registration, prior to deciding on the next steps with the authorities.

The objectives
The objectives should clearly support the strategy by defining what needs to be done and should be **SMART**: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-limited

Example
Objective 1: *To register all unaccompanied minors in Districts A and B as soon as possible.*
Objective 2: *To provide phone services for affected people in Districts A and B by dd date.*
Objective 3: *To publish lists, inside and outside the affected area, of persons sought and survivors in Districts A and B by ddd date.*

5.6   Planning activities

Having set the strategy and objectives, it is important to identify how the latter will be achieved, by drawing up a plan of action. Different Movement components have their own specific planning tools and formats. However, any plan of action should comprise:

Activities:	The choice of approaches/tools (Section 8)
Human resources required:	Roles and tasks for RFL staff and volunteers (Section 9)
Resources required:	Material, logistical, financial
Timing of activities:	When they will start and finish
Assumptions:	Key assumptions must be made and regularly monitored
Risk management:	Significant risks to individuals or the Movement and steps to manage them
Monitoring indicators:	Key indicators to monitor activities and results (see Section 12)

Plan of action

The plan of action comprises a prioritized set of objectives and activities to achieve established overall goals. The following table, with contents, is based on the previous examples in this section.

Example

Strategy: **Support official efforts to prevent disappearances and separation. Provide substitute services to restore contact between families.**

Objective 1: *To register unaccompanied and separated children in Districts A and B as soon as possible*						
Assumptions: *Cooperation with local authorities* *Cooperation with local civil society and leadership*						
Risk management: *Ensure all registered children are brought to the attention of the authorities*						
Activities *(Example)*	**Location**	**Period**	**For whom**	**Material and logistical resources**	**Human resources**	**Budget**
Deployment of 2 teams to register children	*Districts A, B, E and S*	*10 days*	*Unaccompanied/ and separated children and their relatives*	*- 2 vehicles* *- Stationery* *- Registration forms* *Support of logistics and relief teams*	*- 2 field team leaders* *- 4 volunteers*	*Rental cost of vehicles* *Staff costs* *Volunteer costs etc.*
Monitoring indicators: *Number of sites visited and checked, number of children registered, other agencies working on children's needs in affected area*						

Objective 2: *To provide phone services for affected population in Districts A and B by dd date*						
Assumptions: *Normal phone services will be restored in 7 days, etc.*						
Risk management: *Ensure safe keeping and accountability for equipment*						
Activities (Example)	**Location**	**Period**	**For whom**	**Material and logistical resources**	**Human resources**	**Budget**
Deployment of 2 teams with satellite phones	*Districts A, B, E and S*	*7 days*	*Separated close family members (parents, (children, sisters, brothers)*	*- 2 vehicles* *- 2 Sat phone kits* *- Stationery* *Support of logistics and relief teams*	*- 2 field team leaders* *- 6 volunteers*	*Rental cost of vehicles* *Satellite phone running costs* *Staff costs* *Volunteer costs, etc.*
Monitoring indicators: *Number of locations visited, number of successful phone calls made, other providers operating in affected area, etc.*						

Once the action plan has been completed, a one-page organization chart should be drawn up showing how the RFL teams/offices are organized and linked and the number of staff/volunteers, possibly with their names.

Depending on the specific disaster and context, it is important to consider the capacity-building opportunities and needs that can be addressed within the actual RFL plan and response (training, building relationships, etc.). This includes the medium-term impact of the activities planned and implemented on the capacity and role of the National Society in the affected country.

The following guidance is also useful to bear in mind during the assessment, analysis planning and implementation phases.

Plan and Respond
Gaps in information and waiting for "the perfect plan" must not delay an effective response.

Monitor and adjust plans
Monitor needs and effectiveness of the strategy chosen and adjust as necessary. This is very important as the response changes and develops. The phases laid out in Section 8 underline the need to remain alert to changes in needs and operational context. See Section 12 on Monitoring.

Plan for several responses in one disaster
Disasters may create groups with specific needs in different locations, requiring a variety of responses. See Section 8.

Manage risk appropriately
Responses for the general population generally pose few risks; responses for vulnerable groups generally require more careful risk management. See Section 6.

Plan data management
It is essential to plan for a comprehensive system of collecting, checking, storing, filing, retrieving and transferring data. See Section 10.

Links with other sections
When drawing up the plan of action for a specific disaster, a key decision will be the choice of tools and approaches to use. It is therefore important to refer to Section 8, which provides guidance on the selection of tools, and Annex 5, the Toolbox.

Sections 6 and 7, and the annexes referred to therein, provide operational guidance on vulnerable groups and children and on RFL and the dead in disasters, respectively, which may be important elements in the plan of action.

Sections 9 and 10 provide recommendations on the human resources required and the establishment of offices, administrative systems and databases, all of which are essential considerations during planning.

Section 6   VULNERABLE GROUPS AND CHILDREN

This section addresses the needs of children and vulnerable groups and individuals. The RFL needs of vulnerable groups and individuals are often linked to their protection needs and survival.

During all phases of the RFL response (including assessment, planning and delivery of services in the medium term), attention has to be paid to vulnerable individuals.

In an RFL response, it is essential to recognize the needs, including the protection[1] and survival needs, of vulnerable individuals and groups, especially children, and to respond rapidly. As a result of separation (either before or as a consequence of the disaster), the protection needs of vulnerable individuals may increase. Protection activities in this context refers to all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual and protection against violence, physical abuse and neglect, exploitation, illness and psychological suffering.

The RFL needs of vulnerable groups and individuals are often linked to their protection needs and survival. RFL responses may include registration of vulnerable individuals, tracing and the restoration of the family links that can strengthen an individual's protection. These responses should be complemented with the delivery of services, assistance or the implementation of protective measures or with referral to the appropriate authorities or other organizations.

While the concern for vulnerable individual's protection and assistance needs is always applicable, the specific operational measures taken by the Movement to meet their protection and assistance needs will depend on its own capacity and role, the national authorities' role, and the role of other organisations. The role of RFL staff or volunteers in respect of protection activities may vary from referral to others through to more direct protection activities. Vulnerable individuals may include:

- Separated children (children separated from their parents or legal custodian but taken care of by other adult family members)
- unaccompanied children;
- elderly people living on their own;
- the chronically ill;
- those with disabilities requiring support;
- those who rely on institutions for their material conditions of life (prisons, orphanages, homes for the elderly, etc.) or who have become dependent as a result of the disaster, particularly those who are hospitalized;
- pregnant women;
- households headed by women with young children;
- single women, when at risk of sexual or other abuse;
- foreigners lacking diplomatic representation or the means to access it;
- others groups of individuals who are vulnerable in the specific context.

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1 The following definition provides the legal framework. "The concept of protection encompasses aims at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law" *Strengthening Protection in War*, ICRC

6.1 Vulnerable groups and individuals: Operational guidance

See Table 1, Section 8 for guidance on the probable tools and approaches to be used.

- Vulnerable groups and individuals may have RFL, protection and assistance (health, water, shelter, etc.) needs that require urgent response.
- The needs of vulnerable groups and individuals are complex and require a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Responses on behalf of vulnerable groups must take into account the role of the authorities and local communities in particular, as well as the activities of any other agencies responding. Offers of RFL services and other assistance should be made through the authorities and pre-existing agreements respected.
- While active tracing of individuals is not usually undertaken for the general population in the emergency phase of a disaster, it may be appropriate in the case of vulnerable individuals.
- The support given to vulnerable groups and individuals must not stigmatize them. It is important to consider the capacities and wishes of vulnerable groups and individuals and not treat them as passive recipients of assistance.

6.2 Unaccompanied and separated children: Operational guidance

In addition to the principles laid out in Section 2, it is important to emphasize the following principles.

- The rights of the child are set out in a body of international law (the 1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Additional Protocols, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol), as well as in domestic legislation.
- The role of the national and local authorities and of local kinship and community structures is paramount when determining what is in the child's best interests.
- It is a basic operational principle when deciding on a child's future to take into account its best interests.
- All children have the right to:
  – a name, a legal identity and birth registration;
  – physical and legal protection;
  – not be separated from their parents;
  – provision for their basic subsistence;
  – the care and assistance appropriate to their age and developmental needs;
  – participate in decisions about their future.
- Children should be listened to and their opinions given due consideration in the light of their age and maturity.
- Children should be kept informed about the plans being made for them.

- The specific needs of girls must be taken into account.
- Other emergency activities (relief, shelter, medical, etc.) should not prolong or add to separation and this must be considered when planning and implementing such activities.
- It is important to act as quickly and as closely to the point of separation as safety and health considerations allow.

For a body of best practice in relation to unaccompanied and separated minors, see the *Inter-agency Guiding Principles for Unaccompanied and Separated Children* and *Restoring Family Links: A Guide for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*. For specific practical operational guidance on unaccompanied and separated children, see Annex 4 in this Field Manual. Also see 'Interacting with Children' on the CD Rom.

6.3   Other specific needs

Certain marginalized groups, such as ethnic, faith or linguistic minorities, or social groups such as undocumented migrants, may not be easily able to access RFL services. Efforts may be needed to provide them with access to information and services (translation of materials, staff/volunteers who speak minority languages, contacts with community networks and leaders, etc.).

In security-sensitive situations, such groups may face protection risks, and it is therefore vital to be honest with them about the sharing of any data collected.

There may be foreigners in the affected area. Embassies or consulates usually take responsibility for their citizens, but when this is not possible, the Movement may carry out RFL activities on their behalf or that of their relatives.

Section 7 RFL AND THE DEAD IN DISASTERS

Collecting information on the dead and the proper and dignified management of dead bodies can help prevent those killed in a disaster from going missing, facilitate clarification of their fate and allow bereaved families to overcome their grief.

7.1 Importance of management of the dead

The proper management of people killed in a disaster is increasingly recognized as an indispensable component of humanitarian action, along with the rescue and care of survivors and the provision of essential services. From an RFL perspective, it is a key aspect of clarifying the fate of the missing and protecting the right of the bereaved to know what happened to their loved ones and to mourn.

This section explains how collecting information on the dead and the proper and dignified management of dead bodies can help prevent those killed in a disaster from going missing, facilitate clarification of their fate and allow bereaved families to overcome their grief.

7.2 Roles and responsibilities

The management of the dead, including the collection, transportation, storage and identification of human remains, is the responsibility of the authorities (often the police) and forensic professionals. However, in the aftermath of disasters, the authorities may be unable to cope: non-specialist humanitarian workers may be called upon to help and/or advise in this process.

Regardless of the circumstances, non-specialist humanitarian workers should always secure the necessary authorization and clearance, including regarding security. They should also secure acceptance from the families and, if appropriate, community leaders and religious authorities. Failure to do so may give rise to criminal liability and unnecessary security risks for those involved, as well as complicate the identification process and cause unnecessary suffering to bereaved families.

In any given disaster, the Movement's role in the management of human remains is agreed with the authorities. It may include:
• an advisory role in relation to the authorities;
• collection of information on the dead;
• actual handling of human remains, their storage and burial;
• support for the families of victims of the disaster.

Even if the Movement has no active role in this field, it must be fully informed about the roles of the authorities and other actors and about the procedures being used. It should strive to gain access to lists of the dead, or be able to direct people in need of information to the appropriate authorities.

7.3   Assessment and information

Whatever role the Movement plays, the following information needs to be collected.

On the dead

- How many people are dead? Where? Are their remains accessible?
- How are dead bodies recovered and managed?
- Are dead bodies burned or hastily buried (this should be prevented, if possible)?
- Are dead bodies treated in any other way that could prove traumatic for the families? How? Where?
- How are human remains stored? Where?
- How are they identified (visual recognition, comparison of ante-mortem and post-mortem data, DNA)? Where? By whom?
- How are dead bodies disposed of or released to the families?
- How are unidentified bodies disposed of? Where?

On the system: Responsibilities and capacities

- Which authority is responsible for the management and identification of the dead at the local, regional or national level?
- How is this organized? Who is in charge of coordination?
- What is the Movement's role, if any?
- Communication: What information is transmitted to the population regarding the dead (recovery, handling, storage, identification)?

On the families' specific needs

- Is there a family liaison focal point to support the families?
- Is psychosocial support available?
- Are bereaved families informed about procedures and developments relating to the recovery and identification of their loved one(s)?

7.4   The management of the dead

The Movement should always advocate respectful handling of the dead to facilitate identification of the remains. When a National Society has a specific role in the management of the dead, it should ensure that it complies with commonly accepted standards.

The first action after a disaster is often to clear the area and collect the dead for burial. At this stage, it is crucial to keep track of what is being done in order not to "create" missing people.

7.5   Identification of human remains and mourning

The primary concern from the RFL perspective is to identify any human remains. The authorities have a clear responsibility to do their utmost to identify the dead and release their bodies to the families for proper burial/funeral. They may require the help of the international community to fulfil this responsibility.

In most cultures, retrieving the body helps people to accept the death, and the dead require burial/proper funerals. When it is impossible to identify all the dead, for instance because of the scale of the disaster, this should be explained to the population. Consideration should also be given to the location and organization of burial places, in accordance with the wishes of the communities. The Movement may also have a role to play in providing support to the families for funeral rituals.

7.6   Provision of information to affected families

The priority for the affected families is to know the fate of their missing loved ones. It is important, at every stage of the recovery and identification process, to provide them with accurate information. Families must be given realistic expectations of the process, including the methods used and time frame for the recovery and identification of remains.

Families should be informed about findings and the identification of their loved ones before anyone else.[1] One of the Movement's roles is to help families to record information on missing relatives and to ascertain whether their relatives are still alive, or if not, evidence of their death and its circumstances. The Movement should liaise with the authorities on the management and identification of the dead, in particular when it comes to communicating information to the families. In case of difficulties, including those experienced by families, it may need to advocate with the authorities on their behalf.

> For practical and simple advice on the management of the dead by non-specialists and first responders, refer to *Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters: A Field Manual for First Responders*, a 2006 publication issued jointly by PAHO/WHO, the ICRC and the International Federation that can be found at the end of the RFL in Disasters Field Manual and is also available at www.icrc.org.

For emergency procedures concerning the dead, refer to Annex 3.

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[1] The CD-ROM makes training suggestions for providing an appropriate response to individuals experiencing a crisis and furnishes further guidance on imparting news of death.

Section 8 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOLS AND APPROACHES

Guidance for a phased RFL response and the probable choice of RFL tools at different phases for different categories of the affected population. A brief description of 14 RFL tools and approaches and their purpose.

8.1   Overview

A key part of planning the RFL response is choosing the tools and approaches used to serve the affected population in the light of the assessment carried out. This section provides:

• guidance for a phased RFL response and the probable choice of RFL tools at different phases for different categories of the affected population;
• a brief description of 14 RFL tools and approaches and their purpose

Annex 5 (the RFL Toolbox) provides detailed operational guidance on how to choose and use tools and approaches.

The CD-ROM includes sample forms and materials related to the tools and approaches described. These can be adjusted for the requirements of a specific disaster. It also contains training suggestions for the tools and approaches described here.

The guidance and table contained in this section are not instructions that pre-determine or limit the scope and type of response. The choice of tools needs to be adapted to the context, the needs assessment and the plan of action.

Although the scope of this Manual is limited to RFL, RFL staff/volunteers should at least be able to refer the most urgent cases in need of health care, relief or protection appropriately.

8.2   Recommendations for a phased RFL response

The sheer number of people affected and the amount of resources required to use certain tools/approaches force the Movement to set priorities. The priorities will vary according to the category of population and the phase of the disaster (see Section 3, diagram on page 26).

EMERGENCY PHASE: FIRST RESPONSE

The first response identifies actions that have priority during the emergency phase, when time and resources are limited. Communications systems are often not functioning and information is also limited.

EMERGENCY PHASE: SECOND RESPONSE

The second response identifies more actions that can be taken during the emergency phase as conditions stabilize and more resources become available.

RECOVERY PHASE

The recovery phase is marked by the re-establishment of normal means of communication, and/or the return of the displaced/refugees. During this phase, the authorities typically take over most of the tasks that may have fallen to the Movement during the emergency phase, and the Movement may shift its focus to actively tracing persons who remain unaccounted for, identifying mortal remains and supporting families of the missing or who are mourning.

There is no clear dividing line between the phases, which are based on an analysis of typical, as opposed to universal, patterns of need and response. **Note how these responses build on and complement each other and how activities begun in the first and second responses may continue into the recovery phase.**

EMERGENCY PHASE: FIRST AND SECOND RESPONSES

Provide people within the affected area and those who have fled it with the means of informing or contacting their families
The first priority is to communicate to relatives (outside and within the affected area) the whereabouts of those in the affected area at the time of the disaster by informing them directly or publishing names. In the first response to a disaster, avoid taking information/messages into the affected area. Focus on providing means of communication to people in the affected area and to those who fled it.

Protect the most vulnerable and provide them with additional services
Individuals and groups whose vulnerability has increased as a result of isolation or separation caused by the disaster are a priority. These include:
- unaccompanied children;
- separated children (children separated from their parents or legal custodian but in the care of another adult family member);
- elderly people living on their own;
- the chronically ill;
- disabled persons requiring support;
- those who rely on institutions for the material conditions of life (prisons, orphanages, homes for the elderly, etc.) or who have become dependent as a result of the disaster, particularly those who are hospitalized;
- pregnant women;
- female-headed households with young children;
- single women, when at risk of sexual or other abuse;
- foreigners who lack diplomatic representation or the means to access it;
- other groups of individuals who are vulnerable in the specific context.

As well as responding to the needs for protection, medical care, shelter, etc., it is important to consider using additional RFL tools/approaches for vulnerable individuals. These may include: accepting enquiries from relatives in order to identify and locate the most vulnerable; actively searching for them; registering them; actively seeking out their relatives; enabling them to exchange family news and reuniting them with their families.[1]

Prevent separation or loss of contact/information

Reinforce the authorities' efforts to prevent separation or loss of contact in the event of:

• evacuation of the population, especially of vulnerable persons;
• evacuation and care of the injured;
• retrieval and management of human remains, in order to identify them.

RECOVERY PHASE

Sustain and extend RFL services

The Movement must sustain efforts to determine the whereabouts of individuals who are still missing, by:

• accepting personal enquiries for news (tracing requests) of relatives who remain missing but were not previously categorized as vulnerable;
• following up such requests with active searches/inquiries;
• providing additional support to identify human remains that are still unidentified.

The Movement may also provide legal, material and psychological support for the families of individuals who are still missing. It may also expand its RFL services, depending on the capacity of the authorities and others and on its own constraints. It may provide services to people who are not considered vulnerable but who have no means of exchanging family news or reuniting with their family, or advocate on their behalf.

8. 3   Typical RFL activities in a disaster

The following table indicates the probable pattern of:

• RFL activities and tools/approaches during the various phases;
• **RFL activities and tools/approaches for different categories of the affected population;**
• the authorities' activities.

The table is indicative and shows probable choices: it is not a prescription, but a guide for consideration.

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[1] It is also important to monitor the movements and welfare of vulnerable individuals to ensure their protection and care needs are addressed throughout all phases of the response.

Table 1

	Activities begun in the Emergency phase, first response…
PEOPLE FROM AFFECTED AREAS WITH RFL NEEDS	Emergency phase: First response
Population in area without access to regular means of communication	*Provide emergency relief* Restore family links in affected area using: **- Safe and Well messages** **- telephones** **- call centre notifications** **- media and web publication of Safe and Well lists**
Displaced persons and refugees without access to regular means of communication	*Provide emergency relief* Take preventive measures to avoid separation Restore family links in shelters and camps using: **- Safe and Well messages** **- telephones** **- call centre notifications** **- media and web publication of Safe and Well lists**
Vulnerable individuals separated from their families (unaccompanied and separated children, disabled persons requiring support, elderly people living on their own, the chronically ill, all other individuals whose separation from their families increases their vulnerability)	*Provide emergency protection and relief* *to the vulnerable (and caretakers)* Register vulnerable individuals Restore family links using: **- Safe and Well messages** **- telephones** **- call centre notifications** **- media and web publication of Safe and Well lists** Search for vulnerable individuals using: **- active tracing**

The injured	*Provide emergency health care*
	Take preventive action to ensure identification:
	- register medical evacuees
	
	Restore family links using:
	- media and web publication of lists of injured
	  (in accordance with legislation and culture)
	- notification in person or by phone, if necessary
	  (call centre)

… may continue into the second response and these two can continue into the Recovery phase.	
Emergency phase: Second response	Recovery phase
Provide relief Maintain family links in affected area using: **- exchange of RCMs** **- telephones**	*Re-establish normal means of communication* Search for those who remain missing using: **- active tracing**
Provide relief Maintain family links in shelters and camps using: **- RCMs** **- telephones**	*Re-establish normal means of communication* *Organize the return of displaced persons and refugees* *Take preventive measures to avoid separation during the return* *Reunite families* Search for the missing using: **- active tracing**
Provide protection and relief to the vulnerable (and caretakers) Monitor registered vulnerable individuals by: **- regularly collecting information and paying follow-up visits** Maintain family links using: **- RCMs** **- telephones** Reunite families Search for the relatives of registered vulnerable individuals using: **- active tracing**	*Provide protection and relief to the vulnerable (and caretakers)* *Re-establish normal means of communication*
Provide health care Maintain family links using: **- RCMs** **- telephones**	*Provide health care* *Re-establish normal means of communication* *Organize visits by relatives to the injured* *Reunite families or transfer the injured to their relatives*

Table 1

	Activities begun in the Emergency phase, first response…
AFFECTED POPULATION	Emergency phase: First response
The dead	*Organize the emergency collection and storage of human remains* *Provide information to families* Take preventive action to ensure identification: **- register dead bodies and burial sites, photograph human remains, etc.** (see *Management of Dead Bodies*)
Persons residing in closed institutions in the affected area without access to regular means of communication (prisons, police stations, internment camps; closed centres for migrants, refugees or similar categories; hospitals; psychiatric hospitals; homes for the elderly; orphanages and other institutions)[2]	*Provide emergency protection and relief* *Notify families of whereabouts* *Preventive measures* Take preventive measures to ensure identification and avoid further separation Inform the families of the persons' whereabouts, if necessary using: **- Safe and Well messages collected at the institution** **- telephones** **- call centre notifications**

Table 1   Legend
Affected population
The categories of person listed in this column include nationals and foreigners resident in the affected area at the time of the disaster (including foreign residents, tourists, regular and irregular migrants and refugees).

Although not shown in the table, the RFL response also meets the needs of anxious families (inside and outside the affected area).

Activities
As the RFL response is very often a task shared between the authorities, the Movement

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[2] Any Movement activity in a closed institution, especially a place of detention/internment, requires prior authorization from the authorities. The ICRC can provide technical guidance on how to approach such situations. When a disaster strikes in a conflict and sensitive security context, RFL activities for detainees/prisoners are often carried out by the ICRC alone.

… may continue into the second response and these two can continue into the Recovery phase.	
Emergency phase: Second response	**Recovery phase**
Organize the further collection and storage of remains to enable identification *Organize the return of the remains to the family for burial/cremation* Inform the families using: **- notification in person, or by phone, if necessary** **- update media and web lists of the dead (in accordance with legislation and culture)**	*Support the families of the missing* Use additional means to identify the remains: **- collect ante-mortem data and/or samples for DNA from relatives**
Provide protection and relief Inform the persons placed in closed institutions of the whereabouts of family members affected by the disaster using: **- Safe And Well messages from their families** **- telephones, if possible**	*Provide protection and relief* *Facilitate exchange of mail and telephone calls* *Facilitate family visits to the institution* Maintain family links for isolated and vulnerable persons using: **- RCMs** **- telephones**

and possibly other organizations, this table identifies *in italics* RFL (and other related) activities that tend to be carried out by the authorities, other organizations or other Movement teams, and less often by RFL staff or volunteers.

8.4   Factors in choosing tools/approaches

There are a number of factors to consider when choosing the right tools and approaches and implementing the RFL response.

Scale-up
The feasibility of scaling up the tools and approaches sufficiently to meet needs.

Protection
The risk posed by the tool/approach in terms of protection for individuals (including protection of their data).

Speed
The speed with which the tool can be launched in order to meet identified needs.

Follow-up requirements
This includes such things as specific enquiries, searches, communication, and data administration, for the tool under consideration.

Skills requirements
The skills needed to use the tool under consideration, along with available skills and training capacity.

Data management
The system of managing the data for the tool under consideration and the available capacity (see Section 10).

Combination of tools
The potential to combine tools to ensure as comprehensive a response as possible (see Annex 5, Toolbox).

8.5   Overview of specific RFL tools and approaches
Refer to the Toolbox (Annex 5) for step-by-step operational guidance, including the essential requirements, advantages and constraints related to the use of each tool/ approach. Sample forms and supporting documents, along with suggested training activities, can be found on the CD-ROM.

1)   **Safe and Well/I am Alive message:** This is an unsealed message (that can be read by the authorities and other parties) with a standard pre-printed text: "*Safe and Well*" or "*I am Alive.*"

   Safe and Well messages are provided exclusively to people from the affected area (residents in the affected area or displaced persons and refugees who have fled it) to inform relatives of their whereabouts and that they are safe and well. I am Alive messages can be provided to injured persons or persons who have been hospitalized.

2)   **RCM:** This is an unsealed letter that consists of a two-page standard form: the first page is used by the sender to write his/her message and the second is used for the relative's reply. Each page contains the identity and full address of the sender and the recipient. RCMs enable relatives to exchange strictly family or private news.

Undelivered RCMs are sent "Back to Sender" (BTS) with an explanation: address incorrect/insufficient, addressee not known at the address given, further information required, etc.

3) **Anxious for News message:** This is an unsealed message with a standard text used by the sender to inform the addressee that he or she is anxious for news; there is a small space for the relative's reply. The message contains the identity and full address of the sender and the addressee.
Anxious for News messages are for people who are anxious to receive news of relatives who were in the area affected by the disaster and with whom they have lost contact.

4) **Telephones:** This refers to the provision by the Movement of telephones to people from the affected area so that they can restore and maintain contact with others outside, or within, the affected area.

5) **Hotline/Call centre:** A telephone hotline is a publicized telephone number and a service provided to the general public by a call centre. The telephone hotline/call centre may have the following purposes: 1) to enable individuals to call and provide emergency information on themselves and their relatives, in order to restore family links or to direct emergency teams to provide life-saving assistance/protection to the most vulnerable 2) to refer enquirers to appropriate sources of information or to other relevant organizations 3) to provide enquirers with information on the affected area.

In addition, call centres can be used to relay information to families regarding the whereabouts of relatives who are safe and well, injured, etc.

6) **Publication of lists:** Published lists provide information on who is "Safe and Well," children separated from their families, the injured, dead and missing ("Sought persons"), and who is looking for his or her relatives. They can also list addressees of RCMs that remain undeliverable.

Lists can be made public using various media: the Family Links website, newspapers/magazines, radio/TV broadcasts, posters, books of photos or, simply, sheets of paper. Depending on the means available and their stated purpose, published lists of individuals can be drawn up on the basis of data collected and cross-checked by the Movement, of data provided by the authorities or other reliable actors or of data provided directly by an individual (see Family Links website).

7) **Media:** The media can be used to promote and deliver RFL services, for

example, via radio and TV broadcasts, in newspapers/magazines or over the Internet. The various media can be used separately or combined to convey messages or deliver services. They can involve various means: text, photos, video clips, or broadcast speech. Media publication has three purposes that may be combined: 1) to promote RFL services 2) to promote preventive RFL measures and 3) to deliver RFL services by publishing names of individuals.

8) **Family Links website:** This is a ready-to-use, ICRC-managed public website that can be launched within 48 hours of its purpose and functions being agreed. See http://www.familylinks.icrc.org/.

   The Family Links website provides three main services: it allows the Movement to post/publish information on the general situation, on its RFL response and on the processing of RFL and other requests, with useful contact addresses/numbers, references and links to other websites; it allows the Movement to post/publish lists of names; and it allows individuals with access to the Internet to register and publish information themselves.

9) **Preventive measures:** These are measures that serve to avoid or minimize the risk of further separation and are to be considered in the case of evacuation or population movement. They include registering the people concerned, issuing bracelets or ID tags, establishing meeting points, and conveying key messages to the population from the affected area.

10) **Registration of vulnerable individuals:** This involves collecting, recording and processing personal data and information on the whereabouts of an individual identified as vulnerable, for the following purposes: to minimize the risk of separation, strengthen protection, trace relatives and reunite families. Registration always requires a commitment to follow up the whereabouts of registered individuals through regular visits and by collecting information. It goes hand-in-hand with the delivery of services, assistance and the implementation of protective measures.

11) **Photographs:** In the wake of disaster, the Movement's components can use photographs of individuals in three situations: 1) they can collect a recent photograph of a sought/missing relative to supplement a tracing request, for example, for a child or other person unable to give his identity (a disabled, severely ill or injured person) 2) they may systematically take a photograph of a child or other vulnerable person unable to give his/her identity, in order to identify him/her and/or trace relatives and 3) they may take or use a photograph of a dead person to supplement other post-mortem data, in order to facilitate identification (See *Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters*).

12) Mobile team announcements: Mobile teams use public address systems or megaphones in order to: a) obtain information on the whereabouts of particular individuals (sought persons, addressees of RCMs) b) promote RFL services (by providing information on how to register a missing person, find a published list, etc.) and c) promote preventive measures, in the event of further displacement or evacuation.

13) Tracing request: This is a formal request by a family member to trace (and sometimes also protect and assist) a missing relative. All the data needed to ascertain the fate of and restore contact with the missing relative is recorded on a standard form during an interview with the enquirer; the missing relative, if found, must consent to making his whereabouts known. A tracing request always implies that the Movement will do its utmost to trace the missing relative and to inform the enquirer of the outcome. It is used as a priority to trace missing vulnerable persons or their relatives, but may also be used for other missing persons when other means of restoring contact have proved unsuccessful.

14) Family reunification: Family members are reunited once they have restored family links, have formally agreed to reunification and security conditions allow. Cases involving vulnerable persons who depend on the support of their families have priority. Children and other vulnerable persons are reunited with their families once their best interests have been determined.

Psychosocial Needs

Whatever population being assisted or tool being used, the psychosocial needs of the affected population and their relatives is an essential consideration in how the RFL response is planned and managed. Some guidance is provided on the CD ROM `Providing an appropriate response to individuals experiencing a crisis' and `Providing news of death'. There are also resources available through the International Federation Reference Centre at the Danish Red Cross available via their website at http://psp.drk.dk/sw2955.asp

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Section 9   HUMAN RESOURCES

Identifying the roles and tasks of RFL staff/volunteers, and guidance on recruitment, training, support and supervision.

IDENTIFY ROLES AND TASKS → **RECRUIT** → **TRAIN** → **SUPPORT AND SUPERVISE**
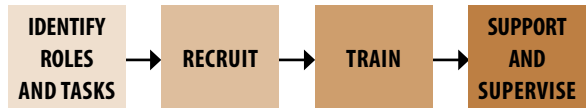
9.1 Identifying RFL roles and tasks

The roles listed below (see Annex 6 for details) do not necessarily equate to jobs or positions. One individual may play more than one role. However, responsibility for the overall management of the RFL response must lie with one clearly identified person. Note that some roles and tasks are shared across the team:

• Management of RFL response
• Assessment
• Field team supervision
• Data administration/entry
• Service delivery
• Office management and administration
• Communication and coordination
• Training
• Monitoring
• Reporting

9.2 Recruitment

Once roles and tasks have been defined, it may be necessary to recruit staff/volunteers. It is preferable to recruit staff/volunteers with a Movement background and known qualities and skills. This should be done as part of National Society or delegation disaster preparedness (see Section 4). It is not possible to conduct detailed reviews of applications and interviews in the middle of a disaster operation. However, any volunteers/staff recruited during the operation should be screened for minimum requirements. The checklist below is for rapid recruitment:

• Job descriptions (see Annex 7)
• Basic qualifications required
• Diversity: Language, ethnicity, gender
• Communication skills, empathy and flexibility

Training provides a further opportunity to confirm which individuals are particularly well-suited – or not – for specific tasks. Recruitment decisions can also be reviewed in the course of support and supervision activities.

9.3 Training

Staff and volunteers must be provided with clear task-specific training to enable them to respond quickly. New recruits will also have to be introduced to the Movement and the Fundamental Principles.

Assessing training needs

There are two key factors to consider when deciding who needs to be trained to do what:

• Existing skills: who has been trained in what and when
• Complexity of the task to be performed: some tasks require specialist skills and training supplemented with coaching and support

Key points when providing training in disasters

• Be realistic
• Keep it simple and focused
• Keep it relevant and practical
• Keep it safe
• Keep it impartial
• Keep it principled
• Check understanding

See Annex 9 for further guidance and the CD-ROM for training suggestions on each tool and approach. It is important to rapidly reinforce training with briefings, debriefings, support and supervision.

9.4   Supporting and supervising the RFL team

The key components of effective support and supervision are clear leadership and decision-making, unambiguous allocation of responsibilities to staff/volunteers, rapid flow of information, coordination of staff/volunteer efforts, positive motivation of staff/volunteers and stress management. The practical recommendations below will help provide such support and supervision.

First operational briefing

This is to give staff and volunteers a clear idea of the situation and the work to be done. Check team members' understanding and always invite relevant questions. It is important not to rush this and waste time later because people have not understood.

• Key messages
• What has happened
• Overview of Movement activities
• Overview of RFL activities and plan of action
• Key stakeholders and issues
• Team welfare issues (food, accommodation, etc.)
• Roles and tasks of each team member
• Security rules
• Curfews, estimated time of return
• Emergency contact details

Written procedures (referred to in this Field Manual as "working procedures") can help team members with the tools they will be using and their work: they reinforce the first operational and subsequent briefings. See Section 10 for guidance on working procedures.

Daily debriefing/briefing
The daily debriefing/briefing brings the team up to date on what has been happening and ensures that information flows rapidly from the affected population to decision-makers. It is a daily information-sharing, problem-solving and planning exercise and should not exceed one hour. Recommended agenda items are:

Debriefing
- Security
- Problem identification and solving
- Issue identification (further action)
- Monitoring key indicators
- Follow-up (issues for action)
- Thanks and appreciation

Briefing
- Security
- Operational overview (Movement)
- Operational overview (other actors)
- Access
- Daily objectives
- Allocation of tasks
- Logistics and transport
- Timing of field visits, return to office

Coaching and support
The right balance has to be struck between quality and the speed of the response. In the acute phase of a disaster, new field staff/volunteers may need support from more experienced staff or volunteers, with whom they can be paired up. Newly recruited data-entry staff need to have their work checked: systems of support and quality control are needed at the earliest possible stage.

Reduction of staff/volunteers
As the RFL response begins to scale back, it is important to reduce the number of staff/volunteers with care and in accordance with both domestic legislation and the human resource policies of the relevant Movement component. Any decisions need to be communicated clearly and with appreciation for the efforts of the staff/volunteers.

Section 10 OFFICE MANAGEMENT, WORKING PROCEDURES AND DATABASES

Establishing RFL office(s)
Establishing an information system
Working procedures
Working with a database
Closing RFL office(s)

10.1   Establishing RFL office(s)

If it is necessary to establish an office and sub-offices (depending on the scale of the operation), the following points must be considered.

Each office needs a **secretariat** to carry out the following tasks:

- **Administration:** management of documents and data; reception and dispatch of mail (including electronic mail); handling of basic office supplies (see Annex 10) and RFL forms; filing of documents and compilation of statistics and internal reporting. Depending on the scale of RFL activities, one or more staff/volunteers may be appointed to these tasks.
- **Reception:** receiving visitors who have enquiries regarding relatives; responding to telephone calls and enquiries. Staff/volunteers require job descriptions (see Annex 7) and must be briefed on the procedures for responding to visitors' enquiries.

Each office needs to provide:

- easy access and basic comfort for enquirers (seating, toilets, drinking water);
- privacy for interviews with enquirers;
- a separate space for the secretariat with secure filing cabinets.

The data stored in the office must be secure. In a conflict situation, the office itself must be in a safe location.

10.2   Information system

It is crucial to establish an efficient information system from the outset to manage all information relevant to RFL activities.

The information system comprises the processes the Movement's components use in a given context to collect, send, receive, analyse, store and archive all relevant data and information related to:

- the identity and situation of the beneficiaries of RFL services;
- the events or situations in which the Movement's components operate;
- the activities carried out by them or other stakeholders, and their results.

The information system should enable relevant data and information (electronic or on paper):

- to flow in a systematic and timely manner to the appropriate persons for timely and appropriate follow-up;
- to be retrieved and consolidated when necessary for action, analysis or reports for donors or other stakeholders.

In all situations, and particularly in conflict and security-related situations, data-protection and confidentiality rules are of crucial importance. Sensitive data[1] requires proper handling, which means:

- distinguishing between sensitive data that should be kept confidential and other data;
- keeping sensitive data in locked filing cabinets;
- restricting access to databases according to the sensitivity of data (see 10.4);
- finding a secure way to collect and also pass (electronically or via ordinary mail) sensitive data or information between Movement teams and offices.

10.3   Working procedures

Working procedures are documents to which RFL staff/volunteers can refer for guidance. They include the description of the information system. These procedures should be drawn up as soon as possible and circulated among RFL staff/volunteers to ensure coherent management of the office(s). A shorter, simpler version in the form of a "field guide" for RFL staff/volunteers working with the affected population is essential. Examples are provided on the CD-ROM.

Working procedures should include:

General information
- A brief explanation of the context (affected population, priorities, specific concerns, role of the Movement's various components and coordination of the response)
- The organization of the RFL team, including an organization chart (explaining who is doing what)

Management of data
- Procedures and tools used for handling paper and electronic mail (see also "Information flow," below)
- How and by whom personal data and files are processed, maintained and stored (in field teams and at the secretariat), including the long-term location of important documents (see 10.4)
- The procedures established for centralizing all data when there is more than one RFL office or team
- The definition of who has the right to access what files and databases
- Who is in charge of and supervises data management
- Who is responsible in the main office (and sub-offices) for circulating incoming mail and the procedures to be followed
- Who is responsible in the office (and sub-offices) for dispatching outgoing mail and the procedures to be followed

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[1] See Annex 1 for the definition of sensitive information.

- Who is responsible for filing data and the procedures to be followed
- Who has the right to enter and update data in the databases and the procedures to be followed
- Rules on confidentiality and national data protection legislation, as appropriate
- Rules on the exchange of data with other Movement components and other organizations

Information flow
Procedures (description of routing, pigeonholes, etc.) and tools used for sending and receiving paper and electronic mail:
- between Movement component teams and offices within the affected country;
- between Movement components in the affected country and the CTA in Geneva;
- between Movement component teams in the affected country and ICRC delegations and National Society tracing services abroad.

Reception
- The main functions of reception
- Referral information for enquiries not related to RFL (how to advise and direct enquirers)

Internal reporting and communication
- Protocols on communication with other RFL offices, headquarters, the ICRC, National Societies and other organizations
- Copies of reporting formats with instructions on the frequency and type of reporting required
- Instructions on how to compile statistics

Public communication
- Rules on working with the media

RFL tools and approaches
- Criteria and procedures for each RFL tool being used (e.g. acceptance criteria for tracing requests, family reunification, and registration of unaccompanied or separated children; and instructions for opening, following up and closing cases) (See CD-ROM for examples)
- Procedures for the management of human remains, the distribution of assistance (material or financial, e.g. for family reunification)
- Operational guidance on the RFL tools being used (refer to Annex 5)
- Sample forms (see CD ROM)
- Operational guidance on organizing field visits (preparation, RFL supplies, equipment, communication protocols with stakeholders)

10.4   Working with a database

In large-scale disasters, a database, to record RFL activities and follow up on large amounts of personal data, would be extremely helpful. If a National Society does not have a database (or one not suited to the disaster), the CTA can provide advice. The main factors to consider when introducing a database are described below.

Data protection

The database must be developed and used in compliance with the data protection principles (see Annex 1) and any national data protection legislation applying in the affected country.

Location and communications

The database should be in, or as near as possible to, the operational area in order to minimize delays in receiving and distributing data as appropriate. It must be in a safe, secure location as most of the original documents are stored alongside it. In addition, there must be a means of ensuring that data can be rapidly and regularly communicated to and from the affected area.

Technical specifications and functionalities

- **Minimum system requirements**
  These should be within the minimum configurations found in the affected country and not require hardware or software that is difficult or expensive to obtain.
- **Different levels of access**
  It is important to allocate access rights to different functions on a user basis (e.g. systems administrators who manage the database functions as opposed to input operators who enter the data) and according to the sensitivity of the data concerned.
- **Backups**
  The database must include a system for backing up the data daily in a place of safety in order to protect it from harm or loss.
- **Replication of data**
  It may be necessary to have a database that allows data to be replicated and used in different locations (offices, mobile teams).
- **Reference system**
  The database must include a field for a reference number that can be cross-referenced with paper files, with a unique reference number.
- **Different language/script requirements**
- **Network function**
  To allow multiple users to work on the database at the same time, computers must be networked and the database accessible on a local server.

- **Individual follow-up function**
  To register different actions carried out on a specific case.
- **Statistical and analytical functions**
  To provide quantitative reports as required.
- **Search function**
  To find specific files by name or other criteria.
- **List function**
  To draw up various lists (for printing, sharing with others) as required.
- **Export/import of data function**
  To share data with other organizations, authorities, or to publish data on a website, etc.

The following functions are equally important. Because of the possibility of technical constraints, however, they are considered optional.

- **Photo attachment function**
  To attach a digital photograph to an electronic file (this can facilitate the follow-up of unaccompanied children in particular)
- **Group follow-up function**
  To register data and actions and update them when they refer to information gathered or action taken on behalf of a group

Content

The database should contain at least the following fields:

- Personal data of affected persons for whom RFL services are required (sought persons, the dead)
- Personal data of the families of the affected persons (e.g. contact details of enquirers)
- Details of the event(s) (e.g. date and place of registration of the unaccompanied child)
- Other details of follow-up required/provided (family located, followed by family reunification request, etc.)
- Identity of person entering the data
- Reference number

Supporting documentation

The database users will require reference documents including:

- **A user manual for system administrators**[2] to provide guidance on managing the functions of the database
- **A user manual for input operators**[3] that outlines the procedures for entering data, taking into consideration the working procedures (see above)

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[2] Job titles in this field vary, but system administrators are sometimes referred to as database managers. Their role is to design and develop the database itself.

[3] Input operators are sometimes referred to as data administrators. Their role is to ensure that the data is entered accurately into the database.

10.5   Closing RFL office(s)

When an RFL office is closed because the operation is scaling down or coming to an end, thought must be given to:

- organizing the transfer of files (at least all original documents) to headquarters;
- saving all information on the database and transferring it to headquarters;
- deleting any sensitive files from computer(s);
- organizing the follow-up of pending cases (identifying someone from a local branch or at headquarters to follow up, or handing the case over to another organization);
- ending contracts with RFL staff (in accordance with national labour regulations) or arrangements with volunteers;
- informing the population about the closure and whom to contact in the future.

When an RFL office is closed because of **an emergency** (a subsequent disaster or for security reasons), the evacuation plan must be carried out as instructed by operational management. In addition, it may be possible to:

- save updated information on the database and remove it to a place of safety;
- destroy sensitive information if there is no time to remove documents (hence the importance of regularly sending original documents to a safe location).

Section 11 REPORTING AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Guidance on internal reporting and external communication, both of which are important in a disaster, when the demand for information is high.

11.1   Internal reporting

RFL reports (assessments, activity and situation reports) need to be fed into the overall operational management and reporting procedures established by the ICRC, the National Society or the International Federation, as appropriate. To that end, it is advisable to appoint a focal point for drafting such reports for approval (see CD-ROM for Situation Report format as well as Statistical Reporting formats).

There is a clear link between the monitoring of activities, results and the situation, on the one hand, and reporting, on the other, just as there is between the collection and analysis of statistics and reporting.

It is good practice to communicate regularly with the CTA so that information is forwarded to the Movement's other components. Other National Societies can then, in turn, communicate relevant information to their own populations who may be worried about relatives in the affected country.

11.2   External communication

From the Movement's perspective, communication objectives are likely to include the following:
- Ensure the correct positioning of the Movement as independent and neutral and promote the Fundamental Principles
- Explain the Movement's work
- Promote RFL services among the affected population and their relatives

In addition, it may be necessary to share the Movement's humanitarian concerns (without providing any sensitive data) with the authorities and opinion formers. This is more likely to be on the basis of private dialogue with the authorities or other agencies involved in the response.

The principles identified in Section 2 must also be applied to any kind of public communication, in particular:
- Neutrality, impartiality, independence
- Do no harm
- Personal data protection
- Respect for the individual

It is important to include the CTA when planning any public communication, as it can act as a conduit for information to the media and, importantly, to National Societies. The latter can in turn carry out their own communication in their respective countries. Refer to Annex 5 for further guidance on the media.

In an operation requiring an international response, whichever component of the Movement is the lead agency has to bear in mind the roles and perspectives of the Movement's other components. While each component of the Movement reserves the right to manage all media coverage or public communication in relation to its own activities, it is important that the endeavours of other components are acknowledged, with their consent.

Section 12 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A very brief overview of monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring in particular should be ongoing at all times during assessment, planning and implementation. Refer to specialists who can provide technical guidance when commissioning or undertaking an evaluation.

12.1   Definitions

Monitoring is a continuous process conducted throughout a response and involves follow-up of activities and results. The findings lead to decisions on whether a response needs to be adapted, for example if objectives cannot be reached or the situation has changed.

An evaluation is an independent, objective and systematic examination of the design, implementation and results of a policy, programme, support services, or emergency operation.[1]

Both require defining **what** to monitor or evaluate (activities and results), **when** to monitor or evaluate (timing), **how** to monitor or evaluate (methodology and tools), **who** will monitor or evaluate, and how to use the results. Many of these aspects should already have been considered, while planning the response.

12.2   The purpose of monitoring and evaluation
Monitoring and evaluation have two primary operational purposes:
• to serve the population affected or at risk by constantly adapting and improving the response in the light of monitoring results and needs;
• to identify and document progress, results, strengths and weaknesses in order to learn, share knowledge and improve quality over time.

They have one primary organizational purpose:
• to enhance an organization's accountability to key stakeholders (the people affected or at risk, donors, staff, volunteers, other organizations) by engaging them in meaningful dialogue about the results achieved.

12.3   Monitoring: Further guidance
While there may be differences in terminology and use, three types of monitoring are particularly relevant in disasters, which are described below and shown in Figure 1.

Activity monitoring
In this instance, it is the activities, their scale and their timely performance that are monitored. In an RFL response, this might include monitoring, for example, the number of volunteers trained, vulnerable people registered or phone calls made. Activity monitoring can lead to changes in the implementation of the plan of action.

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[1] Drawn from the OECD/DAC (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee) definition.

See Section 5, Plan of Action, for examples of indicators. In the plan of action, it is important to identify what indicators will be monitored to ensure that the activities are being carried out.

See Annex 5 for recommended indicators for monitoring specific tools.

Results monitoring
This is the continuous process of measuring progress towards the planned objectives and the achievement of the intended results. It might include monitoring the number of people reassured by contact with a loved one, of families reunited, of deaths reported to families, etc. Results monitoring can lead to changes in the plan's objectives and intended results.

For practical examples, see Section 5, Plan of Action. In the plan of action, it is important to identify the intended results that will be monitored. There may be only a few and they may be hard to identify in a rapidly changing situation of the emergency phase of the response.

Situation monitoring
This comprises monitoring changes in the operational environment that can lead to changes in the implementation – or objectives – of the response. It might include monitoring displacements or returns, changes in the political or security situation, the provision of telephone services, etc. In a disaster, the activities of other actors and the needs of the population can change rapidly: situation monitoring is essential if the response is to remain relevant.

Situation monitoring may be done by daily debriefing staff/volunteers working in the affected area, taking on information from other Movement teams, holding coordination meetings with the authorities and other agencies, or compiling press and media reports

Figure 1: Types of monitoring in a disaster
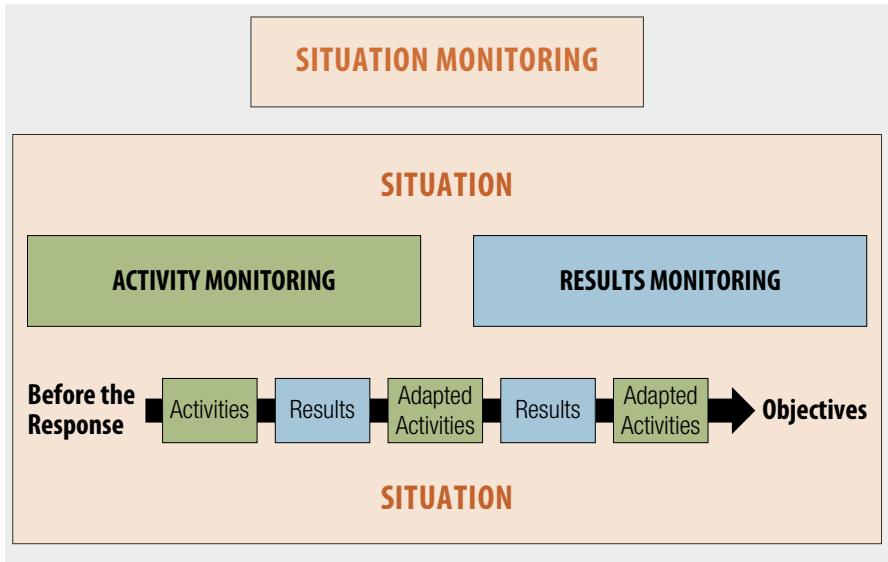
12.4 Evaluation: Further guidance

An evaluation is a more independent, objective and systematic examination of the design, implementation and results of a policy, programme, support service or emergency operation. It can take place during implementation or after a response has come to an end. Evaluation of a response is typically based on selected criteria (see Box 1 below), which are laid out in the evaluation's terms of reference.

Box 1: Examples of OECD/DAC evaluation questions

Relevance/Appropriateness
Did the operation meet the RFL needs? Were the strategy and the operational plan the right ones?
Were the tools and approaches chosen the most appropriate to meet the identified needs?

Coverage
Did the operation have the right criteria? Was it of sufficient scale?

Effectiveness
Did the operation actually meet the objectives that had been set? Did the operation meet needs with the requisite speed?

Coherence/Coordination
Was the organization of services well integrated? Was strong teamwork achieved? Were the decisions made mutually supporting?

Efficiency
Were the resources used in the most economical way?

The terms of reference often include before-and-after comparisons of the situation (i.e. what has been achieved for the population) and a hypothesis about what might have happened without the response (i.e. what has been avoided, thanks to the response).

Clear terms of reference are key to successful evaluations (see Annex 11 for guidance). The process of drafting terms of reference needs to involve all those concerned and build a consensus on the evaluation's scope, key questions (what), purpose, methodology (how) and target group (why and for whom). The terms of reference must hold the evaluators accountable for producing the evaluation requested.

An evaluation will provide explanations, draw lessons and recommend action. The evaluation process needs to include discussion of recommendations and an action plan on how best to implement them. Depending on the level of confidentiality previously agreed, key findings may be shared with others in the Family News Network.

In addition, it is important to consider the value of operational debriefings of the staff/volunteers working on the RFL response. This may be done when the response, or their contribution to it as individuals or a group, comes to an end. Guidance on such group debriefings is provided in Annex 12.

ANNEX 1   Data protection principles

The following principles are drawn from *The Missing: The Legal Protection of Personal Data & Human Remains*, ICRC electronic workshop, Final report and outcome, 2002. This document provides further explanation of the principles and is available on the ICRC website www.icrc.org. National Societies need to consider the application of national legislation in addition to these principles.

Personal data is any data relating to an identified or identifiable person (name, mother's name, father's name, age, address, date and place of birth).

Sensitive data, is data that can lead to unlawful or arbitrary discrimination based on: racial or ethnic origin, nationality, political opinions or activities, religious, philosophical and other beliefs, sexual behaviour, criminal prosecutions and convictions, and medical data or health information, including ante-mortem or post-mortem data and DNA profiles. Data on events, when they relate to identifiable individuals, can also be considered personal data, particularly if the events are of a particular kind (demonstrations, protests, etc.).

Principle 1	"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable individual.
Principle 2	Personal data shall be collected and processed fairly and lawfully.
Principle 3	The consent of the individual is required for the collection and use of personal data, except where inappropriate.
Principle 4	The collection and processing of personal data shall be limited to that which is necessary for the purpose identified at the time of collection, or beforehand.
Principle 5	Sensitive data should only be collected and processed with appropriate safeguards.
Principle 6	Personal data should be accurate, complete and updated as is necessary for the purpose for which they are used.
Principle 7	Personal data should be protected by security safeguards appropriate to the sensitivity of the information.
Principle 8	Personal data may not be used, disclosed or transferred for purposes other than those for which they were collected without the consent of the person concerned, except if required by a substantial public interest or for the protection of the vital interests of the person concerned or of others.
Principle 9	Personal data may only be transferred to third parties respecting personal data protection principles.
Principle 10	Personal data should be deleted as soon as the purpose of their collection has been fulfilled, or when no longer necessary. They may, however, be retained for a definite period if required for the benefit of the individual to whom they relate or if essential for the performance of the humanitarian tasks of the organization that collected the data.
Principle 11	Access to personal data should be granted to the individual to whom the data relate. Provision should also be made for the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of the data and to have them amended as appropriate.

ANNEX 2 Assessment checklist

This checklist is not exhaustive; it covers only essential points requiring assessment (primarily) in the affected areas. However, before planning and carrying out an assessment, it is important to check if any of the information listed in Section 4 (Preparedness) has been collected before the disaster and what information is already known.

Information to collect

On the regions and the population directly affected
- Areas/towns/villages affected (*with as many details as possible*)
- Means of communication available (landlines, mobile telephone network), geographical reach (*accessible everywhere*), cost (*affordable or free*), telecommunication system put in place by the authorities or others
- Access to the affected area (*with as many details as possible: security, state of the roads, public and private means of transportation, airports*)
- How are the authorities informing the public about the situation (*radio, TV, newspapers, posters, the Internet*) and/or publishing or broadcasting lists of injured, dead, missing?
- What other actors, if any, are involved directly or indirectly in RFL, and what are they doing?
- What coping mechanisms are being used by the affected population (family, community, other initiatives)

On the victims
- Number and type of victims (displaced, injured, missing, dead)
- Places where the affected population has gathered (camps, shelters, hospitals, morgues, etc.)
- Authorities in charge of registering and centralizing information pertaining to displaced, injured and missing, and how they coordinate their work, if at all
- Pattern of displacement: organized/disorganized, risk of further displacement
- Where and how is the affected population accommodated (camps, shelters, private homes, other)?
- Are the injured being evacuated? If so, to which areas? Are the families being informed about the evacuation and their relatives' whereabouts?
- What groups of vulnerable persons are among the affected population (unaccompanied or separated children, elderly, disabled or injured persons without family support, etc.)?
- Who is responsible for taking care of these vulnerable persons (registration, shelter, medical care, etc.) and what are their protection or assistance (shelter, health, water, etc.) needs? See Section 6 for guidance on vulnerable individuals.

Management and identification of the dead

Whatever role the Movement's components play, the following information needs to be gathered:

On the dead
How many people are dead? Where? How accessible are their remains?
How are dead bodies recovered and managed?
Are dead bodies burned or hastily buried (this should be prevented)?
Are dead bodies treated in any other way that might came the families pain? How? Where?
How are human remains stored? Where?
How are the dead identified (including criteria for identification)? Where? By whom?
How are human remains disposed of/released to the families?
How are unidentified bodies disposed of? Where?
On the system: Responsibilities and capacities
What authorities are responsible for management and identification of the dead at the local, regional, and national levels?
How is this organized? Who is in charge of coordination?
What is the Movement's role, if any?
Communication: What information is given to the population regarding the dead (recovery, handling, storage, identification)?
On the specific needs of the families
Is there a family liaison focal point to support the families?
Is psychosocial support available?
Have bereaved families been informed about the procedures for the recovery and identification of their loved one(s)?

The Movement's RFL capacity and role

- Number of National Society volunteers and staff available in the affected area
- Number of staff of other Movement components. How many are already trained in RFL?
- Logistical means available (including telecommunications)
- How is RFL integrated into the overall disaster response?

Coordination with the authorities and other actors

- Who is leading the humanitarian response (national and international, if appropriate)?
- Coordination with the authorities
- Existing agreement with the authorities for a Movement role in the field of RFL

- Presence of the Movement's partners
- Coordination among the Movement's components
- Coordination with other actors (international and national NGOs, private sector)

Outside the affected area
- RFL needs of anxious families living outside the affected area (in or outside the affected country): this information is collected by other National Societies and the CTA, ICRC

ANNEX 3   Handling and evacuation of dead bodies: Emergency procedures

For concise, simple and easy-to-follow instructions for non-specialists and first responders on managing the dead, see *Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters: A Field Manual for First Responders* (also available at www.icrc.org).

Emergency procedures

1. Collect

Collect the bodies and bring them to a body-holding area for storage. If this is not possible, consider temporary on-the-spot burial, taking care to map and record burial sites and their contents accurately. Separate body parts should be managed as individual bodies.

2. Protect

Bodies should be stored individually in body bags. If unavailable, use plastic sheets, bed sheets or other material suitable for ensuring the protection and dignity of the remains. Refrigerated storage is best. If unavailable, consider temporary burial (see above). Personal belongings (including documents) should not be separated from the remains. To avoid loss, store inside corresponding body bags or containers, using the same body number.

3. Record (at the minimum)

- Unique body number – see below (include the deceased's name, if known)
- Delivered by (name, organization)
- From (exact place)
- Date of recovery
- Place where the body is stored/buried: if buried, include map
- If the situation permits, it is highly recommended that photographs of the deceased be taken, for purposes of identification

4. Track

Each body and corresponding body bag, associated evidence and burial site should be tagged and marked indelibly with the same unique number. Ensure that this number will remain visible to allow tracking of remains, evidence and corresponding information. Ensure chain of custody of the bodies and record all movements/transfers of remains.

During the response
- Take all security precautions
- Ensure the necessary staff and equipment are available and plan accordingly
- Health and safety
  - Wear protective clothes: boots, thick gloves, protective eyewear (goggles) and overalls/ apron
  - Wear a mask if the odour is disturbing
  - Carry a first-aid kit for bruises and cuts, which should be washed thoroughly and disinfected promptly
  - A tetanus booster is recommended
  - The risk of infectious diseases is normally minimal if basic precautions are taken; avoid contact with body fluids
- Ensure that an attitude of respect for the dead and the bereaved prevails at all times
- Know your limits and don't go beyond them

After the operation
- Wash your hands thoroughly with clean water and soap (even if you used gloves); thoroughly wash, including with disinfectants where appropriate, all the equipment, clothes and vehicles that were used to collect and transport the human remains
- Do not hesitate to express your feelings: talk about the experience with trusted colleagues, family or friends
- Psychological support may be available and might be helpful for staff and volunteers

Other key points
- Bodies do not create epidemics
- Avoid/prevent hasty disposal (burial/cremation) of the dead
- Ambulances are not to be used to transport human remains: they are much more useful for the wounded and sick

ANNEX 4 Unaccompanied and separated children

The following guiding principles, assessment and operational guidance supplement those provided in Sections 1 and Section 4.

Operational guidance

1. Assessment

In addition to the good practice outlined in Sections 5 and 7, several specific assessment issues pertain to unaccompanied and separated children.

Roles and coordination

- It is important to clearly understand the role and responsibilities of the authorities and other actors. The Movement's components as well as other organisations may have been assigned roles prior to the disaster. The role of the affected communities, extended family and networks must also be clearly understood.
- Given the need for a multi-agency approach, it may be useful to share findings from assessments with other agencies and the authorities.

Interviews

- Ideally, those who have been trained in this field should carry out interviews with children. Interviews with children should be undertaken with great care and in accordance with best child protection practice. See 'Interacting with Children' on the CD-ROM.
- It is important to think about the gender of the interviewer: children may be more comfortable with a woman interviewer or if a woman is present at the interview.
- As noted, unaccompanied and separated children may have a number of needs and it is best if children are not interviewed repeatedly. While it may not be appropriate to conduct joint interviews of children with other agencies, on occasion it may be the best way to avoid overloading individual children with several interviews.

Identification

- Identifying the whereabouts of unaccompanied minors (often referred to as "Identification" in the specialist guidelines) is the critical first step.
- This task requires substantial local knowledge, and while there may be children who can be identified as separated, or unaccompanied, through community, social and faith networks, many children living with caregivers are not so easily identified.
- Identification may be complicated if the caregivers in question feel threatened either by the possibility that the child may be taken away, or that they are not being trusted.
- The number of unaccompanied minors will depend on the scale of the disaster, with large-scale population movements more likely to result in more unaccompanied minors.
- In extreme cases, identification may cause stigmatization or attract the attention of those who exploit children. Discretion may be required.

2. Response
Preventive measures
Other humanitarian operations should not themselves increase the risk of further separation. Evacuations or the distribution of relief, or access to other services, should not increase the possibility of separation.

Prioritize infants and very young children
It is essential to identify and register very young children and to gather information on them at the earliest possible stage. The longer the delay, the less reliable the information becomes, and the poorer the chances of successful tracing.

Registration
Unaccompanied and separated children are to be registered with the agreement of the authorities and in conformity with the data protection guidelines set out in Annex 1. The preferred approach is to share such information with other agencies, on condition that they abide by the same data protection guidelines.
- Ensure that children are given a unique number when registered: it is recommended that they be given a Movement identifying code and a number (e.g. RC1234).
- Ensure sufficient copies are made of the registration document for both the Movement's components and those caring for the child. See CD-ROM for example of photograph and of Registration form.
- The child should be photographed at the same time as it is registered.
- Collecting data from children who may be suffering from the trauma of separation requires great sensitivity. It may be advisable for the child's caregiver to be present. However, an accompanying adult should not act as an interpreter for the child, if an interpreter is required. Ensure that the child understands the purpose of the interview.

Care arrangements
It is important to ascertain what the normal (state, community, extended family) attitudes towards, and care arrangements for, "orphaned" children, or otherwise separated children, were prior to the disaster. The community, family or authorities often act quite rapidly to make care arrangements, and the Movement has to confirm precisely what arrangements have been made.

There may have been "voluntary separation," where children are sent away by their families in order to protect them, perhaps with other trusted caregivers or perhaps alone. (N.B. Children may be deliberately sent away in order to access assistance, if there is a discrepancy between the assistance families receive and that which separated or unaccompanied children receive. It is important to base assistance programmes on impartially assessed needs, not status.)

Tracing

Ensure that the tools used (e.g. active tracing i.e. visits to potential locations and informants to trace the whereabouts of the child's family; the display or publication of photographs; broadcasting or publication of names) never provide details on the child's present whereabouts at the time.

Verification

This process may be the responsibility of the national or local authorities, including community leaders. However, if it falls to the Movement, rigorously verify the identity of any individuals who claim the child as part of their family. Techniques include: asking parents to identify their child from a group of photographs; asking for any identifying marks, scars, etc. the child may have; describing the child's clothing at the point of separation; any specific behaviour (likes, dislikes, use of nicknames, etc.). See 'Verification of Family Relationship' on CD-ROM.

Family reunification

Generally, families are reunited quickly after a natural disaster, compared with the often prolonged separation caused by conflict. The challenges are the same: to ensure the views of the child are considered and that steps are taken to determine the best interests of the child. Cross-border reunification (which is less common following a disaster) and the determination of refugee status require a specific procedure based on national and international requirements.

Family support

A family that has suffered as a result of the disaster may need help to reintegrate the child, but such help should be in proportion to the support given to other vulnerable households. If there are concerns about the family's capacity to support the child, or about the child's welfare, the authorities, child welfare agencies or the Movement's components may have to carry out a post-reunification assessment. See 'Follow Up Visit Report' on CD-ROM.

Durable solutions in case of negative tracing

If the child's primary caretaker did not survive, careful consideration will have to be given to the child's future. Experience has proven that most separated children have parents or other family members willing and able to care for them in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Looking at the child's longer-term future, the following factors should be borne in mind:

• Unaccompanied or separated children must not be adopted in haste at the height of an emergency, and adoption should not be considered if there is reasonable hope of tracing the parents and reuniting the family. Adoption is the last resort and should be considered only after sustained efforts to trace family members have proven fruitless.

- Any adoption must be determined as being in the child's best interests and carried out in accordance with applicable national and international law.
- Priority is given to adoption by relatives wherever they live. If this is not an option, preference is given to adoption within the community from which the child comes, or at least within the child's own culture.
- The views of the child, depending upon his/her age and degree of maturity, should be sought and taken into account in all adoption procedures. The child should be counselled and duly informed of the consequences of adoption and of the necessity of giving his/her consent to adoption, where such consent is required. Such consent must be given freely.

ANNEX 5   RFL tools and approaches

This annex contains a brief description of the purpose, advantages and essential requirements for a range of RFL tools and approaches which will facilitate the choices that have to be made in a disaster. It provides basic operational guidelines for effective use of the tools and approaches, and identifies the key points that may have to be emphasized when training staff and volunteers to use the tools effectively.

SAFE AND WELL/I AM ALIVE MESSAGES
For additional guidance, please also refer to: Hotline/call centre and Publication of lists

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	This is an unsealed message (that can be read by the authorities and other parties) with a standard pre-printed text: "Safe and Well" or "I Am Alive." Safe and Well messages are provided exclusively to people from the affected area (residents in the affected area, or displaced persons and refugees who have fled it) to inform relatives of their whereabouts and that they are safe and well. I Am Alive messages can be provided to injured or hospitalized persons. As a general rule, a Safe and Well/I am Alive message is a one-way message indicating only the sender's and recipient's names and contact addresses/numbers (See OP 4 for exceptions).
ADVANTAGES	**Response when communications are cut.** When there are no functioning telecommunications and no postal service, this might be the only means, along with RCMs, of restoring family links. **A fast and user-friendly tool.** I am Alive/Safe and Well messages are fast to complete and their purpose is clear to the sender. They require very little training or coaching of staff/volunteers. **No translation or censorship required.** This may be useful in conflicts, situations of armed violence or where security constraints apply. **Are easily combined with other means (see OP 6).** Those sending Safe and Well or I Am Alive messages may also wish to have their names published as survivors (see Publication of lists and Media). Information provided on the messages may also be relayed by phone or by a call centre when a contact number is available (see Publication of lists, Telephones, Hotline/Call centre). They can be a useful complement to telephone services.
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	**Only for people from the affected area.** Safe and Well and I Am Alive messages are for use only by people who are in the affected area, or who took refuge (or were evacuated) outside the affected area. They are not for relatives outside the affected area at the time of the disaster. **Delivery system.** There should be a reliable system for dispatching messages and delivering them to the addressees.

CONSTRAINTS	**Coordination with the authorities:** This is necessary in order to avoid obstruction and duplication when setting up a network and dispatching the messages, particularly internationally (i.e. across borders). In situations of armed conflict or security-sensitive situations, the authorities' approval is required. **Address of the recipient.** The person sending the message must in principle have the address (or contact number) of the recipient (for exceptions see OP 7). **One-way communication.** Safe and Well and I Am Alive messages generally provide a one-way channel of communication for persons from the affected area, but do not allow the recipients to reply, unless decided otherwise (see OP 4). **No opportunity to add family news or any information.** As there is no opportunity to add further information, Safe and Well and I Am Alive messages are not very useful for vulnerable individuals, or when the sender has a specific request or information to send (see Red Cross messages).
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Functioning of telecommunication and postal services.** Contact the service providers and authorities concerned to check whether telecommunications and postal services are functioning and what area they cover in order to decide whether it would be useful to distribute Safe and Well messages. **OP 2 Checking delivery system capacity.** Rapidly check within and outside the affected area whether there is a functioning Movement delivery system and what its capacity is. The *Extranet Tracing Activities* (see: http://extranet.icrc.org/Tracing_Act) can be consulted to check the delivery system in other countries. Contact the CTA to obtain access to the Extranet, if necessary. **OP 3 Identification of beneficiaries and areas.** Identify, in the light of the needs assessment, OP1 and OP2: • who may use Safe and Well messages; • the areas to which they can be sent and in which they can be delivered. N.B. It might be easier to draw up a list of areas where Safe and Well messages cannot be delivered.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 4 Optional response.** Although Safe and Well/I Am Alive messages are normally one-way messages, decide, in accordance with priorities and resources, whether to give the recipient the opportunity to respond to the sender: • either by using the same form, in which case the Safe and Well/I Am Alive form should include a small blank space on the back page for the reply; • or by using an RCM or other means (telephone call). **OP 5 Set up a delivery system.** Establish (or strengthen) the system to dispatch and deliver Safe and Well/I Am Alive messages rapidly. **OP 6 Combination with other tools.** Decide whether Safe and Well/I Am Alive messages can be combined with other tools. Modify the text of the Safe and Well message (see below) and draw up the working procedures accordingly. Safe and Well/I Am Alive messages may usefully complement telephone services for those whose relatives do not have phones or who cannot be contacted by phone. When Safe and Well messages are also used for publication, the sender's consent is required. Individuals must be given the right to send a message and not to have their or the addressee's names published. Print the request for the sender's authorization to publish his or her name (or that of the recipient) on the Safe and Well/I Am Alive message, or use a stamp. The addressee can be notified more rapidly of the whereabouts of any relatives who have survived using phones or e-mail. Add the telephone number/e-mail address of the addressee on the Safe and Well message. Decide who will contact the addressee in the affected country (field team, call centre, other) and consult the relevant Movement component on the procedure for addressees living in other countries. **OP 7 Address/Phone directory.** Provide the Movement teams with a phone directory, a link to online directories or access to a phone service, so that they can respond to enquiries from those who have forgotten contact details. **OP 8 Individual records.** Decide whether there is a need to keep a record of the individuals using Safe and Well messages and in what form. In general, records are kept of those using Safe and Well/I Am Alive messages only if follow-up is required, for example, when combined with other tools that require such follow-up (see OP 6).

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 9 Monitoring.** The following indicators may be used: number of Safe and Well/I Am Alive messages collected and distributed; information on type of beneficiaries; regions/locations of origin; locations and countries of destination; time elapsed between collection and delivery; number of messages that are undeliverable ("Back to Sender"). The Safe and Well/I Am Alive messages collected can also be numbered in order to help monitor their delivery.

OP 10 Working procedures. Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 2 to OP 9, including a sample of the Safe and Well/I Am Alive message and statistical reporting formats. (See CD ROM)

OP 11 Training and coaching. Train and coach Movement staff/volunteers in the working procedures. |

RED CROSS MESSAGES
For additional guidance, please refer to Chapter 3 of the Restoring Family Links Guide for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	RCMs are unsealed letters consisting of a two-page standard form: the first page is used by the sender to write his/her message and the second is used for the relative's reply. Each part contains the identity and full address of the sender and the recipient.

RCMs enable relatives to exchange strictly family or private news. In some contexts, they can be exchanged between friends.

Undelivered RCMs are sent "Back to Sender" (BTS) with an explanation: address incorrect/insufficient, addressee not known at the address given, further information required, etc. |
| **ADVANTAGES** | **Response when communications are cut.** When there are no functioning telecommunications and postal services, this might be the only means, along with Safe and Well and I Am Alive messages, of restoring family links.

Response to the need to exchange information or transmit requests. Unlike the Safe and Well and I Am Alive messages, RCMs enable people to exchange news and allow the sender to provide more information to the addressee. They are particularly useful for vulnerable individuals or others who need to exchange news or transmit personal requests or more information on their situation.

Possibility of sending pictures. Pictures can be attached to RCMs. |

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	**Usable address:** RCMs require exact addresses for the recipient and the sender. **Delivery system.** There must be a delivery system in place to reach the addressee. **Family or private news only.** RCMs should include only family or private news. Movement teams should read and censor the content of RCMs to enforce this principle, especially in armed conflict or security-sensitive situations. **Respect for individual decisions.** The addressee's decision whether or not to reply must be respected. In such cases, as with tracing requests, Movement staff/volunteers should discuss with the addressee what the sender should be told (see OP7).
CONSTRAINTS	**Coordination with the authorities.** This is necessary in order to avoid obstruction and duplication when setting up a network and dispatching RCMs, particularly internationally (i.e. across borders). **Time and resource consuming.** Collection and delivery of RCMs can be time and resource consuming. Therefore, during the first phase of an emergency response, the use of RCMs is often restricted to vulnerable individuals (see OP 3), as the priority is to notify relatives of the fate and whereabouts of persons from the affected area, by faster and less resource depleting means. **Literacy.** The usefulness of RCMs will also depend on literacy rates.
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Functioning of telecommunication and postal services.** Contact the service providers and authorities concerned to check whether telecommunication and postal services are functioning and what area they cover in order to decide whether it would be useful to distribute RCMs in the context. **OP 2 Coordination with the authorities.** Coordinate with the authorities to avoid duplication and to receive support for the dispatch of RCMs (internally and internationally). In conflict or security-sensitive situations, Movement teams should conduct a prior assessment of the risk posed to the security of senders and addressees and obtain the approval of the authorities concerned before setting up a network. In such situations, the authorities might also require RCMs to be censored before they are sent.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 3 Checking the delivery system capacity.** Rapidly check within and outside the affected area whether there is a functioning Movement delivery system and what its capacity is. The *Extranet Tracing Activities* (see: **http://extranet.icrc.org/Tracing_Act**) can be consulted to check the delivery system in other countries. Contact the CTA to obtain access to the Extranet, if necessary.
	OP 4 Identification of beneficiaries and areas to be covered. Identify, in the light of the needs assessment and OP1 and OP2:
	• Who may use RCMs and for what purpose. Prioritize vulnerable individuals who need to send their relatives important requests or more information on their whereabouts. For example, RCMs should be offered when registering separated children.
	• The areas in which they can be delivered. N.B. It might be easier to draw up a list of areas in which RCMs cannot be delivered.
	OP 5 Set up a delivery system. Establish (or strengthen) the delivery system for the rapid dispatch and delivery of RCMs.
	OP 6 Attachment of photographs. Decide whether personal photographs can be attached to RCMs.
	OP 7 Identification of contents. Define the contents that should <u>not</u> appear in RCMs. The following should not be accepted:
	• references to political or military information, including statements of allegiance;
	• plots, insults or threats;
	• discriminatory or abusive language;
	• inaccurate references to Movement activities.
	OP 8 Control of contents/censorship. Establish procedures and appoint staff to ensure that OP 7 is enforced. This will be more important in situations of armed conflict or security-sensitive situations.
	The contents of each RCM should be checked by the Movement team as it is collected. Failing this, RCMs can be censored and unacceptable contents rendered illegible by designated staff at the local branch or central office. A stamp with the word "**Read**" or "**Checked**" can be used for each RCM that has been censored. If most of the RCM's contents are unacceptable, it should be stamped "**Personal and family news only**" and returned to the sender as soon as possible.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 9 Negative reply to a sender.** Addressees have the right to decide whether or not to reply. Movement staff can talk to the addressee about whether the sender should be told a) that the addressee will contact the sender later b) that the addressee does not wish to make contact or c) that the addressee could not be located. (See Back to Sender form on CD-ROM). **OP 10 Combination with other tools.** Decide whether RCMs can be combined with other tools. Modify the text of the RCMs (see below) and draw up the working procedures accordingly. Before information contained in RCMs is used for publication, the sender's consent is required. Individuals must be given the right to send RCMs and not to have such information published. On the RCM form, print the request for the sender's consent to publish his or her name, or use a stamp. The Movement must not publish the names of addressees of undelivered RCMs without the consent of the sender. This will require the text of the RCM and working procedures to be modified accordingly. **OP 11 Address/Phone directory.** Provide the Movement teams with a phone directory, a link to online directories or access to a phone directory service, so that they can respond to enquiries from those who have forgotten contact details. **OP 12 Individual records.** Decide whether a record needs to be kept of individuals using RCMs and in what form (copies kept in individual files, lists in a temporary filing system). In general, a record is kept of the identities of individuals using RCMs only if follow-up is required when they are used for vulnerable individuals or in combination with other tools (see OP 8). **OP 13 Monitoring.** The following indicators may be used: number of RCMs collected and distributed; information on types of beneficiary; regions/locations of origin; locations and countries of destination; time elapsed between collection and delivery; nature of contents (bad/good news, request for support, others); number of RCMs that are undeliverable ("Back to Sender"). The RCMs collected can also be numbered so as to monitor their delivery. **OP 14 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 4 to OP 13 and include a sample of the RCM form and statistical reporting formats. **OP 15 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff/volunteers in the working procedures.

ANXIOUS FOR NEWS MESSAGES
For additional guidance, please refer to Publication of lists

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	An Anxious for News message is an unsealed message with a standard text informing the addressee that the sender is anxious for news, and a small space for a reply. It contains the identity and full address of the sender and the addressee. Anxious for News messages are for persons anxious to receive news of relatives who were in the area affected by the disaster and with whom they have lost contact. Undelivered Anxious for News messages are sent "Back to Sender" (BTS) with an explanation: address incorrect/insufficient, addressee not known at the address given, further information required, etc. In such cases, it may be appropriate at this point to offer the sender other services, such as a tracing request.
ADVANTAGES	**Response when communications are cut.** When there are no functioning telecommunication or postal services, this might be the only means, along with RCMs, of restoring family links. **A fast and user-friendly tool.** Anxious for News messages are easily completed and their purpose is clear. They require very little training/coaching. **A means that does not require translation or censorship on sending.** This may be useful in conflicts or situations of armed violence or where security constraints apply. However, the reply to an Anxious for News message requires censorship. **A means that can be easily combined with others (publication of lists).** Information provided on the messages may also be published in lists of sought persons (in public places, in newspapers or broadcast via radio, TV or the Internet). See Publication of lists.
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using Anxious for News messages	**No other means available.** Anxious for News messages should be used when there are no other means of receiving news from a relative. **Delivery system for messages and replies.** Anxious for News messages should not be used without a reliable delivery system for their dispatch to people in the affected area and for the collection and dispatch of replies. See Constraints, below. **Address.** The sender should in all cases provide a clear contact address and/or number for the reply and must, in general, have the address (or contact number) of the recipient (for exceptions, see OP 9 and OP 10).

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using Anxious for News messages	**Respect for individual decisions.** The addressee's decision whether or not to reply must be respected. In such cases, as with tracing requests and RCMs, Movement staff will discuss with the addressee how to proceed (see OP 7).
CONSTRAINTS	**Risk of overstretching the Movement's capacity during the emergency response.** The decision to use Anxious for News messages should be taken only after careful consideration as it runs counter to the following principle (see Section 8): "Avoid taking information/messages into the affected area. Focus on providing means of communication to people in the affected area and to those who fled it." Anxious for News messages take time and resources to deliver. They will therefore probably only be used in specific circumstances.
	Limited use for tracing. A tracing request is more appropriate than an Anxious for News message for tracing vulnerable persons, for dealing with cases that require particular attention and individual follow-up or for when additional information is required in order to identify the whereabouts of the addressee.
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Assessment of needs and functioning of telecommunication and postal services.** Assess the needs and contact the service providers and authorities concerned to check whether telecommunication and postal services are functioning and what areas they cover.
	OP 2 Coordination with the authorities. Coordinate with the authorities to avoid duplication and to obtain support for the dispatch of Anxious for News messages (internally and internationally) and replies. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, the security risk to the beneficiaries must first be assessed and the authorities' approval obtained before setting up a network to collect, dispatch and distribute Anxious for News messages and replies. In such situations, the authorities might also require that the replies to Anxious for News messages be censored before transmission.
	OP 3 Checking the delivery system capacity. Rapidly check within and outside the affected area whether there is a functioning Movement delivery system and what its capacity is. The *Extranet Tracing Activities* (see: http://extranet.icrc.org/Tracing_Act) can be consulted to check the delivery system in other countries. Contact the CTA to obtain access to the Extranet, if necessary.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 4 Identification of beneficiaries and areas to be covered.** Define, in the light of OP 1, OP 2 and OP 3: • who may send Anxious for News messages and for what purpose; • in what areas they can be delivered. N.B. It might be easier to draw up a list of areas where Anxious for News cannot be delivered. **OP 5 Set up a delivery system.** Establish (or strengthen) the system for the rapid dispatch and delivery of Anxious for News messages and replies. **OP 6 Identify the contents of replies.** Identify the contents that should not appear in an Anxious for News reply. The following must not be accepted: • references to political or military information, including statements of allegiance; • plots, insults or threats; • discriminatory or abusive language; • inaccurate references to Movement activities. **OP 7 Negative reply to a sender.** Addressees have the right to decide whether or not to reply. Movement staff can talk to the addressee about whether the sender should be told a) that the addressee will contact the sender later b) that the addressee does not wish to make contact or c) that the addressee could not be located. See 'Back to Sender' form on CD-ROM. **OP 8 Control of contents/censorship.** Establish procedures and appoint staff to ensure that OP 6 is enforced. This will be more important in situations of armed conflict or security-sensitive situations. It is advisable to have the contents of each reply checked by the Movement team as it is collected. Failing this, replies to Anxious for News messages can be censored and unacceptable text rendered illegible by designated Movement staff at the local branch or central office. A stamp with the word "**Read**" or "**Checked**" can be used for each Anxious for News reply that has been censored. If most of the contents of the reply are unacceptable, the reply should be stamped "**Personal and family news only**" and returned to the sender as soon as possible.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 9 Combination with other tools.** Decide whether Anxious for News messages can be used in combination with the publication of lists or other tools. Modify the text to ensure consent is requested and define procedures accordingly. Before information contained in Anxious for News messages is used for publication, the sender's consent is required. Individuals must be given the right to send a message and not to have information published. On the Anxious for News form, print the request for the sender's consent to publish his or her name, or use a stamp. **OP 10 Address/Phone directory.** Provide the Movement teams with a phone directory, a link to online directories or access to a phone directory enquiry service, so that they can reply to enquiries from those who have forgotten contact details. **OP 11 Back to Sender.** If it has not been possible to deliver the Anxious for News message, as well as sending the message Back to Sender, it is important to consider whether other tools, such as a tracing request, may be offered to anxious relatives still waiting for news. See CD-ROM. **OP 12 Individual records.** Decide whether a record should be kept of the individuals using Anxious for News messages and in what form (copies kept in individual files, lists in a temporary filing system). In principle, such records are kept only if follow-up is required, when the message is used for a vulnerable individual or combined with other tools (see OP 9). **OP 13 Monitoring.** The following indicators may be used: number of Anxious for News messages collected and distributed, regions/countries of origin and destination, time elapsed during collection and delivery, number of undelivered Anxious for News messages (Back to Sender). Anxious for News messages can also be numbered in order to monitor their delivery. **OP 14 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 4 to OP 11, and include a sample of an Anxious for News message and statistical reporting formats. **OP 15 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff/volunteers in the working procedures.

TELEPHONES
For additional guidance, please refer to Safe and Well/ I am Alive messages and Hotline/ Call centre

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	Telephones are used to allow people from the affected area to get in touch with relatives. They enable people from the affected area to restore and maintain contact with others outside or within it in the emergency phase, when telecommunications are disrupted.
ADVANTAGES	**Rapid means.** A phone call is the most direct and rapid means of restoring family links and reassuring families. **Response to the need to exchange information.** Compared with other means (Safe and Well messages, RCMs), phone calls enable relatives to exchange information immediately. They are particularly useful for vulnerable individuals or others who need to transmit urgent requests to and receive immediate responses from their relatives.
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS	**Existence of a telephone network and level of usage.** Whether or not a functioning telephone network existed and was used before the disaster is a key factor in this tool's usefulness. While telephone use is expanding rapidly, the poorest and most marginalized individuals and areas might not have telephone services or a number to contact. Telephones should therefore be supplemented with other means. **Coordination with the authorities is necessary** to prevent obstruction and duplication, and to obtain the necessary clearances and support. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, the authorities must authorize the use of mobile/ satellite phones. **Managing use, conversations and timing.** The Movement must be in a position to monitor closely both the access to telephones and the length of each conversation. The challenge is to ensure that all individuals who need to call have access to this service while preventing anyone from monopolizing the lines. **Telephone numbers.** Individuals must have the telephone numbers of those they want to contact. If not, it should be possilble for the Movement team to find the numbers in a directory (see OP 7).
CONSTRAINTS	**Knowledge of what the other actors are providing.** It is important to obtain regularly updated information on area coverage and telephone services provided by government services and other humanitarian or private actors in order to avoid duplication.

CONSTRAINTS	**Information on telephone signal coverage.** Information on area coverage by landline cellular telephone networks is important when deciding whether to use satellite or mobile phones and selecting the most efficient provider. There may also be the possibility of providing telephone services via the Internet. **Difficulty in monitoring the content of a phone call.** It can be difficult to monitor the content and timing of a phone call and to intervene during a phone conversation. Phone calls are also difficult for the authorities to monitor and may therefore be forbidden or subject to restrictions in sensitive areas.
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Check other actors' responses.** Check with the authorities and with private and other actors about their capacity to restore the telephone network and/or provide telephone services. **OP 2 Identifying the role and the type of services to be provided.** Decide whether the Movement wishes to provide persons from the affected area with mobile/satellite phones. It may also be possible to support the authorities' efforts to restore the telephone network. **OP 3 Area coverage and cost.** Check the area telephone signal coverage, the cost and whether there are any pre-existing agreements with a provider. Decide accordingly whether satellite or mobile phones need to be used, and subscribe, if necessary, to the most reliable provider. **OP 4 Coordination with the authorities.** Coordinate with the authorities and obtain, if necessary, clearances (customs clearance) to import telephones (especially satellite phones) and the authorization to use them in sensitive areas. It may be possible to purchase satellite phones and the necessary licences in the affected country. It is usually possible – and more effective in terms of cost and technical requirements – to buy mobile telephones in the affected country. **OP 5 Restoring or maintaining family links.** Decide whether or not to use phones exclusively for restoring family links (first calls only) or also for maintaining contact between separated relatives. In the first stage of the emergency response, the focus is on maximizing the number of first-time calls i.e. restoring family links.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 6 Managing use, content and timing.** Decide: • The duration of each call. Calls may be limited to five minutes or less. Longer calls can be authorized for the most vulnerable. • The frequency of calls: one call per family or more. • The number of attempts to be made: how many times a telephone number is dialled before giving up. • Who may call (heads of families only, vulnerable groups, anyone without restriction, etc.). • Whom can be called (family, friends, etc.). It may prove difficult to stop calls being made to others besides family members: telephones provide a relatively "open" service and may be hard to control in this respect. • Where calls can be made to (national or international). • How to restrict the content of the conversation to family news, and the way to handle this, as it may prove difficult or inappropriate to intervene during a phone conversation. **OP 7 Phone directory.** Provide the Movement teams with a phone directory, a link to online directories or access to a phone directory service, so that they can reply to enquiries from those who have forgotten contact details. **OP 8 Combination with other tools.** Supplement the telephone service with other options for those who cannot contact their relatives by phone. Other options include Safe and Well messages, registering individuals for publication on a list and RCMs for and from the most vulnerable. **OP 9 Logistics and technical supplies.** Plan and provide Red Cross/Red Crescent teams with batteries, chargers, pre-paid SIM cards and access to mobile generators. A stopwatch may also be useful. **OP 10 Oversight.** Establish a system to keep track of the phones, secure their storage and oversee their use by Movement staff, as functioning phones may be a valuable commodity in the affected area and may be stolen or misused. **OP 11 Individual records.** Decide whether a record needs to be kept of the individuals using telephones and in what form. In general, such records are kept only if follow-up is required when calls are made by vulnerable persons or combined with other tools (see OP 8).

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 12 Monitoring.** The following indicators may be used: number of successful calls made; number of unsuccessful calls; number of persons/families concerned; where calls originate; where calls are made to; type of request (restoring family links, maintaining family links, assistance, other). See 'Daily Phone Log' on CD-ROM. **OP 13 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 2 to OP 12, and include the telephone-user manual and statistical reporting formats. **OP 14 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff/ volunteers in the working procedures.

MEDIA For Internet publication, please refer to Family Links website For additional guidance, please refer to: Publication of lists, Safe and Well/I am Alive messages, Photographs, Preventive measures

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	Public media such as radio and TV broadcasts, newspapers/ magazines and the Internet are used to promote and deliver RFL services. The various media can be used separately or in combination to convey messages or deliver services. Text, pictures, video clips and broadcast speech may all be used. Media publication has three purposes that may overlap: 1) to promote RFL services; 2) to promote preventive RFL measures; 3) to deliver RFL services by publishing the names of individuals who are: – safe and well (this can include residents and persons who have taken refuge in private homes, institutions, shelters, camps for displaced persons or for refugees); – unaccompanied and separated children (either their names OR their pictures, but never the two combined – see Publication of lists: OP 4): – hospital patients; – dead (this must be done with caution – see Section 7); – missing (lists of "sought persons"); – looking for their relatives; – addressees of RCMs that remain undeliverable.

ADVANTAGES	**Reach.** The media enable the Movement to reach the general public. They can often re-establish their own activities rapidly in the affected area, and provide increasingly globalized information that reaches relatives abroad. The media can help trace individuals by publishing or broadcasting lists of their names. Television, newspapers/magazines and the Internet may be used to broadcast photographs in certain circumstances in order to identify individuals. **Promotion of services and preventive measures.** Even if the media are not publishing or broadcasting lists (or photographs), they can play a vital role in promoting RFL services to the affected population by providing information on how to access such services (e.g. hotlines and the Family Links website). The media can also be helpful in communicating key preventive messages to the population from the affected area.
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using the media	**Identification of purpose, type of information and key messages.** Decide what should be published and for what purpose (see above) in the light of a needs assessment and an assessment of the impact on the security of the individuals concerned (see Publication of lists). **Selection of the most effective media.** Study the area and audience covered in order to determine which media may be the most useful and to what extent. **Coordination with the authorities.** Coordinate with the authorities to avoid obstruction and duplication. **Data protection and ownership.** Data protection standards and legislation must be observed. The ownership and final use of the data provided for publication must remain with the Movement. Clear procedures must be established and implemented for obtaining the consent of individuals providing data to be published. **Agreement on costs.** There may be cost implications as some media charge for the services they provide, although such charges may be waived or reduced as part of the media's response to the disaster.
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Risk assessment.** Make a rapid assessment to ensure that the data published will not pose a risk to the security of the individuals concerned. Be especially careful in conflict and security-sensitive situations to assess the impact of media publication on individuals and on the Movement's activities and image.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 2 Coordination with authorities.** Coordinate media use with the authorities, as they may themselves be employing the media to publish lists of names, hotline numbers or preventive measures. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, the approval of the authorities concerned must be obtained before launching any media campaign. **OP 3 Purpose of publication.** Decide whether the media will be used to promote RFL services, key preventive measures and/or to publish lists of individuals. Identify the type of information to be published (see Publication of lists and Preventive measures). **OP 4 Data protection.** Check that personal data are published in accordance with the principles laid out in Annex 1 and any data protection legislation in force. Consent is required when individuals provide information for publication, and all forms and procedures to obtain signed approvals must reflect this. **OP 5 Identification of key messages.** In order to be consistent, especially when the disaster has international dimensions, ensure that key messages are confirmed with the CTA. Lists of names should be introduced with an explanation of the purpose of the list and instructions for those who recognize a name. This may include giving the Movement team's contact address/number. Particular rules apply to the publication of photographs: see Photographs. Even if the media are not publishing or broadcasting names, they can be vital in publicizing RFL services, a hotline number, a website address, etc. For key messages on preventive measures, see Preventive measures. **OP 6 Choosing the most effective media.** First, identify the target group (population in affected area, diaspora, etc.). Select the media covering the broadest audience and area, taking into account the relative advantages and disadvantages of print and broadcast media. The dispersal of the affected population and literacy rates among them are key considerations in this choice. In addition, the volume of data that can be published in the print media is much greater than that which can be broadcast on radio or TV. In conflict-related and security-sensitive situations, the Movement should not use media that can be perceived as promoting principles that are contrary to those of the Movement, politically biased or favouring one side.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 7 Coordination with Movement personnel responsible for communication.** Work closely with the Movement personnel responsible for communication to ensure that: • the media communicate Movement messages accurately; • the interests of the media are properly understood by the Movement (the media are likely to request individual stories with human interest), which will nevertheless work to ensure respect for individual privacy and security, as appropriate. **OP 8 Agreement on costs, working methods and data ownership.** Reach an agreement with the editors and producers on costs and working methods, including the right for the Movement to decide on the final use of the data provided. **OP 9 Complementary support.** Assess the need for additional Movement support (such as the distribution of radio receivers to the population from the affected area) so as to reach a larger audience. **OP 10 Monitoring.** Monitor data broadcasts and publications to ensure that they are accurate and in accordance with the agreement (see OP 7). Monitor the ease with which the affected population is able to access and use the data appropriately. As the publication or broadcasting of names gives the public the means of identifying individuals themselves, it is difficult to measure outcomes. It is, however, possible to interview sample groups of individuals to measure the usefulness of the media used. The following indicators may be used: number of individuals whose data were published, and for what purpose; number of broadcasts made; number of copies of specific publications distributed; and number of people who contacted the Movement following the broadcast/publication of their names. **OP 11 Individual records.** Keep lists of individuals whose names are published or broadcast in the media in a temporary filing system. In general, such lists are kept for a limited period, with the exception of lists received from a third party (authorities and other organizations). Decide whether or not to open individual files with registration forms and other data and keep them up to date to record action and follow-up. In general, no individual file is opened unless follow-up is required (when the media are used for vulnerable individuals, or combined with other tools requiring follow-up).

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 12 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 3 to OP 11, including key messages, samples of lists to be published and statistical reporting formats. **OP 13 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff in the working procedures.

PUBLICATION OF LISTS
For additional guidance, please refer to Media, Family Links website, and Safe and Well/I am Alive messages

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	Published lists enable the public to find out who is safe and well, separated from family members, injured, dead, missing ("sought persons") or looking for relatives. They can also include the names of addressees of RCMs who are difficult to reach. Various media can be used for publication: the Family Links website, newspapers/magazines, radio/TV broadcasts, posters, books of pictures or simple paper lists. Depending on the means available and the identified purpose, published lists of individuals can be drawn up on the basis of: data collected and cross-checked by the Movement; data provided by the authorities or other reliable actors; data provided directly by an individual (see Family Links website). Lists can be used with different forms of support: text, pictures, video clips, and broadcasts.
ADVANTAGES	**Encouraging public participation.** Published lists encourage people to come forward with information in order to solve cases or add to the list. Published lists can play an important part in rebuilding communities, as people look for all those who have survived in their immediate area, for example. **A rapid and large-scale means of delivering information.** Lists can be rapidly published in a number of media and posted in public places (markets, places of worship, camps for displaced persons or for refugees, etc.) in order to ensure as many people as possible have access to the information. **A means easily combined with others:** Family Links website, media, hotline and Safe and Well messages.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met before publishing lists	**Identification of data to be published.** The information that can be published has to be specified following a needs assessment and an assessment of the risk to the security of the individuals concerned.

Coordination with the authorities. Coordinate with the authorities to avoid obstruction and duplication.

Conformity with data protection rules (See Annex 1)**.** In particular, consent must be obtained before publishing information relating to the person concerned. Information on a sought person is only published with the consent of the relative who is anxious for news and has provided the information, and on the assumption that such publication is in the best interests of the sought person. |
| **CONSTRAINTS** | **Monitoring impact.** It is difficult to assess the impact of this means as the Movement will often not be informed when people succeed in locating each other using the lists.

Volume and coverage limits the choice of media to be used. The large numbers of people affected in some disasters and a dispersed population make it difficult and time consuming to produce, distribute, display, read and update printed lists. Radio and TV broadcasts may be able to broadcast relatively limited amounts of information. |
| **OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE** | **OP 1 Risk assessment.** Make a rapid assessment to ensure that the data published will not pose a security risk to the individuals concerned. Exercise extra caution in conflict-related and security-sensitive situations.

OP 2 Coordination with the authorities. Coordinate with the authorities, as they may also be using the media to publish their own lists of names, or may have security considerations preventing the publication of certain personal data. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, the authorities must give prior approval for publication. |

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 3 Identification of the type of personal data to be collected.** Define the type of data to be collected. In principle, the following information should be collected: • Full name • Name of father and/or mother • Date of birth or age • Place of birth or place of origin • Sex • Last known address/current location • More information may be collected on vulnerable individuals, including children. See OP 4, point 3 below. • The form used to collect data should also request the consent of the person to have his or her identity and contact address, or the identity and last known address of the sought person, published. • A Movement reference number should be assigned to each identity to facilitate the management and retrieval of information on individuals. **OP 4 Identification of the type of personal data to be published.** Decide what type of data will be published while respecting the following five principles in particular: 1. Publish data that are sufficiently reliable and complete to enable the audience to identify those whose names are published. In some cultures, it will be necessary to include patronymics. 2. Protect the persons concerned from abuse and arbitrary discrimination, and take into account domestic regulations on data protection (if necessary, check with the authorities). Do not publish any sensitive data that might lead to discrimination or abuse. The type of data considered to be sensitive might vary with the context. Extreme caution must be exercised with regard to the following types of data: racial or ethnic origin; religious, political and other beliefs; criminal prosecution; medical information. These should under no circumstances be published. Particular care must be taken for separated children in all circumstances. Their previous address and current whereabouts must never be published. 3. Collect – but do not publish – the information needed to verify the identity and claims of enquirers and their relationship with the sought person (e.g. to verify a claim for family reunification with a very young unaccompanied child).

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	4. To avoid harm to individuals, decide whether or not to publish:
	
	  • The current location and/or contact address/phone number/e-mail address of an adult enquirer, so that the sought person can contact him or her directly, rather than via the Movement. This information should never be published without explicit consent;
	
	  • The last known address of a sought person, with a view to providing more information to those referring to lists in order to identify or locate the person.
	
	5. Publish only with individual consent.
	
	Before publication, ensure that those concerned are fully informed of the data that will be published and give their explicit consent. When publishing the names of sought persons, their consent is implied, as long as the Movement and the enquiring relatives deem this to be serving the person's best interests.
	
	Include a section requesting consent to publish personal data on:
	
	• all registration or enquiry forms;
	
	• Safe and Well messages or RCMs, when they contain data that may also be used for publication.
	
	OP 5 Choice of the types of list to be published. On the basis of the needs and risk assessment, decide which types of list will meet the identified needs:
	
	• safe and well individuals, including residents and persons who took refuge in private homes, institutions, shelters, camps for displaced persons or for refugees;
	
	• separated children;
	
	• injured people;
	
	• the dead (this must be done with caution – See Section 7);
	
	• the missing ("Sought persons" lists);
	
	• individuals looking for relatives;
	
	• addressees of RCMs that remain undeliverable.
	
	N.B. In the case of missing (or sought) persons lists, the enquirer's expectations will have to be managed. The Movement must be clear about what can and cannot be done with the information provided.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 6 Identification of the sources of information to be accepted for publication.** Decide whether or not to publish only information collected by the Movement, or also information provided by the authorities or other reliable organizations. In this case, the origin of the list should be clearly indicated, with the agreement of the source organization. If a decision has been taken also to publish information directly entered by individuals via the Internet (see Family Links website), the fact that the list is provided by individuals without Movement monitoring should be clearly stated. **OP 7 Clear labelling of the types of list being used.** Clearly identify the types of list being used, to avoid misinterpretation. For example, it needs to be very clearly stated whether the list contains the names of sought persons or of those who are safe and well. **OP 8 Media selection.** The choice of media, if being used, is vital. Please refer to Media. **OP 9 Limits to publication.** Movement staff and volunteers need to explain to individuals providing information that publication of lists does not mean that the Movement is going to carry out active tracing i.e. a search for the sought person. It may also be useful to post this explanation on a website if the public is being offered the option of entering information directly. **OP 10 Explanation on how to use the list.** Describe the purpose of the list and what action should be taken by anyone recognizing a name on it. This may include contacting the nearest Movement office or delegation, or the authorities at a given address. It should also include instructions for individuals wishing to register themselves or relatives, depending on the kind of list being published. Clear instructions should not only encourage people to look for those who are safe and well, but also to look for their **own** names on sought persons lists and to take the right steps if they find their names listed.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 11 Management of lists (correction and updating).** The names on sought persons lists should be updated in the light of needs and regularly cross-checked against lists of individuals who have been located (safe and well lists, lists of the dead, hospital patients, unaccompanied children). Decide if, and on what basis, the Movement will remove a name from a list. If self-registration is made available, obvious mistakes will be made or the website misused. Decide if, and on what basis, the Movement will remove or correct a name on the list. Decide whether or not to update the lists and how frequently. **OP 12 Individual records.** Keep lists of individuals whose names are published/broadcast in the media in a temporary filing system. In general, such lists are kept for a limited period. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, lists received from a third party (authorities and other relevant organizations) should be retained. Decide whether or not to open individual files with registration forms and other data and keep them up to date to record actions taken and follow-up required. In general, individual files are opened only if follow-up is required (for vulnerable individuals or in combination with other tools). **OP 13 Monitoring.** Indicators may include: numbers of individuals registered on specific lists; numbers of individuals matched between lists; numbers of identities and lists published or broadcast; number of people who contacted the Movement following the publication of their names; number of locations where posters/lists were placed. As publication of lists enables the affected population and their relatives to act independently to restore contact, it will be very hard to gauge the impact. It is important to record individual successes when they occur. Otherwise, consideration may be given to carrying out interviews of a sample of individuals whose names were listed. **OP 14 Working procedures.** Identify and promote internal working procedures based on OP 3 to OP 13, and include statistical reporting formats. **OP 15 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff in the working procedures.

FAMILY LINKS WEBSITE
For additional guidance, please refer to **Publication of lists**

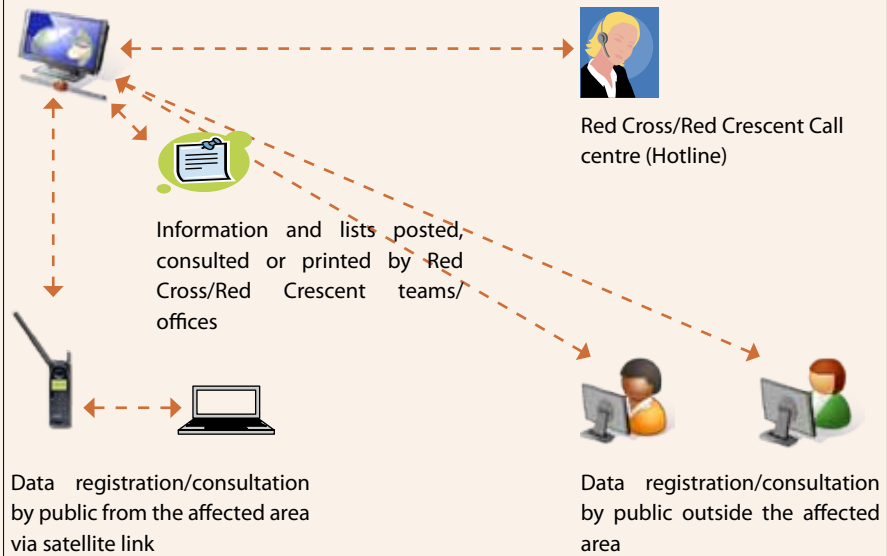|	

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	The Family Links website is a ready-to-use, public website managed by the ICRC that can be launched within 48 hours of a decision to open a website and agreement on its purpose and functions.
	
	See **http://www.familylinks.icrc.org/**
	
	Family Links websites have been used in various contexts since 1999. They are continuously being tested and improved. The Family Links website is managed by the ICRC. Therefore, it can rely on IT support from ICRC headquarters and benefits from ICRC special privileges in respect of protection of personal data and the right to collect and publish such data.
	
	The Family Links website provides three main services:
	
	1) It enables the Movement to post/publish information on:
	  • the general situation and the Movement response;
	  • how to process RFL and other requests, with useful contact addresses/numbers, references, and links to other websites.
	
	2) It enables the Movement to post/publish lists of names of:
	  • individuals who are safe and well (including residents and persons who have taken refuge in private homes, institutions, shelters, and camps for displaced persons or for refugees);
	  • unaccompanied and separated children;
	  • hospital patients;
	  • the dead (this must be done with caution – see Section 7);
	  • the missing ("sought persons" lists);
	  • individuals looking for their relatives;
	  • addressees (of RCMs) who are difficult to reach.
	
	3) It enables individuals with access to the Internet directly to register and publish:
	  • their own names and location when they are safe and well;
	  • the name of the sought relative, with a request for news, and their own name and contact details.
	
	Individuals consulting the Family Links website can communicate any information they have on persons whose names appear there, to the Movement.
	
	For additional guidance, see Publication of lists.

	In addition, should no list of names be published, the Lotus Notes software used to manage individual data on the Family Links website can also be used by Movement teams to manage and communicate data internally (see OP 8). **National Societies can also create their own websites**. They are strongly urged, however, not to launch a website under time pressure unless the site has been prepared and tested beforehand and they can rely on guaranteed, high-quality 24-hour technical IT (or helpdesk) support. A website requires intensive preparation in terms of its purpose(s), functionality, design and publicity; it must be reliable, relevant and user-friendly. A website must always be tested before launch: a poorly designed or dysfunctional website will cause harm as a public RFL tool and damage the Movement's reputation. A website must have a clearly identified webmaster who is responsible for its management and accountable for the data processed. It must meet national and international data protection requirements. National Societies must ensure that the final ownership and use of data collected via a website or published on it is clearly understood by those providing such data and that such ownership and use is strictly for the original humanitarian purpose for which it was gathered. The data protection principles in Annex 1 must be rigorously applied in any planning for a website.
DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	
ADVANTAGES	**Global and immediate coverage.** The Family Links website is a rapid means of collecting information and publishing it globally. Unlike other media, it has a global reach and data can be immediately updated. **Rapid launch.** It can be rapidly launched regardless of the Movement's technological capacity in the affected area. The Family Links website can be launched within 48 hours by ICRC headquarters in Geneva. **Flexibility.** It is a standard tool, but offers various options (see above). **Self-publication and search.** It enables individuals to directly publish their requests for news or their whereabouts, to scan lists to search for sought relatives and to provide additional information on sought persons. **A means easily combined with others.** The website can be easily used in combination with other tools, such as the publication of lists, media, Safe and Well messages and hotlines/call centres.

Illustration of a Family Links website used for publishing data

As shown, the information can be registered and consulted – and relayed – through four potential routes:

WEBSITE

Red Cross/Red Crescent Call centre (Hotline)

Information and lists posted, consulted or printed by Red Cross/Red Crescent teams/offices

Data registration/consultation by public from the affected area via satellite link

Data registration/consultation by public outside the affected area

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using the Family Links website	**Clear identification of the purpose(s) and services provided by the website.** In order to decide which functions are to be activated, it is essential first to define: • the purpose(s) of the website, • the services to be offered (see above). **Risk assessment related to the use of a website to manage personal data ie. not publication.** Before deciding to use a website to collect, manage and transmit personal data (including sensitive data, see Annex 1), conduct a rapid risk assessment of the impact of possible data leakage or theft on the affected population and on the Movement's reputation and capacity to act. See OP 8, below. **Impact of website publication on security.** Before opting to publish data on a public website, conduct a rapid check on the impact on the security of the persons concerned and on the Movement's reputation and capacity to act. In conflict and security-sensitive situations, extra caution is required.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using the Family Links website	**Conformity with data protection rules** (See Annex 1). The website must comply with international standards and national regulations on data protection.

Coordination with the authorities. Public websites should be launched only after consultation with the authorities concerned to avoid obstruction or duplication. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, the approval of the authorities must be obtained before launching a public website.

Computers with access to the Internet. Computers (either mobile or fixed units) with Internet access are essential to enter or consult data.

Data input from the affected area. A website is useful to enquirers only if the Movement can feed it with valuable information, in particular accurate and timely data on the whereabouts of people from the affected area. |
| **CONSTRAINTS** | **Short lifespan.** Generally, websites have a short lifespan and are active during the emergency phase of a disaster. They can nevertheless be kept active as long as they serve their purpose, i.e. as long as new information is being added or individuals are consulting the site. A website with regularly updated lists of missing persons may remain active for years.

Lack of data quality control. The Movement has no control over the quality of data directly registered by individuals, when this option is used.

No possibility for individuals to delete or modify data directly. With the self-registration option, individuals may directly register personal data on the website, but not modify or delete them.

Difficulty to assess impact. It is not possible to determine whether contact was restored, or information provided, as a result of consulting the website.

Limited Internet access in affected area. While public Internet access in the affected area is not essential, this constraint requires the Movement to ensure that there are means for the affected population to register or consult information on the website (registration via the Movement, consultation through the publication of lists, etc.).

Script. There may be technological constraints relating to the use of some alphabets. |

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Contact the CTA.** The CTA manages the Family Links website and determines the rights to access, enter, modify and delete data. In collaboration with National Societies or ICRC delegations, it decides on the website's functionalities and approves any text on the website. It advises how to best implement the options and functionalities of a website based on the needs identified in a specific disaster. The CTA should therefore be contacted immediately to see whether it would be opportune to launch the Family Links website and to discuss the ensuing measures (from OP2 to OP 18).
	OP 2 RFL need for a website. Decide whether a public website would provide an appropriate means of responding to RFL needs in the light of the following factors, any one of which may be decisive:
	• volume of requests;
	• the local population's use, trust and understanding of the Internet in normal times;
	• extent of current Internet access in the affected area;
	• number of anxious relatives in foreign countries (out of the affected area) with access to the Internet, in particular, the existence of a significant diaspora from the affected area and/or of a significant foreign population in it;
	• Movement access to information related to disaster victims from the affected area;
	• the need to communicate to the general public about the Movement's RFL response;
	• access to telecommunications for Movement staff/volunteers to enter (or transfer for entry) data from the affected area.
	OP 3 Impact on security of website data management. Rapidly assess the risk of possible leakages or theft of data when using a website, and of the impact on the protection of individuals and their personal data as well as on the Movement's reputation and role. It is especially important to do this in conflict and security-sensitive situations.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 4 Impact on security of data publication.** Rapidly assess the likely impact of publishing personal data on a website on the security of individuals belonging to vulnerable groups and on the Movement's reputation and role. It is essential to do this in conflict and security-sensitive situations.
	OP 5 Consultations with the authorities. Coordinate with the authorities to avoid obstruction and duplication in case they wish to open their own website. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, the approval of the authorities concerned must be obtained before the website is launched.
	OP 6 Data protection rules. Check that data collection and publication on the website comply with international standards and with national regulations on data protection, as well as with the principles laid out in Annex 1. In particular, information should be provided on how the personal data collected will be published and processed, and individual consent should be explicit. Relatives registering a sought person must give consent; it is assumed that the registration is in the sought person's interests and that his or her consent is therefore implicit. See OP 12.
	N.B. ICRC headquarters, as the manager of the Family Links website, owns the data collected and is accountable for its use.
	OP 7 Decision to open a website. Decide, on the basis of OP1 to OP 6 and in consultation with the CTA, whether or not to launch the Family Links website.
	OP 8 Identification of purpose. In particular, it is essential to decide which of the following purposes the website will serve:
	• helping Movement teams to manage and communicate data internally, in which case the Family Links website will not be used for publication, but only as an internal tool, allowing the teams to register and communicate data, to consult updated lists in response to enquirers, and to print lists in full or in part for publication by other means, if necessary;
	• helping the Movement communicate information on the RFL response to the public;
	• publishing lists of individuals;
	• enabling individuals to register news about themselves or requests for news of relatives directly on the website;
	• enabling individuals to provide the Movement, in electronic form, information on the fate of sought persons whose names have been published on the Family Links website.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 9 Management of and access to data.** Determine: • who will have the right to enter data; • the (mobile or fixed) Movement units where the website will be replicated; • the (mobile or fixed) Movement units that will have the right to delete/modify the data; • which (mobile or fixed) Movement unit will control the consistency and accuracy of the data collected. ("Unit" refers to a site plus the Movement staff and volunteers.) N.B. On the Family Links website, individuals can enter data directly but not delete it. In case of errors, they should contact the Movement units that have the right to delete/modify data. **OP 10 Contact e-mail address.** Decide which Movement unit will be the contact e-mail address posted on the website. **OP 11 Language.** Identify the language(s) used on the website, as the use of different alphabets might be a significant technical constraint. **OP 12 Disclaimer.** The Family Links website comes with standard disclaimers/warnings for all users as to the purpose and use of the data published or entered on it. Check that they conform to domestic data protection standards and regulations. Translate them into the appropriate language. **OP 13 Home page.** National Societies and ICRC delegations should draft the text and provide a photo to appear on the home page of the Family Links website and forward them to the CTA. **OP 14 Communicate with the Family Links Network.** Draw up a short message with the website address and send it to the CTA for forwarding to the Family Links Network: the message should communicate the purpose and functions of the website (refer to OP 8 and OP 9) and request its promotion in other countries. **OP 15 Website launch.** Draw up a short message for the media (TV, radio, Internet and press announcements) in the affected country. Include the website address, its purpose and for whom it is intended. Promote the website only once it is operational. **OP 16 Individual records.** In general, names posted directly on the Family Links website by individuals are subject to constant modification and are therefore not recorded elsewhere. Decide whether or not to print and keep lists of these names in a temporary filing system.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	Keep lists of individuals whose names have been published/ posted on the Family Links website by the Movement in an ad hoc filing system. In general, such lists are kept for a limited period. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, lists received from a third party (authorities and other relevant organizations) should be retained. Decide whether or not to open individual files using registration forms and other data and keep them updated to record action and follow-up. In general, individual files are opened only if follow-up is required, when they are used for vulnerable individuals or combined with other tools requiring such follow-up. **OP 17 Monitoring.** Indicators may include the following: number of registrations (self-entry and entered by the Movement unit) in the various lists; number of hits per day i.e. number of people visiting the website (this will be a determining factor in the decision to close the website); and number of recorded complaints/difficulties registered by users. **OP 18 Website Closure.** Assess the usage, the type of user (anxious relatives, general public, authorities or other organisations) and the usefulness the website has in restoring family links. Statistical analysis of the volume of and trends in usage of the website pages (number of hits, new enquiries per day) can be complemented with qualitative assessment of the website's effectiveness. Assess the likely impact of the closure on beneficiaries and the authorities's perception of the Movement's activities. Plan and implement other approaches to address pending cases or enquiries previously addressed by the Family Links website. This may include referral to the authorities or other organizations or possibly opening a tracing enquiry. Decide, in consultation with the CTA, whether the website should be closed, according to the assessment and planning guidance above.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	Decide on what to do with the data published on the website. The options include: • destroy the data • keep the data for a limited period • archive the data • make the data available through other means (eg publications other than the website) • transfer the data to the relevant authorities/organizations that will undertake the tasks fulfilled until this point by the Movement Any transfer of data to the authorities or other organisations must be in accordance with the the Data Protection principles in Annex 1. Distinguish between data that has been self-registered and data that has been collected, verified and consolidated by the Movement prior to its publication. As a general rule, the data that was self-registered can be deleted following closure of the website and after notification of the beneficiaries, authorities and general public. However, if data protection legislation requires that the data be kept, or that the data may prove useful in the future to address RFL needs, this data may be kept. For data that has been collected, verified and consolidated by the Movement, it should, as a general rule, be filed and kept by the Movement, at least temporarily, Draw up a communication plan to inform the persons who have registered themselves or relatives, or whose names were published on the website; the general public; the Family News Network; the authorities and other organisations. Using the website itself and other media, the Movement should communicate: • the rationale for the closure • how the Movement intends to address the remaining RFL needs and pending cases (including the use of other RFL approaches and tools) • whether the data collected and published will be available by other means • a contact number/ email address/ postal address for specific questions or requests

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	As a next step, inform the authorities, the Family News Network of the decision to close the website.
	Inform the general public and update the Family Links website to inform them on what other RFL tools and approaches are available, referral to the authorities, other organisations, as previously decided.
	Deactivate the self-registration option on the website.
	Subsequently, after a period determined as part of the communications plan, deactivate the public access to lists and data.
	Deactivate the relevant pages of the Family Links website. However, this should take place after an interval during which communications to the general public are carried out.
	Destroy, transfer or keep data, in accordance with decision previously taken.
	OP 19 Working procedures. Identify and promote internal working procedures based on OP 8 to OP 17. The working procedures may include:
	• what information is to be collected and on what forms;
	• how data should be entered on the website;
	• who will have access to what data and how (access rights and passwords);
	• what information is to be published;
	• who will control the data collected and published and how (including the right to delete data);
	• what type of personal information should be collected, but not published, so as to check the relationship/identity of an enquirer;
	• when to post links to the websites of the authorities or reliable organizations;
	• how to select/search data;
	• how to select/record statistics;
	• supporting forms: these are paper forms to register enquiries or other data to be entered on the website, such as Safe and Well, hospitalized individuals (full name, address, telephone number, postal and e-mail addresses, purpose of the request, follow-up required), etc.
	OP 20 Training and coaching. Train and coach Movement staff in the working procedures.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES Please refer to Registration of vulnerable individuals, Media and Mobile teams and announcements	
DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	Preventive measures help avoid or minimize the risk of further separation and are to be considered in the event of an evacuation or other population movement. They include registration, issuing bracelets or ID tags, establishing meeting points and disseminating key messages to people from the affected area.
ADVANTAGES	**Reduction in harm.** Timely action can considerably reduce the amount of harm inflicted on the population.
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using preventive measures	**Coordination with the authorities and other organizations.** The decision to evacuate is ultimately the responsibility of the authorities. In such cases, it is essential to liaise with the authorities on the practical steps to be taken to ensure that families do not become separated during the evacuation. However, individuals and groups may spontaneously decide to move: any action taken in this context also requires liaison with the authorities to ensure that it does not worsen the situation. Close coordination with the other organizations involved is also essential in order to avoid confusion and ensure that action is based on reliable information. **Speed.** The essential requirement is to act before people become separated; prompt action is therefore critical. **Primacy of life-saving action and security.** Preserving family unity is a priority in all evacuations, but safety, security and life-saving action always take priority. In extreme situations, the family may need to be separated – as a last resort – when not to evacuate a child or an adult would place him or her at severe risk.
CONSTRAINTS	**Scale.** If large numbers of people are being evacuated, it may be impossible to register them all. It is therefore important to focus registration on particularly vulnerable individuals, while using public announcements to address the population as a whole. **Logistics.** Movement involvement in evacuations requires significant human resources and means of transport and of communications if staff and volunteers are to operate efficiently. **Movement responsibility.** The Movement's participation in a displacement ordered by the authorities against the population's will might be detrimental to its image and how it is perceived, especially in a conflict or security-sensitive situation.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Coordination with the authorities and other organizations to define the Movement's role.** Define the Movement's role and activities in coordination with the authorities, whose role in carrying out evacuations is paramount. Coordinate Movement activities with other organizations, as necessary. In situations of conflict or security-sensitive situations, the conditions and implications of evacuation may be very complex, and the application of international humanitarian law and human rights law must be considered carefully.

OP 2 Coordination with the authorities and other organizations to identify and promote key measures and messages. Identify key measures and messages and ensure their implementation in coordination with the authorities, other Movement teams and organizations that may be engaged in the evacuation.

OP 3 Registration. Decide, as a preventive measure, whether to register and follow up all evacuees or only the most vulnerable individuals, such as children, the elderly or disabled, so as to minimize the risk of separation. See Registration of vulnerable individuals.

When registering vulnerable individuals, due care must be taken to ensure that their protection and assistance needs are also addressed.

OP 4 Mass evacuation, preventive steps. Take preventive steps to minimize or avoid separation. The following practices are recommended:

- Issue identity bracelets and/or ID tags for children and the most vulnerable.
- Encourage parents (possibly through public announcements or the media) to teach young children their names and key facts, such as their parents' names and addresses, and to identify family focal points (e.g. a relative living in a safe area who might receive news from all relatives).
- Promote informed guidance to the authorities, Movement staff and other stakeholders. Indeed, people tend to become separated at key points in the evacuation process: checkpoints, during the allocation of transport, at border crossings, etc. Provide a clear message to those responsible to ensure that families are assisted and processed as a group, as this can minimize the risk of separation. N.B. Other Movement teams may be playing a role in the evacuation process and may need to be briefed.
- Establish meeting points and/or identify focal points en route and at the destination, where people can go to find relatives with whom they may have lost contact. |

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 5 Medical evacuees and vulnerable individuals, preventive steps.** When medical cases and vulnerable individuals are evacuated, the Movement may have to promote the following recommended practices even if its teams are not directly responsible for the evacuation: • Evacuation should be to the nearest possible location able to provide the care and safety required, so that family reunification can be carried out easily. • On evacuation, register basic details (name, place of birth, customary residence, names of the parents (or children) of the individual being evacuated, date and place of evacuation) and ensure that the evacuee and the Movement unit, authorities or organization in charge are in possession of of this information. • Record as much information as possible on the planned destination (e.g. name of hospital) and contact details, if at all possible. • Ensure that there is a means of contacting the relatives who have remained behind. • Register on arrival: ensure that the reception procedures for evacuees in the place of safety, hospital, etc. include registration and that this information is centrally held. If none of the steps above has been possible, rapid registration at the point of arrival will help restore contact. Telephone services may be useful. The evacuees may wish to place calls themselves or via a call centre that can pass on information on their location with their prior consent. **OP 6 Communication.** Identify clear messages for public announcement in the form of a script. Draw up a sheet of questions and answers enabling staff/volunteers to answer questions from the general public or other stakeholders. **OP 7 Individual records.** Keep records of individuals who have been registered by the Movement in individual files, each with a unique reference number. Keep lists of individuals evacuated/transferred received from the authorities/relevant organizations in a separate filing system, giving each list a unique reference number. In general, no other individual records should be kept unless follow-up is required, when they are used for vulnerable individuals or in combination with other tools.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 8 Monitoring.** The most important indicator is the speed with which preventive measures are taken. Other indicators before the evacuation are: the number of registrations of vulnerable persons and of ID bracelets/cards. Indicators after the evacuation could show how effective the preventive measures were; in particular, the number and type of tracing enquiries that are opened is a proxy indicator. **OP 9 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 2 to OP 8 and include statistical reporting formats. **OP 10 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff in the working procedures.

REGISTRATION OF VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS
For additional guidance, please refer to Section 6, Section 10, Preventive measures and Publication of lists

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	Vulnerable individuals are registered (i.e. their personal data and whereabouts are collected, recorded and processed by the Movement) for the following purposes: • To prevent the risk of separation • To strengthen protection • To trace relatives • To reunite families Registration always implies **the commitment to monitor** the welfare and confirm the whereabouts of registered individuals (through regular visits and by collecting information). Registration goes hand in hand with **the delivery of services, assistance or the implementation of protective measures.** The Movement's responsibilities go beyond registration and follow-up. The Movement has to assess the material and security situation and the RFL needs of the vulnerable persons, take the measures needed to restore contact with their relatives and provide them with shelter, protection and care, or refer them to the appropriate authorities or other organizations. N.B. Registration, as described here, does not include the specific role of the ICRC in conflicts and security-sensitive situations.

ADVANTAGES	**Successful tracing.** In the case of vulnerable individuals, in particular separated children, early registration, when combined with other means of tracing, such as the publication of lists, the Family Links website and tracing requests, improves the chances of successful tracing (see Section 6). **Preventing separation.** In the case of evacuation or population movement, the registration and follow-up of vulnerable individuals, when combined with other preventive measures, can minimize the risk of separation (see Preventive measures). **Strengthening protection.** The identification, registration and follow-up of vulnerable individuals, along with other appropriate measures, reinforce their protection. **Identification of needs.** Registration combined with interviews helps to identify humanitarian needs.
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	**Coordination with the authorities.** The authorities have primary responsibility for preventing separation and ensuring protection for individuals at risk. It may be their task to register and follow up the most vulnerable: it is therefore essential to coordinate with them to avoid duplication and obtain the necessary support. **Identification of purpose and criteria for registration.** The purpose of registration and the types of individual to be registered and followed up by the Movement should be clearly identified in order to decide what data should be collected and how it will be managed and used. **Commitment to follow up and address individual needs.** By registering vulnerable individuals, the Movement undertakes to follow up on their RFL and most vital needs, either directly or by referring them to the relevant authorities or organizations. **Conformity with data protection rules.** Data should be collected and managed in conformity with Annex 1. In particular, individuals should be informed about the purpose of registration and their consent for use of the data requested. **System for managing data.** Registration and follow-up require a reliable and secure system to centralize, cross-check, store, retrieve and transmit data. See Section 10.

CONSTRAINTS	**Time and resources.** Registration and individual follow-up are time and resource consuming. Registration should reinforce other emergency protective and tracing efforts, not undermine them by absorbing resources disproportionately. It is therefore essential to set priorities: registration and follow-up may often be limited to the most vulnerable, such as separated children or medical evacuees.
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Risk assessment.** Make a rapid assessment to ensure that the Movement's registration of vulnerable individuals will not pose a risk to their security.
	OP 2 Coordination with the authorities. Coordinate with the authorities in order to clarify their responsibilities, identify the Movement's role, and obtain the necessary support. In situations of armed conflict or security-sensitive situations, the role of the ICRC in registration and follow-up is determined by international humanitarian law and the current agreement with the authorities.
	OP 3 Coordination with other actors. Coordinate with other actors in order to avoid duplication in registration and follow-up, to share certain data when deemed necessary, and to refer vulnerable individuals to the appropriate organizations.
	OP 4 Identification of beneficiaries and purpose. Identify:
	a) Which groups will be registered. Vulnerable groups are identified during the RFL needs assessment, but might include: • separated children; • elderly people on their own and disabled people; • women on their own; • members of groups at risk because of their origin, nationality, political or religious belief, etc;
	b) For what purpose(s) registration will be carried out: • preventing a risk of separation; • tracing; • strengthening protection; • family reunification; • other.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 5 Identification of follow up-action.** Identify what type of follow-up action will be required:
	• RFL services, which might include monitoring the individual's present location and situation, active tracing of relatives, publishing identities, organizing the exchange of family news and reuniting a family;
	• directly meeting and monitoring needs for shelter, care, emergency assistance and protection;
	• referrals to the relevant authorities or other organizations for shelter, care, emergency assistance and protection;
	Decide whether vulnerable individuals need follow-up visits and, if so, how frequently.
	OP 6 Checking the system for managing data. Rapidly check whether there is a functioning Movement system to manage data and what its capacity is.
	OP 7 Setting up a system for managing data. Establish (or strengthen) as required the system and procedures to collect, centralize, cross-check, store, retrieve and transmit data collected during registration. The system should serve to control the quality of the data collected (as per OP 9 and OP 10) and to record follow-up activities, those carried out and those to be taken on behalf of registered individuals (as per OP 5). Refer to Section 10.
	OP 8 Identifying how the data will be used. Identify how the information collected during registration will be used, especially in respect of the authorities, other actors or publication. There are three options, which may be combined:
	• data can be used internally for cross-checking with other lists, individual follow-up, tracing, family reunification, assistance and protection;
	• data can be shared with the relevant authorities or other organizations providing emergency assistance or protection;
	• data can be published in order to inform relatives/trace individuals.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 9 Identification of the data to be collected during registration.** Identify, in accordance with OP 4, the data to be collected during registration and create the appropriate form (see Registration forms on CD-ROM). In general, the following should be collected and recorded: • Full name • Name of father and/or mother • Date of birth or age • Place of birth or place of origin • Nationality • Sex • Physical description and a photograph (for children and others whose identity is in doubt (persons with specific disabilities, the severely ill, the injured)) • State of health • Current whereabouts • Future whereabouts (for those who are going to be evacuated or relocated) • Contact person and address/number • Description of situation and needs • Action taken, with relevant details • Follow-up required, with relevant details • Agreement of the person concerned to follow-up steps proposed by the Movement • Agreement of the person concerned to the sharing of certain personal data with the authorities or other organizations • Agreement of the person concerned to the publication of certain personal data • Date and place of registration • Signature of the registered person • Name and function of the person who registered the individual concerned • A Movement reference number should be assigned to each identity to facilitate the management/retrieval of cases **OP 10 Identification of the data to be collected for follow-up.** Identify, in accordance with OP 5, the data to be collected during follow-up visits and create an appropriate form.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 11 Individual records.** Keep updated records (electronic and paper) of the data related to the identity of registered individuals, their situation or events related to them and the action taken on their behalf in the same individual file/database. Such records must be centralized and kept in a safe place. See Section 10. **OP 12 Monitoring.** Indicators may include the following: number of individuals registered; number of follow-up visits; number and types of activity carried out on their behalf or assistance delivered; positive results of Movement action (family located, reunited with the family); pending cases; time elapsed between registration and final results of Movement action. **OP 13 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 3 to OP 12, including a registration form, a follow-up form and statistical reporting formats. **OP 14 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff/volunteers in the working procedures.

PHOTOGRAPHS For additional guidance, please refer to Tracing requests, Publication of lists and Registration of vulnerable individuals

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	In the aftermath of a disaster, the Movement can use photographs of individuals in three ways: 1) It can collect a recent photograph of a sought/missing relative for a tracing request. It will do this systematically whenever the tracing request concerns a child or any other person unable to identify himself/herself because he or she is handicapped, severely ill or injured. 2) It can systematically take a picture of a separated child or of any other vulnerable person unable to identify himself/herself, in order to identify them and/or trace their relatives. 3) It can take or use a picture of a dead person to complement other post-mortem data with a view to identification. This text covers the first two situations. For identification of the dead, please refer to Section 7 and the *Management of Dead Bodies.*

ADVANTAGES	**Identity verification.** Photographs can be usefully combined with other information in order to ascertain the identity of a person unable to identify himself/herself.
	Appeal for information. Publishing photographs of sought persons can encourage people who do not know an individual's name but recognize him or her to come forward with information.
	Verification of claims. Photographs can also be used to verify the identity, for example, of an individual claiming kinship with an unaccompanied child on the basis of the minor's name.
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	**Risk assessment.** The decision to publish personal photographs should be made on the basis of an assessment of needs and of the risk posed to the security of the individuals concerned.
	Conformity with data protection rules (see Annex 1)**.** Individuals must consent to having their pictures taken and published. In circumstances where it is not possible to obtain consent, pictures are taken and published only after it has been determined that it is in the best interests of the individual concerned to do so. Photographs, particularly of children, must not be published with the subjects' names or other personal data that can help identify them and their whereabouts, as doing so can encourage, or lead to, false claims of kinship, especially for separated children.
	Coordination with the authorities. This is necessary when publishing photographs in order to avoid obstruction and duplication.
CONSTRAINTS	**Insufficient reliability.** Visual identification based on a photograph carries a serious risk of misidentification and is often not reliable enough to establish someone's identity. It should be used to complement other information and in combination with other tools.
	Acceptability. The use of photographs may be unfamiliar or culturally unacceptable in certain contexts; this must be considered carefully before proceeding.
	Display and distribution. The production of leaflets, newspapers and posters with photographs requires particular resources and technology that might delay the process.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Rapid assessment.** Rapidly assess the needs, the risks for the persons concerned and Movement staff and the cultural propriety of taking photographs.

OP 2 Definition of purpose and beneficiaries. Decide for what purpose (see above) and for which types of beneficiary photographs can be taken or used. In general, photographs will be systematically taken and used for separated children and for persons who are not able to identify themselves.

OP 3 Coordination with the authorities. Coordinate with the authorities if the decision is to publish pictures, as they may be doing the same thing or may have security concerns precluding the publication of pictures of may certain individuals. In situations of armed conflict or security-sensitive situations, the authorities' approval is required.

OP 4 Forms and procedures. Modify tracing and registration forms and procedures depending on the outcome of OP 1 (see Registration of vulnerable individuals, OP 9 and 13, and Tracing requests, OP 10), so as to include the use of photographs.

OP 5 Setting up a reference system. Establish a single reliable system for filing and retrieving pictures – and for linking them with registered or traced individuals – with the date and place where they were taken. The same reference system must be used in all locations. Only one reference number is to be assigned to each person whose picture is taken. This number should correspond to the individual registration or tracing request number. One copy of the picture is attached to the registration or tracing request form stored in the person's file. Another copy is filed in numerical order.

OP 6 Planning to take and store photographs.
- Plan for the type of film (digital film is preferable).
- Plan for additional camera batteries and for a charger.
- Plan for secure storage and back-up copies.
- Appoint Movement staff to take and to be in charge of the pictures and of all materials. N.B. If professional photographers are used, the contract should stipulate that ownership lies exclusively with the Movement, which is entitled to use and publish all pictures. |

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 7 Taking photographs.** • Photographs must show each individual alone. • Take more than one picture. One photograph must show the individual's face and upper chest. Another could be of the individual standing, if possible, next to some item that serves to estimate his or her height and build. • Each photograph should display the individual's reference number on the chest. • Photographs must not include guns, uniforms, ambiguous symbols or slogans. • The individual's name, previous address and current whereabouts should not appear on the picture. This is especially true for separated children. • Take pictures of separated children and other vulnerable persons during registration, or as soon as possible, as their value, especially for very young children, diminishes over time. • Take pictures of vulnerable persons, including children, in the clothes in which they were dressed at the time of separation, if possible. • See CD-ROM for examples. **OP 8 Collecting photographs.** Make sure tracing requests related to vulnerable individuals are accompanied by the most recent good-quality photographs of the relatives sought. **OP 9 Publication.** Please refer to Media and Publication of lists. The subject of the photograph must give his or her explicit and informed consent for publication of the photograph. The consent of sought persons is deemed to be implicit if the Movement and the enquiring family consider publication to be in the individual's best interests. **OP 10 Displays.** Public displays of photographs need to be accessible and well protected. A Movement staff member/volunteer should be on hand to answer questions. At the minimum, there should be clear instructions for contacting the Movement if a person is recognized. **OP 11 Oversight.** Establish a system to keep track of the cameras, secure their storage and oversee their use. **OP 12 Individual records.** Keep records of all pictures taken (see OP 4).

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 13 Monitoring.** Indicators may include: number of individuals photographed; publication statistics; number of sites where photographs are displayed; number of enquiries based on photographs; number of identifications achieved using photographs. **OP 14 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 1 to Op 13, including statistical reporting formats. **OP 15 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff/volunteers in the working procedures.

MOBILE TEAMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	
For additional guidance, please refer to Preventive measures	
DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	This refers to the use by mobile Movement teams of public address systems or megaphones to: • seek information on the whereabouts of particular individuals (sought persons, RCM addressees); • promote RFL services (by providing information on how to register a sought person, find a published list, etc.); • promote preventive measures in the run-up to a displacement or evacuation.
ADVANTAGES	**Response to the lack of media.** This tool is useful during the acute phase of the emergency, when there are no other means (media) of spreading information and people are concentrated in shelters and camps or gather for specific purposes (distribution of relief items, water, etc.).
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	**Coordination with the authorities.** Coordinate, particularly, with local authorities, to avoid obstruction and duplication and to obtain the necessary support. In situations of armed conflict or security-sensitive situations, the authorities' approval is required. **Access to affected communities**. Movement teams must be able to travel to and access sites where the affected population gathers or has taken shelter.
CONSTRAINTS	**Sensitivity.** Any public announcement, especially in a situation of conflict, should take into account both the national and local context and sensitivities. The contents of the announcement will therefore require careful consideration. **Resource and time consuming.** Announcements by mobile teams might attract many requests not linked to RFL. The teams need to be prepared to respond to all types of enquiry and to refer the enquirers to the appropriate authorities or organization.

CONSTRAINTS	**Capacity to deliver RFL services**. Public announcements promoting RFL services are only to be used for existing services that can be delivered. The teams making the announcements should also be in a position to provide some RFL services on the spot.
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Rapid assessment.** Rapidly assess the needs, the risks for the persons concerned and Movement staff/volunteers, and the cultural propriety of making mobile team announcements.
	OP 2 Identification of purpose and beneficiaries. Decide for what purpose (see above), in what areas or situations, and for what beneficiaries mobile team announcements should be made. Exercise special caution in conflict-related and security-sensitive situations.
	OP 3 Coordination with the authorities. Coordinate with the central and local authorities, as they may also be making announcements or may have security concerns precluding public announcements of certain kinds of information. In particular, key preventive messages have to be coordinated with the authorities. Local authorities can help in facilitating access to shelters and other places, or in organizing the gathering of people together for the publicization of messages. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, the authorities approval of the authorities is necessary.
	OP 4 RFL service delivery. Identify RFL staff/volunteers and a location, close to the spot of the announcement, where they can receive enquirers, deliver RFL services (e.g. Safe and Well/ I am Alive messages) and ensure quick follow-up to specific requests.
	OP 5 Transport and logistics. Organize transportation and logistical support for the mobile teams. Provide them with megaphones, spare batteries and a charger.
	OP 6 Drawing up the message(s). Draw up the message(s) and test it/them on a sample group taken from the affected population. Provide the mobile teams with the text of the message.
	OP 7 Briefing on responses to RFL and other needs. Brief Movement staff/volunteers on the RFL response and provide them with working procedures for the tools used to deliver RFL services. Provide them with a referral list of relevant organizations for needs that cannot be met by a mobile team.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 8 Question-and-answer sheet.** Draw up and provide Movement mobile teams with a sheet of questions and answers so that they can respond to the most frequently asked questions. **OP 9 Individual records.** No individual records are kept. **OP 10 Monitoring.** Indicators may include: number of announcements made; number of locations visited; estimated numbers of people reached; number of individual RFL enquiries/registrations collected on the spot following the announcements. **OP 11 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote working procedures based on OP 2 to OP 10, including the text(s) of the message(s) for announcement, referral lists, question-and-answer sheet and statistical reporting formats. **OP 12 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff and volunteers in the working procedures.

HOTLINE/CALL CENTRE **For additional guidance, please refer to Safe and Well/I Am Alive messages, Family Links website and Publication of lists**	
DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	A hotline is a publicized telephone number that provides a service to the general public by means of a call centre. The hotline/call centre may have the following purposes: • It can enable individuals to call and provide emergency information on themselves and their relatives. This information is used to restore family links or to direct emergency teams providing life-saving assistance/protection to the most vulnerable. • It can be used to refer enquirers to appropriate sources of information or to other relevant organizations. • It can provide enquirers with information on the affected area. • It can relay information to families regarding the whereabouts of relatives who are safe and well, or injured. A hotline/call centre may cover only the national territory or may also provide international services.
ADVANTAGES	**A way to make RFL services more accessible**, particularly for those outside the affected area who have access to phones. **A helpful method for referring anxious individuals** to the proper authorities or to organizations that may be able to address their specific needs.

ADVANTAGES	**A rapid means** of collecting and providing information. **A very useful means when combined with others (publication of lists, Safe and Well messages).** Information provided on Safe and Well messages can be relayed by the call centre to the addressee. Information published in lists can be given to enquirers calling the hotline. **A means to monitor the level of demand for RFL services.**
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	1) **Coordination with the authorities.** Hotlines should be opened in consultation with the authorities concerned in order to avoid obstruction or duplication. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, the authorities' approval must be obtained before the hotline is opened. 2) **Setting up a call centre.** A hotline requires the establishment of a call centre in a secure location provided with well-functioning equipment. This may include telephone systems allowing for more than one telephone to be connected to the publicized hotline number. 3) **A regular and rapid flow of information between the call centres and Movement teams in the field.** Hotlines should be opened only if information from enquirers can be relayed to Movement field teams in contact with people from the affected area. 4) **Knowledge of what other actors are providing.** Ascertain what is being done by other actors, particularly the authorities and other sources of reliable information, in order to refer enquirers. 5) **Promotion.** The hotline number must be promoted in the media and in public places.
CONSTRAINTS	**Difficulty of identifying enquirers.** The identity of enquirers calling the hotline and their relationship with the sought person are difficult to confirm by phone. **Level of demand.** It is very likely that the call centre will be overwhelmed with requests that are unrelated to RFL and difficult to address. **Speed.** Hotlines need to be launched quickly if they are to provide anxious families with the means to restore family links, or obtain information, as soon as possible.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Rapid assessment.** Rapidly assess the need for a hotline and the risks related to the provision of information by phone. **OP 2 Definition of purpose and beneficiaries.** Decide the purpose (see above), areas, and beneficiaries to be covered by a hotline/call centre. **OP 3 Coordination with the authorities.** Coordinate with the authorities, as they may open a hotline themselves or have security concerns precluding the provision of certain kinds of information by call centres. On the other hand, the authorities may make available premises for a call centre, or provide other support and publicize the hotline number. In conflict or security-sensitive situations, the central and local authorities' approval is necessary. **OP 4 Information about others' responses.** Obtain information about the responses and contact numbers of the authorities and other organizations, in order to inform enquirers and refer them to the relevant actors as needed. **OP 5 Hotline numbers.** Decide whether to open one hotline/call centre covering the whole affected area, or several hotlines/call centres, each covering a specific area. Consider whether several hotlines/call centres will be needed to deal, for example, with various kinds of enquiries or different languages. Opening only one hotline/call centre has many advantages: it avoids duplication of information and work between call centres, and facilitates the cross-checking and consolidation of data, quality control and communication to the public. In some contexts, it may be preferable to open several hotlines/call centres so as to afford the victims of the disaster more possibilities of access.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 6 National or international coverage.** Decide whether the hotline will respond to both national and international enquiries, or only national enquiries.
	There are several advantages in having both national and international coverage: simplicity, rapidity, and better information, because of the call centre's proximity to the affected area.
	The disadvantages of an international hotline are as follows:
	• it will still have to refer demands for, or offers of, material support from enquirers abroad, or cases requiring specific language skills, to National Society tracing services or ICRC delegations;
	• it will be more complicated to get information on what the authorities in other countries are doing on behalf of their citizens;
	• it may be overwhelmed by demands from enquirers in other countries;
	• it will have to rely on other National Societies to publicize the hotline number;
	• other National Societies may already have opened hotlines of their own in response to demand or have nationally advertised enquiry numbers, creating confusion among the general public;
	• it will cost callers from abroad, who have to pay international phone charges, more.
	OP 7 Channels of communication. Establish, as per OP 2 to OP 6, a regular channel and procedures of communication between:
	• the call centre and the Movement teams working in the affected area;
	• the call centre and the tracing services of National Societies and ICRC delegations covering other countries;
	• the call centre and other call centres, if decentralized;
	• the call centre and other organizations and the authorities.
	OP 8 Location of the call centre. Identify an appropriate location for the call centre(s), in the light of OP 5 and according to the following criteria:
	• safety;
	• good communication possibilities with the teams working in the affected area;
	• good communication possibilities with the public outside the affected area;
	• availability of IT support.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 9 Management of the call centre**. Define the tasks and put someone in charge of setting up and managing the call centre. These tasks, not to be underestimated, include: • recruiting and training staff/volunteers; • deciding opening hours, establishing shifts and drawing up staff/volunteer rotas; • liaising with IT/telephone service providers; • monitoring the work of the call centre; • regularly briefing/debriefing staff/volunteers; • maintaining contact with the authorities and other organizations; • monitoring the flow of information between Movement teams and/or other organizations in affected areas with the support of the coordinator. **OP 10 Technical set-up of the call centre.** The technical requirements of a call centre are determined by the scale and types of service being offered. They should be identified as part of the disaster-preparedness process. Depending on the hotline, it may be important: • to connect more than one telephone line to the hotline number; • to divert an incoming call to another line, if the first line is busy; • to enable enquirers to leave messages, if the hotline is not open 24 hours a day; • to record outgoing messages, if the hotline is not open 24 hours a day; • to record an outgoing message placing enquirers on hold if all lines are busy; • to bring more than one Movement staff member or volunteer into the response by connecting the caller to more than one person; • to offer a series of options for the enquirer with services designed to meet specific needs ("If your enquiry is about x, press 1, etc."). It may also be useful to record conversations for training purposes. Before recording conversations, ensure that doing so does not contravene domestic data protection regulations. As a minimum, callers must be informed that their calls may be recorded.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 11 Staff/volunteer recruitment.** Recruit staff/volunteers with a mix of languages depending on the enquirers' origins. Make sure that both genders are represented.
	OP 12 Identification of the information to be collected. Distinguish between requests for information that can be handled by the Movement and for which data need to be collected, and other situations or requests. In particular, identify how urgent requests for assistance and protection will be handled. Identify the type of data/information to be collected and on what forms; identify the follow-up required. When follow-up is required, the following information should, in general, be collected from an enquirer:
	• full name of enquirer;
	• name of father and/or mother;
	• date of birth or age;
	• place of birth or place of origin;
	• sex;
	• contact address/number;
	• type of request(s);
	• full name of sought person (if relevant);
	• full details on sought person/request (if relevant);
	• enquirer's consent to the follow-up, in particular in case of publication ;
	Also, keep a record of:
	• the information provided;
	• follow-up required;
	• date of the call and name of the Movement staff member who took the call;
	• the Movement reference number that should be assigned to each identity, to facilitate the management/retrieval of cases. See Hotline/Call Centre Telephone Log on CD-ROM.
	OP 13 Identification of information to be provided to enquirers. Identify and update the information that may or may not be provided to enquirers by phone. Provide the Movement staff at the call centre with access to updated information on the situation and data of individuals registered or published by the Movement. Instruct staff/volunteers that, when in doubt, they are to take note of the request, double check and call back.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 14 Checking relationship/identity.** Identify questions to check the identity of an enquirer (e.g. asking for birth date of sought person, names of other close relatives, etc.).
	OP 15 Referral information. Establish and keep a regularly updated list of referral organizations (national or local authorities, hospitals, police, etc.) that may be called on to inform relatives or provide other services to enquirers.
	OP 16 Question and answer. Draw up and maintain a list of questions and answers enabling staff/volunteers working in call centres to respond to the most frequently asked questions.
	OP 17 Communicate with the Family Links Network. Send a message to the CTA explaining the hotline's purpose, coverage and functioning (see OP 1 to 3), and request its promotion through the Family Links Network (only if it provides international coverage).
	OP 18 Promote the hotline. Draw up a short message to the media (TV, radio, Internet and press announcements) and put up posters or leaflets in public places (e.g. municipalities, markets, or camps for displaced persons or for refugees) announcing the hotline number, its purpose, and whom it aims to assist. Promote the hotline number as soon as the call centre is operational.
	OP 19 Individual records. Keep individual records of incoming requests and information (see OP 12), of follow-up required and of outgoing calls to inform relatives. In general, this record is kept only as long as follow-up is required, unless it concerns vulnerable individuals.
	OP 20 Monitoring. Indicators may include: number of calls made and received (per region/country); number of persons/families concerned; types of request (for assistance, RFL, etc.).
	OP 21 Working procedures. Draw up and promote working procedures based on OP 2 to OP 20 and include statistical reporting formats.
	OP 22 Training and coaching. Train and coach Movement staff and volunteers in the working procedures.

TRACING REQUESTS For additional guidance, please refer to Publication of lists, Photographs, Registration of vulnerable individuals and Section 10 of the Manual	

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	**Tracing requests are collected and followed up when a family member formally requests that a missing relative's whereabouts be traced (and sometimes that the relative be offered protection and assistance).** The definition of family is based upon custom and should be as broad as possible. Sometimes, in deference to cultural and social practice, a tracing request may be accepted from a friend.
	
	Tracing requests have the following purposes:
	• **to inform the enquirer of the whereabouts of a family member and restore contact;**
	• **to locate the most vulnerable individuals in order to assist and protect them.**
	
	In the first instance, a tracing request requires the collection on a standard form of all the details needed to ascertain what happened to the relative and restore contact with the enquirer.
	
	A tracing request always implies that the Movement is committed to:
	• do its utmost to trace the relative and inform the enquirer of the results, once the relative's fate has been clarified and/or the relative has been located and consented to make his or her whereabouts known;
	• record and continue to update (in a database and/or in an individual file) any relevant information and action taken to follow up each individual case.
	
	The search for a relative for whom a tracing request has been opened can take various forms:
	• the data collected in the tracing request can be matched with:
	  1. other data handled by the Movement, such as: lists of persons who are safe and well, injured or dead; RCMs; Anxious for News messages; other tracing requests;
	  2. other data published in the media or via the Internet, or shared by other organizations;
	• some of the data collected can be published in order to reach those who have pertinent information and allow them to come forward (see Publication of lists, Media);

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	• the case can be submitted to the authorities, who may be able to provide additional information on the sought person; • field tracing can be carried out. This includes visiting the last known addresses of the person in question; contacting relatives and neighbours; approaching heads of communities, associations and displaced groups; consulting local representatives of the authorities or organizations working for the affected population; visiting shelters and camps; checking hospital, mortuary and cemetery records. With the exception of vulnerable persons, tracing requests are generally not accepted on a large scale in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster that has given rise to significant RFL needs. They are used to trace vulnerable persons (separated children, elderly people on their own, disabled people and others in need of protection and assistance) and their relatives. Tracing requests may, however, also be used to trace other missing persons, but generally only at a later phase, when other and simpler means of restoring contact have been used and have proved unsuccessful.
ADVANTAGES	**Increasing the likelihood of success in difficult cases.** The detailed information collected on tracing requests increases the number of leads and opportunities to carry out tracing activities, and therefore improves the chances of success. This is especially important in vulnerable cases and when other means of restoring contact have proved unsuccessful. **Meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.** The information collected is used not only to trace individuals, but also to identify individual protection and assistance needs, and thus provide emergency assistance and protection to the most vulnerable. **Individual tracing over time.** Because a record is kept of the tracing request and of all information and activities related to the sought person, the chances of a positive match rise. Each case can be followed up and tracing efforts sustained. **Combination with other tools.** Tracing requests make it possible to look for individuals using a variety of tools: active field tracing, referral to the authorities, publication in the media, and so on.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	**Coordination with the authorities.** The authorities have primary responsibility for ascertaining the whereabouts and fate of missing individuals, even though their capacity to do this may be limited. It is therefore essential to coordinate with them to avoid duplication and to obtain the necessary support.

Coordination with other agencies. It is important to work with the governmental and non-governmental actors engaged in the affected areas, as they can provide reliable information on sought relatives and refer cases to the Movement for active tracing; the Movement, for its part, can refer individuals whose needs it cannot meet to them.

Individual follow-up of cases. There is no tracing request without individual follow-up. Therefore, tracing requests require a reliable information system (see Section 10 and OP 5) able to manage individual data, sufficient capacity and scrupulous administration to handle and follow-up individual cases on a sustained basis.

Clear acceptance criteria, according to needs and capacity. These are essential in order not be overwhelmed by requests to trace missing relatives in the initial phase of a disaster. Processing tracing requests is a time-consuming job that requires rigorous organization and a number of trained staff able to record, actively trace and follow up each individual case. During the emergency phase of a response, other means of restoring contact (such as Safe and Well messages, telephones, publication of lists, Family Links website) are generally more efficient and provide a faster response to large-scale needs; tracing requests will therefore be limited to the most vulnerable. It is generally only after other means of restoring contact have been used by the affected population that tracing requests can be extended to other categories of person.

Sufficient information to carry out the search. The minimum information needed to carry out a search should be identified beforehand.

Conformity with data protection rules. Data should be collected and managed in conformity with Annex 1. In particular, the enquirer should be informed about and consent to the tracing process and the possible use of the data provided (see OP 13). The enquirer must always formally consent to having data published. Formal consent may also be required for a tracing request to be forwarded to the authorities concerned or to actors other than Movement components (see OP 10). |

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	**Respect for individual decisions.** Once located, the sought person should always be informed that he/she is the subject of a tracing request and given the identity of the enquirer. The sought person's decision to inform – or not – the enquirer of his or her whereabouts must always be requested and respected (see OP 7).
CONSTRAINTS	**Skilled staff and volunteers.** The collection and processing of tracing requests requires skilled and trained persons. **Personal interview.** Generally speaking, tracing request forms should be completed during personal interviews between an enquirer and a trained Movement staff member/volunteer. **Management of expectations.** The decision to open a tracing request and engage in an active tracing process on behalf of a family member may raise high expectations and put pressure on the Movement staff member or volunteer who collected the information. Enquirers should be given clear explanations of the methods involved and the chances of success. **Distressing news.** Giving distressing news to the enquirer requires prior verification of the facts and the source of the information, tactful delivery, and possibly the assistance of a Movement staff member/volunteer with appropriate psychosocial skills (see CD-ROM for guidance). **Not appropriate for identification of human remains.** Although a tracing request might in certain contexts provide useful leads, it is not an appropriate tool for ascertaining the identity of human remains. Collecting ante-mortem data requires a specific form and approach (See *Management of Dead Bodies*).
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Rapid assessment of need, risk and capacity.** Rapidly assess and regularly review: • the need to trace individuals by means of tracing requests (collected from anxious families) in addition to the other means being used to restore family links (Safe and Well messages, publication of lists, telephones, Family Links website, etc.), and for which categories of persons individual tracing may be appropriate. Focus particularly on vulnerable persons and on persons with whom contact cannot be restored by any other means. Unless judged to be counter-productive, the Movement will, in principle, make systematic use of tracing requests for the most vulnerable persons (e.g. unaccompanied children and their relatives, elderly on their own and the disabled); • the most efficient tracing methods (matching and cross-checking information, active field tracing, publication, submission to the authorities);

	• the risk those methods pose to the security of the enquirers and sought persons;
	• the capacity (set-up, human resources and organization) required to collect tracing requests and carry out tracing activities using the methods identified.
	OP 2 Coordination with the authorities. Coordinate with the authorities in order to clarify their responsibilities, identify the Movement's role, and obtain the necessary support.
	OP 3 Coordination with other actors. Coordinate with other actors in order to avoid duplication in tracing, to promote Movement tracing activities and ensure that individuals are referred to the Movement for tracing work, to share certain data when deemed necessary, to obtain additional information on sought persons, and to refer vulnerable individuals to the relevant organizations for other protection and assistance needs.
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 4 Identification of purpose, beneficiaries, methods and areas.** These criteria should be periodically reviewed and perhaps modified in the light of needs and capacity, notably at the beginning of a second phase response and of the recovery phase (see Table in Section 8.3.). Decide accordingly :
	• for which main purpose(s) a tracing request will be accepted (see above);
	• for which groups of the affected population a tracing request will be accepted: separated children, elderly on their own or disabled people, other persons in urgent need of assistance/ protection, vulnerable persons, etc.;
	• from which groups of beneficiaries a tracing request will be accepted: close relatives or a broader family groups, persons who have tried all other means of restoring family contacts, etc.;
	• whether or not to accept tracing requests when contact was lost before the disaster;
	• for which situation a tracing request will not be accepted: requests from third parties; requests regarding legal matters and wills; situations involving family or legal disputes, etc.;
	• which methods will be adopted to trace individuals (see above);
	• for which area tracing requests will be accepted;
	• from which area tracing requests will be collected. Decide in particular whether tracing requests collected abroad by the Family Links Network will also be accepted.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 5 Criteria for the closure of a tracing request.** Decide in what circumstances a case will be closed. Tracing requests can be closed positively (after successful tracing) or negatively (when the fate of the person sought cannot be clarified). In general, tracing requests are considered closed, and no further action taken to trace the relative sought and inform the enquirer, in the following circumstances: • the person sought has been located and the enquirer has been informed; • the person sought has been located but has declined to allow his/her address to be disclosed, and the corresponding response has been sent to the enquirer; • the person sought is deceased, the enquirer has been so informed and, if possible, a death certificate has been provided by the authorities and the enquirer has been informed about the location of the body; • the enquirer has withdrawn the tracing request; • the enquirer has died; • the enquirer has moved and all possible avenues to locate him or her have been explored; • the search cannot be continued because all possible avenues have been explored without success and the enquirer has been so informed. The closure of a tracing request means the end of the Movement's efforts to locate the sought person and inform the enquirer. However, it does not mean the end of all other possible activities and individual follow-up in behalf of the sought person, or the enquirer. Depending on the circumstances and needs, once the tracing request is closed, the Movement might: • offer services to maintain contact between the enquirer and the person being sought, once he or she is located; • organize a family reunification; • meet the needs for assistance and protection of the sought person, once he or she is located; • refer enquirers to sources of information and support (the authorities for death certificates, organizations that can provide psychosocial support, etc.); • organize, or facilitate, the return of the body of the sought person to his/her relatives.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 6 Distressing news.** Take into account local regulations and customs. It is often the duty of the authorities to announce a death. Identify specific procedures to verify the facts and sources and adopt a sensitive approach for communicating distressing news to the enquirer. Distressing news should be delivered personally whenever possible (preferably by someone who is trained, or whose presence is requested by the family) or in some cases through a family member or trusted person. See '*Providing an appropriate response to individuals experiencing a crisis'* and *'Providing news of death'* on the CD-ROM for further guidance. Distressing news may include information that: • the person sought is (presumably or certainly) dead; • the person sought is (presumably or certainly) severely injured; • all avenues to clarify the whereabouts of the person sought have been explored without success; • the person has been located but refuses to inform the enquirer of his location (see below). **OP 7 Refusal to inform the enquirer.** No contact details may be disclosed to the enquirer without the consent of the sought person. Therefore identify, with the sought person, what information is to be provided to the enquirer when the person sought: • refuses to restore contact with the enquirer; • refuses to release his/her contact address/number; • refuses to even inform the enquirer that he/she has been located by the Movement. In that case, the enquirer will be informed that the "search has not been successful." This should be used as a last resort and only after discussing with the sought person the consequences of his or her decision, as it is possible that the enquirer will continue the search by other means. See 'Back to Sender' form on CD-ROM. The sought person may have to sign a specific form stipulating what is to be said to the enquirer. **OP 8 Checking the system for managing data.** Rapidly check whether there is a functioning Movement system to manage individual data and what its capacity is.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 9 Setting up a system to manage data.** Establish (or strengthen), as required, the system and procedures for processing tracing requests. It is important to have a centralized individual filing system, and perhaps a database (or at least, a card index), to manage and follow up individual cases. Each person sought should have a file under his or her name and a specific reference number. Refer to Section 10. The system should notably enable staff or volunteers to:
	• collect, centralize, store, retrieve and transmit data collected in, or related to, the tracing requests;
	• provide a basis for quality control of the data collected;
	• match the data collected in the tracing requests with other data collected by the Movement or published or shared with the Movement by other actors (see above); this explains the need for a centralized filing system;
	• analyse the data to monitor progress and adjust activities. The system should therefore enable staff and volunteers to record and retrieve (in the same individual filing system or database) data related to all relevant actions and additional information on the sought person during the search process (correspondence between the Movement and the enquirers, other relatives, the authorities and other organizations; records of interviews and contacts by phone or e-mail; press cuttings; photographs; copies of RCMs exchanged, etc.) and the information given to the enquirer on the results of the search and the decision to close the case.
	OP 10 Identification of the data to be collected in the tracing request. Identify, in the light of needs, the information required for a tracing request to be accepted. Tracing request forms need to be adapted to the specific needs of the context and alphabet (naming systems, structure of addresses, etc.). See CD-ROM for standard format. Design and print a tracing request form accordingly. The information required should always:
	• be sufficient to enable tracing to be undertaken with a good chance of success and include, as a matter of course, the personal data of the sought person and the circumstances under which contact was lost;
	• include the exact identity of the enquirer, his/her contact address/number and relationship with the person sought;

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	• include the formal consent of the enquirer to let the Movement use the information provided for publication. N.B. The Movement will accept the tracing request of an enquirer who does not consent to the information being used to approach the authorities, other organizations, or for publication, when other more discreet tracing means can be used. In this case, the enquirer should nevertheless be informed that his/her decision might limit the chances of success.
	The information required and collected for a tracing request should, in general, comprise the following elements:
	Information on the person being sought, which may vary according to local circumstances and the purpose of the tracing request, but should include as a minimum:
	• full name (as used locally)
	• maiden name
	• any nicknames or aliases
	• sex
	• father's name
	• mother's name
	• place of birth
	• date of birth
	• nationality and place of origin
	Other useful information may include:
	• profession
	• marital status
	• spouse's name and date of birth
	• children's names and dates of birth
	• religious affiliation
	• community/clan
	• mother tongue
	• physical description
	• clothing and personal belongings the person was carrying with him/her
	• recent picture(s)

	Information on the circumstances of separation/loss of contact and leads for tracing:
	• detailed description of the circumstances leading to loss of contact, with date and place
	• other persons who may have been with the person sought at the time of separation/loss of contact
	• date and nature of last news received (when last seen or last heard from)
	• last known address(es), with a description of how to find the person's home or last address
	Individual vulnerabilities are important as they might help identify needs for protection and assistance that serve to prioritize cases.
	Names and addresses of anyone who may be able to provide information (relatives, neighbours, friends, employers, colleagues, social contacts, etc.).
	Any further information that may help trace the person being sought.
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**Information on the enquirer:**
	• full name
	• parent's name
	• date of birth, place of birth (or place of origin)
	• sex
	• relationship to the sought person
	• contact address, telephone number and e-mail addess
	Signature of the enquirer
	Statement of the enquirer's consent that the Movement:
	• publish in the search process certain data (to be identified), such as his/her name and the name (and picture) of the relative sought;
	• share the tracing request with other organizations that might help trace or assist the relative sought;
	• share the tracing request with the authorities, which might help trace or assist the relative sought.
	Administrative information:
	• name of the person who has accepted the tracing request and the organization to which he or she belongs
	• place and date the tracing request form was completed

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	A Movement reference number should be assigned to each person sought in order to facilitate the management and retrieval of cases. See Tracing Request form on CD-ROM. **OP 11 Identification of follow-up steps and data.** In accordance with OP 3 and OP 4, identify the type of action to be taken for a successful search and to address the RFL needs and the most urgent protection and/or assistance needs of the sought person. Identify the type of data to be collected and centralized for proper individual follow-up. **OP 12 Needs for protection and assistance.** Brief the Movement field staff and equip them with tools, logistics and telecommunications so that they can either directly meet the most urgent protection and/or assistance needs of the sought persons or refer them rapidly to the appropriate authorities or organizations. Prepare and update a list of referral organizations that provide essential relief and services to complement the services provided by the Movement. **OP 13 Description of the tracing process.** Draw up an internal note laying out the process once a tracing request has been filed. Write a shorter briefing note enabling Movement staff or volunteers to explain the tracing process to enquirers and other stakeholders. This briefing note will emphasize the importance of respecting the wishes of the person sought. **OP 14 Communicate to the Family Links Network.** Send a message to the CTA to explain to the Family Links Network the criteria, purpose and coverage of the tracing requests and the tracing process. **OP 15 Communicate to other stakeholders.** Communicate the same information to the authorities concerned and other relevant stakeholders, for referral of cases and to promote RFL services. **OP 16 Individual records.** Centralize updated individual records (paper and possibly electronic) in a safe place. Such records will include: the data provided in the tracing request; other data related to the whereabouts and fate of the sought person; data related to all actions and communications pertaining to the tracing case, including communication with the families; the results of the search and the decision to close the case. Records should be kept even after the closure of the case. See OP 9 and Section 10.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 17 Monitoring.** Indicators may include the number of: tracing requests opened, cases pending, cases closed positively/ successfully (the sought person was located or his/her fate determined) and the reasons why, cases closed negatively/ unsuccessfully (the sought person was not located and his/her fate remains unknown). **OP 18 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 2 to OP 16, including: a description of the tracing process, a briefing note for enquirers, a tracing request form, a follow-up form and statistical reporting formats. **OP 19 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff/ volunteers in the working procedures. More particularly, train Movement field staff/volunteers in carrying out active field tracing.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION
For additional guidance, please refer to Registration of vulnerable individuals, Tracing requests, Section 6 and Annex 4 of the Manual

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	Family reunification refers to the reuniting of separated family members once they have restored family links, have formally agreed to be reunited and security conditions allow. Reuniting a child with its family means first verifying the relationship and, if the separation is long-term or the primary caregiver has died, assessing whether family reunification is in the child's best interests. See 'Verification of Family relationship checklist' and 'Family Reunification Assessment form' on the CD-ROM. The preservation of the family unit is the ultimate goal of all RFL efforts, and therefore the reuniting of all family members separated by the disaster should be promoted by the Movement. The definition of 'family' is based on custom and should be as broad as possible. However, priority is given to vulnerable persons who depend on the support of their families. Family reunification, as described here, concerns only cases in which it is clear that: • the separation is the direct result of the disaster; • the family members have been located; • the family relationships have been verified (in the case of children); • the family reunification is obviously in the best interests of all those concerned;

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE	• the family reunification does not modify the status of or relationship between the dependent relative and his or her primary custodian or caregiver. Refer to Section 6 of the Manual and Annex 4, and also to Registration of vulnerable individuals, to see what other specific measures should be taken to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly children.
ADVANTAGES	**Strengthening protection.** The reunification of vulnerable persons with their primary caregivers may strengthen their protection and help meet their most essential needs. **Emotional impact.** Family reunification has a strong positive emotional and psychological impact on the persons concerned.
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	**Coordination with the authorities.** The authorities have primary responsibility for reuniting separated families, although their capacity to do so may be limited. It is therefore essential to coordinate with them in order to clarify the Movement's role, avoid duplication and gaps and obtain the necessary authorization and support. The authorities may ask the Movement to assume the lead role in tracing, which it should if asked. **Coordination with other agencies.** It is important to coordinate with the main stakeholders (in particular, the major national child protection agencies in the affected country as well as any international agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children, International Rescue Committee, World Vision) engaged in the affected areas, as they are likely to be working with children separated from their families. The purpose of coordination is to avoid duplication and gaps and to promote a principled response that is in the best interests of the persons affected, refers individuals whose needs cannot be met by the Movement to others, and accepts referred cases that might benefit from the Movement's services. **Clear acceptance criteria, based on needs and capacity.** These are essential if the Movement is not to be overwhelmed by family reunification requests in the initial phase of a disaster. Family reunification is time and resource consuming. It requires effective logistics, an efficient information system, rigorous organization and procedures, and trained staff to handle and follow up each individual case. For these reasons, priority is given to vulnerable separated relatives following a disaster. This does not preclude assisting other individuals with family tracing and reunification, which should probably take place at a later stage.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	**Individual follow-up of cases.** Families cannot be reunited unless the relatives to be brought together receive individual follow-up. Family reunifications require a reliable information system (see Section 10) to manage, verify and transmit data on the persons concerned and documents between Movement teams in contact with the beneficiaries. It requires sufficient capacity and scrupulous organization to handle and process each individual case over time. Furthermore, the Movement's role might not end when the family is reunited. A follow-up visit, ongoing assessment or assistance may also be required.
	Individual requests. Requests for reunification should be made only by the individuals themselves. Accept no requests from third parties.
	Family reunification process. A family reunification can take place only at the end of the tracing process and only after the conditions below have been met.
	1) **Re-establishment of contact.** A family reunification can be organized only after the relatives concerned have been located and contact restored between them through the exchange of family news. (The exchange of family news organized by the Movement enables them to take an informed decision and the Movement to ascertain that they are related and wish to be reunited, and to identify possible obstacles.)
	2) **Identity and kinship** have both been verified.
	3) **Mutual consent.** The formal consent of both sides is a prerequisite for family reunification. Young children should be involved in the decision (see point 4 below).
	4) **Assessment of best interests.** It may be necessary to assess what is in the best interests of children and other vulnerable persons who have been separated from their families for a long time, or whose primary caregiver is dead, before reuniting them with their families.
	5) **Primacy of safety.** A family reunification can be carried out only after the safety of the beneficiaries during the journey and the security of the reunification site have been properly assessed and confirmed.
	6) **Logistical support.** A family reunification requires safe Movement access to the areas where the relatives are and safe and reliable transportation.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS to be met for using this tool	7) **Authorization of the authorities.** In most cases, the authorities should, in principle, be notified beforehand and their approval obtained; this is especially true in conflict and security-sensitive situations, for children, or for cross-border reunifications.
CONSTRAINTS	**Need for stable environment.** In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, and as long as the situation remains unstable or there are security risks and further population displacements, it might not be advisable to proceed with family reunification. **Legal framework.** The national legislation might include definitions of the family unit and their rights, child protection measures and other obligations and requirements that can have an impact on family reunification. The definition of the family unit and the right to reunification varies according to national legislation. In situations where reunification entails the admission of family members by another country, the decision is made with regard to the laws and regulations of that country.
OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 1 Rapid assessment of needs, risks and capacity.** Rapidly assess and regularly review: • the need to carry out family reunifications and the categories of person for whom they are required. Focus particularly on vulnerable separated family members, such as children, the elderly, disabled persons and those who depend on their families for support; • the security risks family reunification pose to the beneficiaries; • the impact of the legal framework on child protection and family reunification; • the role and capacity of the authorities to organize or assist with family reunifications; • the role and capacity of non-governmental actors to organize or assist with family reunifications; • the Movement's capacity (legal status, set-up, logistics, human resources and organization) to organize or assist with family reunifications. **OP 2 Coordination with the authorities.** Coordinate with the authorities in order to clarify their responsibilities, identify the Movement's role and obtain the necessary support and authorization to proceed or to assist with family reunification.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 3 Coordination with other actors.** Coordinate with other actors in order to avoid duplication, share data when deemed necessary, build a referral system and promote a principled response that is in the best interests of the beneficiaries. For children, refer to the *Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*. **OP 4 Movement involvement.** Decide whether the Movement will organize the whole process of family reunification, request the contribution of other partners in a reunification process led by the Movement, or assist other leading agencies (governmental or non- governmental) in the family reunification process. Decide accordingly how to refer cases and what data should be shared. Negotiate and formalize an agreement with partners. See 'Model Agreement for National Societies on sharing data' and accompanying guidance on the CD-ROM. **OP 5 Criteria and scope.** Identify: • for which category of beneficiaries the Movement will organize or participate in family reunifications; • from which, and to which, areas the Movement will carry out or participate in family reunifications. **OP 6 Cross-border reunifications.** Identify in particular whether the Movement will carry out or participate in family reunifications only within the affected county or also across borders. In the latter case, ask the National Society or ICRC delegation concerned to provide the "receiving" country's procedures. Decide whether travel documents issued by the ICRC might be necessary for those without ID or passports. **OP 7 Follow-up after reunification.** Identify whether the family reunification requires follow-up, and if so by whom and how. **OP 8 Description of the family reunification process.** Draw up a working procedure describing the family reunification process (for the Movement). Identify: • each step of the process leading up to a family reunification; • the conditions to be met at each step for a family reunification to proceed (refer to Essential Requirements above); • what has to be monitored and by whom, so as to ascertain that the conditions required have been met; • what documents are needed to confirm that the conditions have been met;

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	• how the documents will be stored and exchanged (where and by whom they will be centralized);
	• who is doing what in the process, and particularly who takes the final decision to proceed with the family reunification and who is responsible for transportation/travel;
	• how to liaise with the authorities and other organizations.
	Draw up a shorter briefing note enabling Movement staff to explain the family reunification process and its requirements to beneficiaries and the main stakeholders.
	OP 9 Criteria for closing a family reunification case. Decide in what circumstances a case is closed. A family reunification case can be closed positively (when the hand-over certificate has been signed by the receiving family, after successful reunification) or negatively (when the family reunification could not be completed). See 'Handover Certificate' on CD-ROM.
	In general, a family reunification case is considered closed, and no further action to reunite the relatives concerned taken, in the following circumstances and after the relatives concerned have been duly informed by the Movement:
	• the family members have been reunited (through the family reunification process or by other means);
	• one of the family members directly concerned refuses the reunification;
	• after verification, the beneficiaries do not meet the criteria required for family reunification (e.g. kinship);
	• the family reunification is clearly not in the best interests of the vulnerable person;
	• the family reunification cannot be carried out, even in the long term, for logistical, legal, security or other reasons;
	• one of the family members to be reunited has died and the other has been so informed (a death certificate may have been provided by the authorities and the enquirer informed about the location of the body);
	• one of the family members to be reunited has moved and cannot be located and all avenues to trace him or her have been explored without success;
	• another (lasting) solution has been found for those (vulnerable) individuals for whom family reunification is not possible or runs counter to their best interests.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	The closure of a family reunification case does not necessarily mean the end of the Movement's individual follow-up or of its efforts in behalf of the relatives concerned. Depending on the circumstances, the needs and the best interests of the persons concerned, the Movement may open another family reunification case for a different family member. It may also address other needs for RFL services, assistance or protection, or refer the family members to the authorities or other organizations.

OP 10 Production of forms. Produce these forms (see CD-ROM), to be used for family reunifications, at a minimum:

1. **Family reunification assessment form.** This is a request for family reunification to be completed during an interview with a Movement staff member or volunteer and signed by the relative requesting family reunification.

2. **Family reunification assessment form.** This is used to assess both the present circumstances of the child and those of the relative of the child (the future caregiver).

3. **Family reunification agreement.** This is to be completed during an interview with a Movement staff member or volunteer and signed by the receiving family members before the reunification.

4. **Hand-over certificate.** This is to be signed by the receiving family in the presence of a Movement staff member or volunteer at the place and time of the reunification.

5. **Follow Up Visit Form.** This is to be used to check on the welfare and integration of a child after family reunification.

If it is possible to carry out the family reunification quicker than the transfer of the Family Reunification Request form would allow, it is possible to use the Family Reunification agreement form 'on-the-spot', with the Family Reunification Request Form being processed in due course.

OP 11 Movement capacity to restore contact and manage data. This is an essential requirement for family reunifications. Rapidly check the Movement's capacity:

• to enable the exchange of family news between separated families;

• to manage data on the persons concerned and transmit the necessary documents between Movement teams and offices that may be in contact with both sides of the family to be reunified.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 12 Setting up a system for managing data.** Establish (or strengthen), as required, the information system and procedures to collect, transmit, handle and follow up requests for family reunification. It is essential to create a centralized individual filing system and possibly a database (or at least, a card index) to manage and follow up individual cases. For each person who requires family reunification, an individual file should be opened and given a specific reference number. Refer to Section 10. The system should enable Movement staff or volunteers to: • collect, centralize, store, retrieve and transmit data and documents that were collected during, or that are related to, the family reunification process, including information given to the enquirer on the results of the search and the decision to close the case; • exercise quality control of the data collected; • monitor progress. **OP 13 Assessment and setting up of logistical support.** Assess the capacity of the Movement and other reliable stakeholders (governmental or non-governmental bodies, private companies) to ensure reliable and safe transportation. Strengthen the Movement's capacity if necessary, or use other stakeholders or private companies. Check whether the people concerned require the presence of a trained Movement staff member or volunteer (particularly if they have health or psychosocial needs) during transportation. **OP 14 Communicate to the Family Links Network.** Send a message to the CTA explaining the criteria, conditions and scope of family reunifications for sharing with other National Societies and delegations, as appropriate. **OP 15 Communicate to other stakeholders.** Communicate the same information to the authorities concerned and other relevant stakeholders, for referral of cases or promotion of RFL services. **OP 16 Individual records.** Centralize updated individual records (electronic and paper) of the original documents and relevant data related to the family reunification process and follow-up in a safe place. This should include: the family reunification form; the family reunification agreement; the hand-over certificate; copies of the RCMs or news exchanged between the separated relatives; a copy of the correspondence between the Movement components and the families; the results of the family reunification process and its follow-up; the decision to close the case. Records should be kept even after the case has been closed.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE	**OP 17 Monitoring.** Indicators may include the number of: family reunification cases opened; cases pending; cases closed positively (successfully); cases closed negatively (unsuccessfully) and the reasons for it; and cases related to children. **OP 18 Working procedures.** Draw up and promote internal working procedures based on OP 2 to OP 17, including a description of the family reunification process, a briefing note for beneficiaries, a family reunification form, a family reunification agreement, a hand-over certificate, a follow-up form and statistical reporting formats. **OP 19 Training and coaching.** Train and coach Movement staff or volunteers in the working procedures. Brief the staff or organization in charge of transportation.

ANNEX 6   Human resources: Main roles and tasks

The brief descriptions below of the main roles and tasks of Movement staff can be used as a checklist to ensure that all tasks have been allocated.

Management of RFL response

- Set overall strategy and make major operational decisions relating to RFL
- Take responsibility for overall analysis, planning and monitoring
- Liaise with operational management of other Movement components
- Coordinate with the CTA
- Liaise with authorities, management of other actors, as needed
- Ensure coherence with other responses
- Allocate roles and tasks within the RFL team
- Identify and approve key messages for external target groups
- Produce final report on activities and recommendations for next phase of operation

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Assessment   See Section 5

- Draft clear terms of reference
- Manage the assessment process, reporting daily on key findings
- Brief and manage assessment teams and members
- Identify key capacities, urgent needs and operational conditions
- Liaise with other Movement assessment teams

Field team supervision

- Recruit, supervise and support field team members
- Liaise with local authorities, other agencies
- Liaise with other Movement operational teams
- Draw up daily reports based on debriefing
- Arrange logistical and administrative support for RFL teams
- Identify key operational challenges

Data administration

- Decide what data needs to be collected to implement the RFL response
- Ensure a coherent system for the collection, use and storage of data, in line with the capacities and technologies available
- Ensure data administration is clearly identified as part of the plan of action
- Supervise staff or volunteers who are responsible for entering data
- Establish a robust means of checking the quality of data entry

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Service delivery   See Section 8 and Annex 5

- Key tasks depend on the specific tools and approaches chosen

Office management (administration)   **See Section 10**

- Establish or develop a tracing office (s)
- Provide basic administrative support
- Organize reception facilities for those seeking news of relatives
- Ensure communications flow both within the RFL field-based team and to other designated recipients

Cross-cutting activities that are shared across the RFL team:

Communication   **See Section 11**

- Communicate with national and local authorities to clarify roles and responsibilities
- Communicate with other actors, identify complementarity and potential for cooperation
- Communicate with local leaders, community networks
- Communicate to the affected population how to access RFL services

Training   **See Section 10 and CD-ROM**

- Train non-RFL specialists to carry out basic RFL tasks
- Introduce the Movement and guiding principles for RFL to newly recruited staff/volunteers
- Train staff and volunteers in basic data administration

Monitoring and reporting   **See Section 12**

- Monitor key indicators on a regular basis
- Produce assessment reports, daily in the first phase
- Produce regular activity reports for overall management of the disaster response and for the CTA, ICRC

ANNEX 7 Human resources: Sample job descriptions and person specifications

The following job descriptions and person specifications may be adjusted for the specific disaster or context, as required. These job descriptions and person specifications are on the CD-ROM.

Head of RFL office (coordinator)

He or she heads the RFL team based at the RFL office and may supervise the activities of sub-offices, as appropriate.

N.B. Job titles may vary across the Movement.
Specific responsibilities and tasks will vary according to operational requirements.

Main responsibilities and tasks

- To establish local priorities according to instructions provided by headquarters
- To be responsible for communication between the main RFL office and: the headquarters (if this should be in a different location); the branch or local office management; and other Movement representatives providing RFL responses in the affected area
- To lead the planning of local RFL activities, including the organization of field visits
- To organize the daily activities of field teams (team composition, tasks, places to visit, briefing, debriefing of teams)
- To provide regular reports, including the identification of problems to be addressed
- To oversee the organization of the main RFL office
- To understand the guidelines provided by headquarters and ensure their implementation by staff/volunteers
- To train new volunteers/staff to carry out their tasks or ensure such training is provided
- To supervise and support staff and volunteers within the National Society and/or delegation, as appropriate (this may include on-the-job training)
- To ensure the effective use of resources (human, material and financial)
- To cooperate closely at all times with other Movement teams providing a response in the disaster
- To liaise, as appropriate, with the relevant authorities and other agencies
- To provide recommendations on future RFL activities relating to the disaster
- To observe confidentiality and data protection principles (see Annex 1)
- To uphold the Movement's Fundamental Principles

Person specification
The following are *possible* factors to consider when appointing Heads of RFL Offices (coordinators):
- Minimum RFL experience required
- Minimum experience supervising staff/volunteers required
- Experience working in disasters/emergency operations
- Skills in training and providing technical support to staff and volunteers
- Knowledge of RFL tools and methodologies
- Knowledge of RFL data administration requirements
- Familiarity with IT
- Communication skills, both written and oral
- Initiative and problem-solving skills
- Skilled at negotiating with a range of partners
- Able to work well in a team
- Able to work and live in stressful situations and help others working under stress
- Language skills if the work involves different language groups

Administrator (Focal point) at RFL Office
He or she is responsible for daily administration and reception in the RFL office or sub-office.

N.B. Job titles may vary across the Movement.
Specific responsibilities and tasks will vary according to operational requirements.

Main responsibilities and tasks
- To provide reception facilities to enquirers arriving at the office
- To respond to telephone enquiries
- To organize and maintain the filing system in the office
- To register, or organize the registration of, all new cases
- To manage the RFL budget and expenditure
- To maintain financial records of all expenditure
- To collect completed RFL forms at the end of the day
- To ensure equipment is properly handled and safeguarded by field teams and in the RFL office
- To ensure that field teams are equipped with phones and other equipment, as necessary
- To ensure that field teams are provided with the documents (lists, cases, etc.) they need to carry out their tasks
- To manage the stock of stationery and other supplies in the RFL office
- To monitor the movements of teams in the field
- To train new volunteers/staff to carry out their tasks in the RFL office

- To supervise and help staff and volunteers within the RFL office, as appropriate (this may include on-the-job training)
- To do what is needed to close the office, as appropriate
- To observe confidentiality and data protection principles (see Annex 1)
- To uphold the Movement's Fundamental Principles

Person specification

The following are *possible* factors to consider when appointing an administrator at an RFL office (focal point):

- Minimum experience of office management/administration required
- Minimum experience working in RFL required
- Minimum experience supervising staff/volunteers required
- Experience of financial administration, petty cash
- Skills in training and providing support to staff and volunteers
- Knowledge of RFL data administration requirements
- Familiarity with IT
- Communication skills, both written and oral
- Initiative and problem-solving skills
- Able to work well in a team
- Able to work and live in stressful situations
- Language skills, if the work involves different language groups
- Functional numeracy

RFL field staff/volunteer

He or she provides RFL services directly to the affected population, possibly in the RFL office, but probably out of the office, in the affected area. N.B. Job titles may vary across the Movement. Specific responsibilities and tasks will vary according to operational requirements.

Main responsibilities and tasks

- To receive enquirers and respond to their questions
- To respond to telephone enquiries (if based in an office)
- To understand the RFL working procedures provided and apply them
- To fill out all forms accurately
- To use other RFL tools as identified in accordance with the working procedures provided
- To check the forms carefully before submitting them for processing and action
- To hand over completed forms to the administrator and provide figures on the activities carried out and RFL services offered to beneficiaries
- To follow the instructions of the team leader, as requested
- To refer complex problems to the team leader/manager for guidance

- To observe confidentiality and data protection principles (see Annex 1)
- To treat all enquirers with respect
- To uphold the Movement's Fundamental Principles

Person specification
N.B. It is seldom practical to interview volunteers during a disaster; it is, however, more likely that volunteers and staff can be screened for basic requirements. The following are *possible* factors to consider when selecting RFL field staff/volunteers:
- Literacy – basic school leaving certificate
- Level of experience working in RFL
- Level of experience working in similar field of activity
- Communication skills, written and oral
- Able to work well in a team
- Able to work and live in stressful situations
- Familiarity with IT
- Language skills, if the work involves different language groups
- Gender, to ensure appropriate team mix

RFL data administrator (data entry)
He or she provides RFL data administration services in the RFL office, either inside or outside the affected area.

N.B. Job titles may vary across the Movement. This job may be referred to as data entry or input administrator.

Specific responsibilities and tasks will vary according to operational requirements.

Main responsibilities and tasks
- To perform data administration tasks according to the RFL guidelines and working procedures provided
- To apply a very high standard of accuracy in all data entry
- To enter data in a methodical, timely manner
- To check the forms carefully before entering the data
- To provide statistics on the activities carried out and on RFL services offered to beneficiaries
- To follow the instructions of the team leader, as requested
- To refer complex problems to the team leader/manager for guidance
- To observe confidentiality and data protection principles (see Annex 1)
- To uphold the Movement's Fundamental Principles

Person specification

The following are *possible* factors to consider when selecting RFL field staff/volunteers:

- Level of experience working in RFL
- Level of experience working in a similar field of activity, particularly data entry
- Familiarity with IT
- Literacy – basic school leaving certificate
- Able to work well in a team
- Able to work and live in stressful situations
- Language skills, if the work involves different languages
- Gender, to ensure an appropriate team mix

ANNEX 8 Human resources: Recruitment in disasters

Key points

- It is preferable to recruit staff and volunteers with a Movement background: this should be part of the National Society or delegation's disaster preparedness. However, a disaster may require "instant recruitment" of individuals without a Movement background.
- During a disaster, recruitment of staff or volunteers under great time pressure means that the normal process, based on a full review of applications and complete interviews, is not possible.

The recommendations below are for rapid recruitment and should be used only for this purpose.

- **Be clear about the role(s) and tasks that you are recruiting for:** Define these and the essential skills required. See Annex 7 for sample job descriptions and CD-ROM for models which can be adapted as required.
- **Identify basic qualifications:** Identify the basic educational requirements for a specific role.
- **Diversity:** Consider if you need a mix of languages, cultural backgrounds, ages and a balance between men and women in the group that you are recruiting. (In a situation of conflict or armed violence, it may be essential to recruit individuals who are acceptable to different communities or parties to the conflict.)
- **Communications skills, empathy and flexibility:** These "soft skills" are difficult to determine in a rapid recruitment process. Consider each individual's relevant experience.
- **Interviews:** However time-consuming this may be, consider interviewing potential volunteers. The interview may be limited to questions on educational achievement, experience and availability.
- **Training:** Training provides an opportunity for trainers to check if individuals are well suited – or not – for particular tasks. If individuals are not suited for a task, it would be preferable to find them another, more suitable role.
- **Support and supervision:** Support and supervision provide an opportunity to review recruitment decisions and strengthen the performance of particular individuals, reassign them or end their involvement.

ANNEX 9   Human resources: Training during disasters

Suggestions for training are also to be found on the CD-ROM and include:

- **Training in a disaster: overview and guidance**
- **Principles underpinning the RFL response** – key messages
- **Providing an appropriate response to individuals experiencing a crisis** – key messages for staff and volunteers working with the affected population
- **Providing News of Death**
- **Interacting with Children** – provides guidance
- **Training suggestions on specific tools** – for use with Annex 5
- **Data administration training**
- **Photograph library** – for use in training or publicity materials, if appropriate

Setting training objectives

The overall objective is to ensure that staff and volunteers are provided with clear and task-specific training to enable them to respond quickly. For newly recruited staff and volunteers without a Movement background, it is also essential that they be introduced to the Movement and the Fundamental Principles.

There are three important factors to consider when deciding who needs to be trained to do what in a rapid-onset disaster.

1) Skills already existing in the National Society or delegation and identified gaps

It is important to understand who has been trained in what and when this took place. Those being trained may have experience of RFL and be familiar with the tools, while others may have had little or no prior contact with the Movement. Even if the delegation and/or National Society is well prepared, the numbers of staff and volunteers may have to be increased.

2) Complexity of the tasks the staff and volunteers need to carry out

It is easier to train people to use some tools (e.g. telephone services) than others. Some tasks require specialist skills, such as the analysis of assessment findings or the choice of tools and approaches to be used.

It is essential to take a realistic view of what a person can reasonably be expected to accomplish with limited training. More complex tools require further training.

- Ensure that more complex tasks are carried out only by those with proven experience OR
- Ensure that more complex tasks are carried out under the supervision of those with proven experience OR
- Pair individuals to ensure stronger and weaker staff/volunteers can work together effectively on more complex tasks

3) The balance between the quality of work and the speed of response required
If staff and volunteers are being trained during the acute phase of a disaster, it is important to provide sufficient support and supervision at an early stage. Data entry may require rapid intensive training and close supervision to ensure data quality.

Training during disasters: Recommended practice

Be realistic
Decide what tools and approaches are to be used with the skills and knowledge available. Some tools are not easily used by relatively untrained staff and volunteers (see above).

Keep it simple and focused
Do not overcomplicate the training with too much theory or policy, but keep it clear and accessible. It is important to ensure that training is provided in a limited number of tools and approaches at the same time. Restrict training to the chosen tools and what is needed to use these tools. See CD-ROM for suggestions on training on specific tools and approaches.

Keep it short
The time available for training may be counted in hours, not days. During a disaster, teach people what they have to know, not what may be desirable for them to know.

Keep it relevant
Be clear about whom you are training. Providing a rapid briefing to an experienced team of RFL staff and volunteers is different from training individuals with little or no knowledge of RFL, or indeed of the Movement.

Practise
Ensure that those being trained have the opportunity to practise using the tools and approaches they will actually deploy.

Keep it comfortable
Make sure that staff and volunteers know that they do not have to know everything and that they can bring back questions for follow-up. Be discreet about the points raised: people must feel free to make mistakes, ask questions and test their understanding. Set the ground rules for this at the beginning of the training.

Keep it impartial
It may be important for the training to address the challenges of gender, ethnicity and faith. It may be difficult for some staff and volunteers to work across some social barriers. Encourage participants to ask questions so that their concerns are addressed.

Keep it principled
Section 1 and the key operational principles outlined there may be important as a reference point.

Check it
It is essential to check how well things have been understood. Use role-playing, multiple-choice tests, etc., to confirm how well things have been learnt.

Other training guidance
Supplement training with briefing, supervision and support. During a disaster, time is so limited that it is essential that feedback from support, supervision and debriefing be turned into further training. It is important that briefing, debriefing, support and supervision rapidly reinforce the training that has been provided.

Family
Use of nearly all the tools requires a clear understanding of what is meant by "family" in the context. This must be made clear at an appropriate point in the training. Some tools and approaches are more easily restricted to family members, whereas others, such as phone services or the website, are not.

Conduct
How staff and volunteers conduct themselves with the affected population, whether in person or on the phone, has to form part of the training and be monitored.

How staff and volunteers conduct themselves with local communities, their leaders, the authorities and other agencies is also critical to success. All training should cover these aspects. For example, if an RFL activity is being carried out in a shelter or a camp, those in charge and other key stakeholders must be informed in advance to secure their consent and support.

Procedures
It is important that the necessary procedures be introduced during the training, whether they apply to overall work or to specific tools, and that these are supported by written instructions (working procedures). See Section 10, Annex 5 for guidance on specific tools and the CD-ROM for examples of Working Procedures.

ANNEX 10   RFL KIT

Emergency preparedness includes putting together an RFL kit containing the equipment and materials needed for the response. See Section 4 on preparedness. Before purchasing the contents of the kit:

- Identify the likely needs and existing capacities, and establish the kit as part of overall preparedness.
- For guidance on specific items and their selection, visit www.icrc.org/emergency-items/ to view the emergency items catalogue.
- Consider support requirements for IT and telecommunications equipment.
- Consider coverage and cost when choosing telecommunications equipment.
- Identify which items are best stored and maintained and which are best obtained during the disaster (e.g. mobile phones).
- If items are to be purchased during the disaster, specifications and standard protocols for procurement approval are needed in advance, in order to speed up the response.
- Choose where items are to be stored: this will depend on geography, cost and means of transportation.
- Plan for maintenance to ensure that the kit is well maintained, usable and up to date.
- Identify the need for training in the use of the kit, including refresher training.
- Identify who will decide to deploy the kit and who controls the use of materials.

Using the checklist (see CD ROM for copy of this checklist)
- The following checklist should be seen as a prompt and to be used in light of the considerations above: not every item will be useful in every context.
- The list is not exhaustive: there may be items not listed that may also be useful.
- The list does not include the equipment or materials required for a hotline/call centre, which will require separate planning and resources.

RFL KIT CHECKLIST

ITEM	NEEDED OR NOT: √ OR ×	UNIT/ QUANTITY NEEDED
Office equipment		
CD-RW (Rewritable)		
Laptop		
USB key		
Printer/Copier		
Calculator plus roll		
Generator		
Surge protector unit		
Jerrycans		
Padlocks		
Cabling and sockets		
Communications equipment		
Satellite phone		
Mobile phone		
VHF radio		
Other equipment		
Identification tags		
Portable radio		
Timer/Stopwatch		
Megaphone		
Camera (digital)		
Body bags		
Gloves		
Masks		
Office furniture		
Tables		
Chairs		
Lighting		
Storage (waterproof, secure)		
Trays for sorting paper		
RFL forms (pre-printed)		
Safe and Well		
RCMs		
Tracing forms		
Anxious for News forms		
Family reunification forms		
Reporting forms (see CD-ROM for examples)		

Office supplies and stationery		
Date stamp, pad and refill ink (red, black)		
Movement stamp		
Stapler (and staples)		
Rulers		
Hole punch (large)		
Hole punch (normal)		
Paper cutter		
Scotch tape/Sellotape and dispenser		
Scotch tape (large, brown)		
Scissors		
Box file (binders)		
File dividers		
Plastic folders		
Index files		
B4 envelopes		
Official envelopes		
Envelopes for internal mail		
Assorted size envelopes		
Pens (black)		
Markers (red, black)		
Highlighters (yellow)		
Correction pen/fluid		
Pencils		
Pencil sharpeners		
Erasers		
Post-its		
Rubber bands		
Paper clips		
Letterhead		
Paper		
Carbon paper		
Photographic paper		
Notebooks		
Card index		
Cash box		
Clipboard		
Labels (stickers)		

Other		
Contact list of other agencies/ governmental offices (address book)		
Maps		
Identification badges		
Water filter for office		
Fire blanket/Extinguisher		
White board		
White board markers		
White board eraser		
Flip chart		
Flip chart paper		
Laminating machine for ID cards and supplies (plastic, clips, etc.)		

ANNEX 11   Drafting the terms of reference for an evaluation

There are no model terms of reference for evaluations. Terms of reference may include the following sections:

Title
Briefly identify the response (project, programme, policy) being evaluated.

Purpose
Clearly identify the purpose of the evaluation (why it is being carried out and how it will be used). State that there will be a formal management response to the results of the evaluation.

Scope and focus
State the focus and scope of the evaluation (what it will look at, what its limits and priorities are).

Stakeholders and information
Identify the key stakeholders and documents the evaluation will need to access.

Outputs/deliverables
Consider limiting the length of the evaluation report and indicating the contents of the executive summary. Identify the process for presenting the report: a document, a workshop, a presentation or a combination of all three.

Accountability/Responsibilities
Identify who is managing the evaluation within the Movement, and his or her responsibilities; identify the responsibilities of those carrying out the evaluation. State if there is a need for a mid-evaluation presentation/submission of a report to key stakeholders to validate early findings. Identify the ownership of the report and the terms of confidentiality that will apply: if the evaluation is being conducted by external consultants, this will need to be specified in the evaluation team's contract.

Methodology and timetable
Request a work plan identifying the methodology and timetable (the Movement may set a deadline for completion of the evaluation and submission of the report).

Evaluators' qualifications
The terms of reference may state the minimum requirements in terms of qualifications or experience to be satisfied by those carrying out the evaluation.

Budget
While this is often open to negotiation, it may be appropriate to specify how many workdays the evaluation is expected to take.

ANNEX 12   Team debriefings

These are internally run learning exercises (sometimes referred to as "After-Action Reviews") and are usually conducted at the end of an operation or a phase of the operation. The following is recommended practice for team, or group, operational debriefings.

• Arrange for another person – from outside the RFL team, but from within the Movement – to facilitate any group discussions.
• Ensure that an agenda is agreed with the group. This can be flexible, as it is important to allow people to speak freely. Remember that individual debriefings are also important and some issues may be better explored in depth in such debriefings.
• Allot enough time. Operational debriefings should not be rushed.
• Ensure that the discussions are well documented and key learning points identified.
• Consider the operation chronologically: agree a timeline of the operation.
• Recognize good practice (but provide evidence for this).
• Recognize operational problems (and provide evidence of these).
• Acknowledge operational problems and weaknesses, but do not personalize them. At the same time, it is important to consider what can be done to address the problems (see grid below).
• Debriefings are challenging for those who may be exhausted after weeks of intensive work under pressure. Frustrations and disappointments need to be acknowledged and appreciation expressed. The grid below allows team members to identify operational constraints first, in order for people to be more objective in subsequent discussions:

WHAT WERE THE OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS?	
WHAT WENT WELL?	WHAT DID NOT GO WELL?
HOW COULD IT BE IMPROVED IN THE FUTURE?	HOW COULD IT BE IMPROVED IN THE FUTURE?

ANNEX 13   References and bibliography

Legal and Movement references
ICRC
The part played by the ICRC in RFL, including its lead role within the Movement, is defined by the following:

- The 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols. In conflicts or situations of internal violence, the legal framework is set by the four 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and by the applicable international human rights law. Express mention is made of the ICRC's mandate and of the CTA (Article 123 of the Third Geneva Convention, Article 140 of the Fourth Geneva convention and Article 33 of Additional Protocol I). Common Articles 9/9/9/10 and Article 81(1) of Additional Protocol I allow the ICRC to offer its services in times of international armed conflict; Common Article 3 allows it to do so in times of non-international armed conflict;
- Article 5 of the Movement's Statutes, in particular Article 5.2 (e), specifies that the ICRC ensures the operation of the CTA as stipulated by the Geneva Conventions;
- Resolutions adopted by the Movement's statutory bodies, in particular the 25th and 26th International Conferences (1986 and 1995 respectively), drew the States' attention to the role of the CTA as coordinator and technical adviser to National Societies and governments;
- Resolutions of the Council of Delegates, and the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures.

National Societies
The part played by National Societies in RFL, including their role in natural disasters, is defined by the following:

- The 1949 Geneva Conventions (Articles 3.1 and 3.2), which stipulate that their role is to assist the victims of armed conflict and the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies who need help;
- Article 3 of the Movement's Statutes, which states that the National Societies must carry out their humanitarian activities in conformity with their own statutes and national legislation and act as auxiliaries to the authorities in the humanitarian field;
- Resolutions of the Council of Delegates, and the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures;
- Resolution XVI of the 25th International Conference (1986), which outlined the important role of National Societies as components of the international network for tracing and reuniting families.

Secretariat of the International Federation

The functions of the Secretariat of the International Federation are defined by the following:

• Article 6 of the Movement's Statutes;
• Resolutions of the Council of Delegates, and the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures;
• The *Restoring Family Links Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Cross Movement 2008–18* commits all the Movement's components to strengthen its RFL capacity, including in its response to natural disasters. It states that the Secretariat will ensure that assessments will take into account the need for RFL and that it will strive, in coordination with the ICRC, to ensure that disaster-preparedness and response plans emphasize the role and importance of RFL.

In addition, the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief* provides a basis for all Movement action in disaster relief activities.

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ANNEX 14   Agreements with external partners, Council of Delegates, 2003

AGREEMENTS WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Minimum elements to be included in operational agreements between Movement components and their external operational partners Council of Delegates, 2003

The following elements should be referred to when negotiating or reviewing operational agreements between Movement components (National Societies, the International Federation Secretariat and ICRC) and external organizations (United Nations Agencies, intergovernmental organizations, international and national non-governmental organizations) in order to ensure any such agreement reflects coherence with Movement Fundamental Principles, policy and practice and complementarity among the components of the Movement.

Movement components are advised to consult with and notify other Movement components prior to the signature of any operational agreements with external partners. According to the International Conference 1981, Manila, National Societies are obliged to consult the ICRC and the Federation Secretariat in advance of signing any agreement with UNHCR.

SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT

1. Adherence to Movement Principles and Policies

National Societies and other Movement components must be able at all times to act in adherence to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, particularly those of independence, neutrality and impartiality. In addition, the issue of serving only the needs of the Partner's targeted population (i.e. refugees in most cases) and not balancing this with serving the needs of others in the surrounding vicinity who may be facing similar hardship (adhering to Impartiality principle) needs to be monitored. Serving only specific beneficiary groups could result in the National Society not being able to fulfill its duty to assist all those affected without distinction, which in turn could result in a negative image for the National Society. A holistic approach should be adopted, which takes into account both the needs of the refugees and/or IDPs and those of the local population, which may be experiencing even harsher living conditions than the refugees themselves.

National Societies and other Movement components must also adhere to and respect at all times, the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Seville

Agreement) as well as the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief and the Code of Conduct.

The necessity for the National Society and other Movement components to adhere to Movement policies, such as the policy on the Regulations on the use of the Emblem of the Red Cross or Red Crescent by National Societies and the policy related to the armed protection of humanitarian aid should be clearly described and followed at all times. Of paramount importance is the absolute imperative for Federation Secretariat, National Society and ICRC personnel to adhere to the principles expressed in the 'IASC Policy Statement on Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in Humanitarian Crisis,' which has been signed by both the Federation Secretariat on behalf of its membership, and by the ICRC.

If at any time, the ability to act in coherence with the above is compromised, National Societies or other Movement components must have the immediate reflex and ability to suspend or terminate the Agreement with the external Partner (see section 10).

2. Identity
The Agreement must reflect that the National Society or other Movement component will at all times clearly display its own individual identity and be clearly associated to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It will not assume the identity of the Partner agency through the displaying of double logos or emblems on equipment or through the adoption of vehicle licenses. Its identity must not be compromised at any time while conducting its responsibilities under said agreement. The Regulations on the Use of the Emblem will be followed at all times. The protective emblem will only be utilized in conformity to regulations.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT CONTENT

3. Define Partners clearly and correctly
In the title and introductory paragraph of the Agreement, use the legal/official name of the National Society or other Movement component and the organization involved. These names may be followed in parenthesis by the abbreviated name which then should be used throughout the Agreement.

4. General Situation Background and Purpose of the Agreement
The context and situation that is leading to this Agreement should be clearly described.

5. Stated Goal (or outcomes) and Objectives

The Agreement must state the overall goal or outcomes to be achieved through the working relationship and the objectives needed to be accomplished in order to achieve this goal.

Beneficiary determination

In all operational partnerships, the external Partner must respect the need for the Red Cross/Red Crescent Partner to adhere to the requirement to meet the needs of all persons needing assistance and protection. For example, this may include persons not explicitly considered 'convention refugees' but rather persons who may be even more vulnerable due to the absence of legal status. In order to prevent tensions from mounting in the geographical area, vulnerable persons in the surrounding community may also be assisted.

For this reason, it is advisable for the Red Cross/Red Crescent component to be actively involved in the assessment of needs, which in turn, determines the beneficiary population.

Continuum of Support

Care should be taken when determining the goal, to ensure the project is not overly restricted to one period of time in the beneficiary's experience, but rather linked to longer term needs leading to durable solutions such as societal integration, medical needs, family reunification, repatriation and legal guidance.

6. Delineation of Roles and Responsibilities of each Partner to the Agreement

The primary roles and responsibilities of each Partner must be stated clearly, clarifying what they can and cannot expect from each other. Within these roles, the issue of accountability for resources and the achievement of specific objectives must be detailed. Responsibilities for the following should be clearly articulated:
- assessment of needs,
- determination of beneficiaries,
- planning, formulation of project objectives,
- implementation, with details of specific roles and responsibilities outlined,
- protection and advocacy,
- financial management including internal and external auditing of accounts,
- financial and narrative reporting as well as monitoring and evaluation should be
- described clearly,
- monitoring and evaluation.

Additionally, of importance, is the clear establishment of who is responsible for the security of the staff and volunteers while fulfilling their responsibilities.

7. Resource Contributions

The financial, material and human resource contributions to be made by each Partner in order to fulfil their respective commitments in the Agreement should be outlined. Care must be taken by both institutions involved in the partnership, to ensure that the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement Partner's capacity is not diminished or overwhelmed, but rather is enhanced.

To avoid the common unfortunate situation where a National Society or other Movement component is actually in financial arrears as a result of such Agreements due to overhead costs not remunerated by the Partner organization, attention should be given to ensuring adequate financial coverage. Such a situation could be prevented through a procedure of advancement of funds and rigorous and regular quarterly project review meetings (see next section).

8. Description of Project Coordination and Management Mechanism

A description of how the overall project will be coordinated and managed between the two Partners should be outlined clearly in the agreement.

Focal Points: Each party will appoint a focal point to serve as the primary liaison between the Parties, to ensure the successful fulfilment of activities.

Coordination Meetings: Meetings will be organized as required and will involve other concerned parties if warranted. Formal quarterly project review meetings will occur which will review the implementation plan, reporting and financial management to ensure the agreement is being implemented as planned. The outcomes of these meetings will be utilized to suggest any project revisions and to guide decisions regarding project revision and/or including prolongation.

9. Agreement Provisions

9.1. Commencement, Termination and Project Finalization

The exact date that the Agreement comes into effect must be stated as well as when the active project implementation is to be terminated. Additionally, the date of the project finalization should be stated, at which time the completion of all required reporting, hand over of equipment and materials as necessary, should be completed.

9.2 Review, Revision, Prolongation

Through the establishment of regular joint monitoring, the review and possible revision or prolongation of certain Agreement elements will be mutually decided. These decisions will be reflected in written and signed addendums to the original Agreement.

Three months prior to the project termination date, as part of the quarterly Project Coordination meetings, decisions will be taken regarding the need to prolong the contract or to adhere to the original project end date.

9.3 Suspension or Disengagement Clause

9.3.1 In the event of circumstances beyond the control of the Partners

The Partners have the right to immediately suspend or cancel the Agreement in the event of circumstances beyond their control such as a major change in the conditions or environment. Particularly, should there be a change from a situation of peace to one of internal tension, disturbances and/or armed conflict, the National Society or other Movement component must have the possibility to withdraw from the Agreement immediately. If the ability of the National Society or other Movement component to adhere to the Fundamental Principles, or Movement policy or procedures is compromised, it must not hesitate to withdraw from the Agreement immediately. This can take the form of a temporary suspension of the contract until an identified period of time has passed or a change of circumstance has occurred, following which, upon consultation with and agreement of other Movement components, the Agreement can be resumed. Alternatively, a complete disengagement and termination of contract can occur.

Prior to this clause being invoked, consultation will take place between the Partners. The suspension or termination will take place effective immediately or within one month following the consultation. During this time, all possible attempts will be made by both Partners to ensure the needs of the beneficiaries continue to be met by other means.

10. Non-adherence to Agreement Clauses

Should there be a disagreement that cannot be resolved regarding the implementation of the Agreement or the adherence to certain clauses, a consultation meeting will take place between the Partners. Should it be decided, despite invoking the Dispute Settlement clause, to dissolve the partnership as a last resort, it will be done within a minimum of sixty days, maximum of ninety days time frame. During this time, all attempts possible will be made by both partners to ensure the needs of the beneficiaries continue to be met by other means. Any of the Partners may withdraw from the Agreement with sixty days written notice.

11. Signatures of Authorized Representatives

Before the Agreement is signed, the National Society or other Movement component is obliged (Resolution 4, Council of Delegates 2001) to inform the other Movement components of the negotiation that is leading to a formal Agreement between them and any agency of the United Nations or any other international organization. The International Federation and/or the ICRC must concur with the terms contained in an Agreement with the National Society in order to ensure coherence and complementarity.

Copies of an Agreement with a National Society should be sent by the National Society to the International Federation and the ICRC for their information. Copies of Agreements signed by other Movement components should in turn be provided by them to the other components as well.

Once this has been done, the Agreement needs to be signed by a duly authorized representative of each Partner to signify agreement. Under the signature the name of the signatory and his/her designation within his/her respective organization must be clearly stated. Such authorization may depend upon the respective constitution or statutes, or internal regulations of the National Society. Unless there is a specific local provision to the contrary, the person to sign on behalf of a National Society will most likely be its Secretary-General.

12. Mechanism for Dispute Settlement

Regardless of the nature of the relationship between the Partners at the time of the agreement, differences or unforeseen problems may arise once the project is under way, or the situation may change making it difficult for one of the parties to uphold their commitments. It is therefore important that the Partners agree in advance on a method to resolve issues as they arise. These procedures should be detailed in the agreement. Settlement of disputes should begin at the country level and be referred if necessary to the regional level, and then the international headquarters level. At any time, appropriate third party intervention could be sought to aid in resolution as appropriate, including consultation with other Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement components.

Reference Documents:
- Regulations on the Use of the Emblem of the red cross or the red crescent by National Societies
- Policy related to the armed protection of humanitarian aid
- Fundamental Principles of Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement
- Agreement on the International Activities of the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement ("Seville Agreement")

- Code of Conduct for organizations taking part in disaster relief operations
- IASC Statement and Plan of Action for Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in Humanitarian Crisis, April 2002
- Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement adopted by the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross at Geneva in October 1986 and amended by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross at Geneva in December 1995
- Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief, Geneva, 1995
- Resolution of the 2001 Council of Delegates and background papers for "Movement Action in Favour of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons"

Management of
Dead Bodies after Disasters:
A Field Manual for First Responders

Pan American Health Organization

Regional Office of the
World Health Organization

World Health Organization

ICRC

International Federation
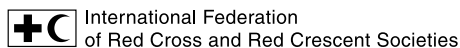of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Management of Dead Bodies

after Disasters:

A Field Manual for First Responders

Editors

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Pan American Health Organization
Regional Office of the World Health Organization
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World Health Organization

ICRC

International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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FOREWORD

Management of the dead is one of the most difficult aspects of disaster response, and natural disasters, in particular, can cause a large number of deaths. Although the humanitarian community has been aware of these challenges for over 20 years, the massive loss of life following the South Asian tsunami in 2004 highlighted limitations in our current capacity to respond. Several large natural disasters in 2005, including Hurricane Katrina in the United States, Hurricane Stan in Central America, and the earthquake in Northern Pakistan and India, further reveal the need for practical guidance.

Natural disasters frequently overwhelm local systems that care for the deceased. Consequently, the responsibility for the immediate response falls on local organizations and communities. The absence of specialist advice or mass fatality planning amplifies the problems, often resulting in the mismanagement of human remains. This is significant because the way victims are treated has a profound and long-lasting effect on the mental health of survivors and communities. In addition, correct identification of the dead has legal significance for inheritance and insurance that can impact on families and relatives for many years after a disaster.

This manual marks an important step toward promoting better treatment of victims and their families. It recognizes the vital role of local organizations and communities and the exceptionally difficult task of managing human remains following disasters.

We are pleased that the principles outlined in this document are being implemented and promoted by a variety of organizations, including the Pan American Health Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mirta Roses Periago
Director
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1. INTRODUCTION

This manual has two broad aims: first, to promote the proper and dignified management of dead bodies, and second, to maximize their identification. Following disasters, implementing simple measures early on can significantly improve the opportunity for successful identification. However, after the majority of disasters, the immediate management of human remains is done by local organizations and communities and not by specialist teams of national and international experts. Consequently, this manual focuses on practical recommendations for non-specialists.

Immediately after a disaster there is little time to read guidelines, so this manual dedicates one chapter for each key task and uses bullet-points for brevity and clarity. Local coordinators can photocopy and distribute the relevant chapters to individuals responsible for specific tasks, such as body recovery.

Throughout the manual we have chosen to use the term "dead bodies" instead of the more respectful and technically correct term "human remains," because the term "dead bodies" is less ambiguous for readers whose first language is not English.

This manual does not provide a comprehensive framework for forensic investigation. However, following the recommendations will aid the work of forensic specialists when they arrive at the scene. These recommendations will also help communities for whom forensic expertise is unavailable to collect basic information that may aid identification of the deceased. Nevertheless, this manual does not replace the need for specialist forensic identification of victims.

2. COORDINATION

Overview

♦ Immediately after a disaster, emergency response is often chaotic and uncoordinated.

♦ Coordination is needed at several levels: local, regional/provincial, and national.

♦ Disaster preparedness plans may already have identified a coordination structure.

♦ Early coordination is vital for the following tasks:

✳ Manage information and coordinate assessment activities.

✳ Identify required resources (e.g., forensic teams, morgues, body bags, etc.).

✳ Implement a plan of action for the management of dead bodies.

✳ Disseminate accurate information to families and communities about identification of the missing and management of dead bodies.

Effective local coordination

♦ As soon as possible, and in accordance with existing disaster preparedness plans, identify an agency and name a person to serve as a local coordinator with full authority and responsibility for the management of dead bodies (e.g., local Governor, Police Chief, Military Commander, Mayor).

♦ The selection of Medical or Hospital Directors as coordinators should be discouraged as their primary responsibility is the care of the living and injured.

♦ Establish a team, within the Emergency Operations Center, to coordinate management of the dead. Include key operational partners such as the military, civil defense, fire service, local emergency or rescue organizations, National Red Cross/Red Crescent Society, and local funeral homes, morticians, and coroners, etc.

♦ Appoint persons to be in charge of one or more of the following tasks and provide them with a copy of the relevant chapter in this manual:

　✶ Body recovery (Chapter 4).

　✶ Storage (Chapter 5).

　✶ Identification (Chapter 6).

　✶ Information and communication (Chapters 7, 9 and 11).

　✶ Disposal (Chapter 8).

　✶ Support for families (Chapter 10).

　✶ Logistics (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 8).

Effective regional and national coordination

♦ As soon as possible, name a person as a national or regional coordinator and provide him or her with the appropriate authority for the management of dead bodies (e.g. Minister, Governor, Police Chief, Military Commander, Mayor).

♦ Refer to the mass fatality section of your disaster response plan or major incident procedures manual, if available.

♦ Establish a coordination group including key individuals to advise on:

　✶ Communications with the public and the media.

　✶ Legal issues about identification and death certification.

　✶ Technical support for identification and documentation.

　✶ Logistical support (e.g., military or police).

　✶ Liaison with diplomatic missions, inter-governmental and international organizations (for example, United Nations, World Health Organization, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and INTERPOL).

3. INFECTIOUS DISEASE RISKS

Overview

♦ After most natural disasters there is fear that dead bodies will cause epidemics.

♦ This belief is wrongly promoted by the media, as well as some medical and disaster professionals.

♦ Dead bodies do not cause epidemics after natural disasters.

♦ The political pressure brought about by these rumors causes authorities to use unnecessary measures such as rapid mass burials and spraying so-called "disinfectants."

♦ The consequences of mismanagement of the dead include mental distress and legal problems for relatives of the victims.

♦ The surviving population is much more likely to spread disease.

Infections and dead bodies

♦ Victims of natural disasters are normally killed by injury, drowning, or fire—not by disease.

♦ At the time of death, victims are not likely to be sick with epidemic-causing infections (i.e., plague, cholera, typhoid, and anthrax).

♦ A few victims will have chronic blood infections (hepatitis or HIV), tuberculosis, or diarrheal disease.

♦ Most infectious organisms do not survive beyond 48 hours in a dead body. An exception is HIV, which has been found six days postmortem.

Risk to the public

♦ The risk to the public is negligible because they do not touch dead bodies.

♦ There is the potential (but as yet undocumented) risk of drinking water supplies contaminated by fecal material released from dead bodies.

Risk to body handlers

♦ Individuals handling human remains have a small risk through contact with blood and feces (bodies often leak feces after death) from the following:

＊ Hepatitis B and C.

＊ HIV.

＊ Tuberculosis.

＊ Diarrheal disease.

♦ Body recovery teams work in hazardous environments (e.g., collapsed buildings and debris) and may also be at risk of injury and tetanus (transmitted via soil).

Safety precautions for body handlers

♦ Basic hygiene protects workers from exposure to diseases spread by blood and certain body fluids. Workers should use the following precautions:

＊ Use gloves and boots, if available.

＊ Wash hands with soap and water after handling bodies and before eating.

＊ Avoid wiping face or mouth with hands.

＊ Wash and disinfect all equipment, clothes, and vehicles used for transportation of bodies.

♦ Face masks are unnecessary, but should be provided if requested to avoid anxiety.

♦ The recovery of bodies from confined, unventilated spaces should be approached with caution. After several days of decomposition, potentially hazardous toxic gases can build-up. Time should be allowed for fresh air to ventilate confined spaces.

♦ See Chapter 4 (Body Recovery) for recommendations about the use of body bags.

4. BODY RECOVERY

Overview

♦ Body recovery is the first step in managing dead bodies and is usually chaotic and disorganized.

♦ Many different people or groups are involved in body recovery. Communication and coordination with them is often difficult.

♦ This part of the process can be essential for identification and should be read in conjunction with Chapter 6, Identification of Dead Bodies.

♦ Body recovery only lasts a few days or weeks, but may be prolonged following earthquakes or very large disasters.

The aim of body recovery

♦ Rapid retrieval is a priority because it aids identification and reduces the psychological burden on survivors.

♦ Recovery of bodies should not interrupt other interventions aimed at helping survivors.

The workforce

♦ Body recovery is often done spontaneously by a large number of individuals, including:

  ✳ Surviving community members.

  ✳ Volunteers (e.g., National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies).

  ✳ Search and rescue teams.

  ✳ Military, police or civil defense personnel.

♦ Coordination of these groups is needed to encourage the use of procedures and health and safety precautions recommended in this manual.

Methods and procedures

♦ Bodies should be placed in body bags. If these are unavailable, use plastic sheets, shrouds, bed sheets, or other locally available material.

♦ Body parts (e.g., limbs) should be treated as individual bodies. Recovery teams should not attempt to match the body parts at the disaster scene.

♦ Body recovery teams work most effectively in two groups: one to take bodies to a nearby collection point and a second to take them to identification or storage areas.

♦ Noting the place and date where the body was found helps identification (see Annex 1, Dead Bodies Form).

♦ Personal belongings, jewelry, and documents should not be separated from the corresponding remains during recovery, but only during the identification phase (see Chapter 6, Identification of Dead Bodies).

♦ Stretchers, body bags, and flatbed trucks or tractor-trailers can be used to transport bodies. Ambulances should not be used for this purpose as they are best used to help the living.

Health and safety

♦ Body recovery teams should wear protective equipment (heavy-duty gloves and boots) and wash their hands with soap and water after handling dead bodies (see Chapter 3, Infectious Disease Risks).

♦ Recovery teams often work among debris or collapsed buildings. First-aid and medical treatment should be available in case of injury.

♦ Tetanus may be a particular problem in unvaccinated workers. Local medical teams should be on the alert for tetanus prone injuries.

Protective equipment used for body recovery, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 2005.

Source: Oliver Morgan

5. STORAGE
OF DEAD BODIES

Overview

♦ Without cold storage decomposition advances rapidly.

♦ Within 12 to 48 hours in hot climates, decomposition will be too advanced to allow facial recognition.

♦ Cold storage slows the rate of decomposition and preserves the body for identification.

Storage options

♦ Whichever storage option is used, each body or body part should be kept in a body bag or wrapped in a sheet before storage.

♦ Waterproof labels (e.g., paper in sealed plastic) with a unique identification number should be used (see Box 6.1 in Chapter 6, Identification of Dead Bodies). Do not write identification numbers on bodies or body bags/sheets as they are erased easily during storage.

Refrigeration

♦ Refrigeration between 2°C and 4°C is the best option.

♦ Refrigerated transport containers used by commercial shipping companies can be used to store up to 50 bodies.

♦ Enough containers are seldom available at the disaster site and alternative storage options should be used until refrigeration becomes available.

Temporary burial

♦ Temporary burial provides a good option for immediate storage where no other method is available, or where longer term temporary storage is needed.

♦ Temperature underground is lower than at the surface, thereby providing natural refrigeration.

♦ Temporary burial sites should be constructed in the following way to help ensure future location and recovery of bodies:

   ✶ Use individual burials for a small number of bodies and trench burial for larger numbers.

   ✶ Burial should be 1.5m deep and at least 200m from drinking water sources (see Chapter 8, Long-term Storage and Disposal of Dead Bodies).

   ✶ Leave 0.4m between bodies.

   ✶ Lay bodies in one layer only (not on top of each other).

   ✶ Clearly mark each body (see Chapter 6, Identification of Dead Bodies) and mark their positions at ground level.

AFP/Getty Images

Temporary burial of dead bodies in Thailand following the tsunami disaster on 26 December 2004.

Dry ice

♦ Dry ice [carbon dioxide (CO_2) frozen at -78.5°C] may be suitable for short-term storage.

    ✳ Dry ice should not be placed on top of the bodies, even when wrapped, because it damages the body.

    ✳ Build a low wall of dry ice (i.e., 0.5m high) around groups of about 20 bodies and cover with a plastic sheet, tarpaulin, or tent.

    ✳ About 10 kg of dry ice per body, per day is needed, depending on outside temperature.

    ✳ Dry ice must be handled carefully as it causes "cold burns" if touched without proper gloves.

    ✳ When dry ice melts it produces carbon dioxide gas, which is toxic. Closed rooms or buildings should be avoided when using dry ice in preference to areas with good natural ventilation.

Ice

♦ The use of ice (frozen water) should be avoided where possible because:

    ✳ In hot climates ice melts quickly and large quantities are needed.

    ✳ Melting ice produces large quantities of dirty waste water that may cause concern about diarrheal disease. Disposal of this waste water creates additional management issues.

    ✳ The water may damage bodies and personal belongings (e.g., identity cards).

6. IDENTIFICATION OF DEAD BODIES

Overview

♦ Identification of dead bodies is done by matching information from the deceased (physical features, clothes, etc.) with information from individuals who are missing or presumed dead.

♦ Mobilizing forensic resources may take several days. This means that early opportunities to help identify bodies may be lost as the bodies decompose.

♦ Visual recognition of cadavers or their photographs by acquaintances of the deceased is the simplest form of identification, but this is prone to errors. Therefore, whenever possible, it should be complemented with other means of forensic identification, albeit at a later stage.

♦ Forensic procedures (autopsies, fingerprinting, dental examinations, DNA) can be used after visual identification of bodies or photographs becomes impossible.

♦ The early work of non-specialists in managing the dead (especially proper recovery, documentation and storage methods) will determine much of the success of future identifications by forensic specialists.

♦ The Dead Bodies Identification Form in Annex 1 can be used to collect basic and invaluable information that will aid later forensic identification procedures.

General principles

♦ Sooner is better for victim identification. Decomposed bodies are much more difficult to identify and require forensic expertise.

♦ The key steps to identification as described below are: Unique reference number, Label, Photograph, Record, and Secure.

♦ It should be appreciated that visual recognition, while simple, can result in mistaken identifications causing serious embarrassment, distress to the bereaved and legal difficulties. It is always preferable to ensure that accurate identification is achieved by evaluating a combination of criteria and not solely on visual recognition.

♦ Injuries to the deceased, or the presence of blood, fluids, or dirt, especially around the head, will increase the chance of mistaken visual recognition.

♦ Any separate body part which proves that a person is dead can aid in the identification and should therefore be managed as though it is a whole body (i.e., using a unique reference number).

Processes

Unique reference (mandatory)

♦ Assign a sequential, unique reference number to each body or body part. Reference numbers must not be duplicated. (see Box 6.1, page 17 for a recommended numbering system).

Label (mandatory)

♦ Write the unique reference number on a waterproof label (e.g., paper sealed in plastic) then securely attach it to the body or body part.

♦ A waterproof label with the same unique reference number must also be attached to the container for the body or body part (e.g., body bag, cover sheet or bag for the body part).

Photograph (mandatory – if photographic equipment is available)

♦ The unique reference number must be visible in all photographs.

♦ If available, digital cameras allow for easier storage and distribution of photographs.

♦ Clean the body sufficiently to allow facial features and clothing to be properly represented in the photographs.

♦ In addition to the unique reference number, the photographs should include at least:

  ✳ A full length of the body, front view;

  ✳ Whole face;

  ✳ Any obvious distinguishing features.

♦ If circumstances permit, or at a later time, additional photographs can be included with the unique reference number of the following:

  ✳ Upper and lower part of the body;

  ✳ All clothing, personal effects, and distinguishing features.

♦ When taking photographs the following should be considered:

   ✳ Blurred photographs will not be useful.

   ✳ Photographs must be taken close to the dead body; when photographing the face, it should fill the entire picture.

Minimum photograph set required for visual identification	
A) Whole Face 	**B) Whole Body**
C) Upper Body 	**D) Lower Body**

Source: Pongruk Sribanditmongkol / Photographer: Kunt TongTahm Na Ayudhaya

Note: For the purpose of demonstration, photographs were taken of a volunteer and not of a deceased individual.

* The photographer should stand at the middle of the body when taking the picture, not at the head or feet.

* The photograph must include the visible unique reference number, to ensure that identification made using the photograph matches the correct body, and a scale, to calculate the size of features in the photo.

Record (mandatory)

♦ If photographs have been taken, record the following data together with the unique reference using the form in Annex 1: (Dead Bodies Identification Form):

   * Gender (confirmed by looking at the genital organs).

   * Approximate age range (infant, child, adolescent, adult, or elderly).

   * Personal belongings (jewelry, clothes, identity card, driver's license, etc.).

   * Obvious specific marks on the skin (e.g., tattoos, scars, birthmarks) or any obvious deformity.

♦ If no photographs have been taken, also record:

   * Race.

   * Height.

   * Color and length of hair.

   * Color of eyes.

Secure

♦ Personal belongings should be securely packaged, labeled with the same unique reference number, and stored with the body or body part. *This is mandatory.*

♦ Clothing should be left on the body.

Identification and release of body to relatives

♦ To increase reliability of visual recognition, viewing conditions should mini-mize emotional stress to bereaved relatives.

♦ Although there may be no alternative following large disasters, the psychological impact of viewing dozens or hundreds of dead bodies may further reduce the validity of visual recognition.

♦ Viewing photographs of the highest possible quality may be a better approach.

♦ Release of a body:

  ✳ A dead body should only be released when identification is certain.

  ✳ Visual recognition should be confirmed by other information such as identification of clothing or personal effects.

  ✳ Information collected about missing people can be used to cross-check visual recognition (see Annex 2, Missing Persons Form).

  ✳ A body should only be released by the responsible authority, which must also provide documentation of the release (a letter or death certificate).

  ✳ Record the name and contact details of the person or relatives who claimed the body together with the body's unique reference number.

Box 6.1 Unique reference numbering for dead bodies

Each body or body part *must* have a unique reference number. The following is recommended.

PLACE + RECOVERY TEAM/PERSON + BODY COUNT

For example:

Colonia San Juan - Team A–001

OR

Chaing Mai Hospital - P. Sribanditmongkol–001

PLACE: Where possible, all bodies should be assigned a unique reference number indicating place of recovery. If recovery place is unknown, use instead the place where the body was taken for identification/storage.

RECOVERY TEAM/PERSON: Person or team numbering the body.

BODY COUNT: A sequential count of bodies at each site (e.g., 001 = body number one). See Annex 3 for a list of sequential numbers.

Note: Details about where and when the body was found and the person/organization who found it should also be recorded on the Dead Bodies Identification Form (see Annex 1).

✳ Bodies that can not be recognized by visual means, should be properly stored (see Chapter 5, Storage of Dead Bodies) until forensic specialists can investigate.

✳ Care should be taken before releasing bodies that are not whole, as this may complicate subsequent management of body parts.

7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Overview

♦ State authorities bear primary responsibility for the proper handling of information about the dead and missing in disasters.

♦ A large amount of information is collected about the dead and missing, even after relatively small disasters. Necessary resources (human, technical, and financial) for information management must be provided.

♦ Management of information is a key role for coordination (see Chapter 2, Coordination).

Organizational arrangements

♦ Information centers should be established at regional and/or local levels.

♦ Local centers act as focal points for collection and consolidation of information on the dead and for attending to the public. They are particularly necessary for receiving tracing requests, leaving photographs and information about the missing, and for the release of information on persons found or identified.

♦ A national system for management and coordination of information should centralize all information on the dead and missing in disasters. Tracing services of the International Committee of the Red Cross and National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies may assist in this task.

♦ Data should flow in both directions between the national and local level.

Information for the public

♦ The population should be promptly and clearly informed about the response and procedures adopted for:

  ✳ Searching for the missing.

  ✳ Recovery and identification of dead bodies.

✳ Collection and release of information.

✳ Support for concerned families and communities.

♦ Information can be provided through the local or regional centers.

♦ A wide range of media can be used:

✳ The Internet.

✳ Notice boards.

✳ Newspapers, television, radio, etc.

Information about dead bodies

♦ Basic information must be collected about all dead bodies when possible (see Chapter 6, Identification of Dead Bodies, and Annex 1, Dead Bodies Identification Form).

♦ Early data collection may use paper forms (see data collection forms in Annex 1, Dead Bodies Identification Form and Annex 2, Missing Persons Form) and this information may be entered into an electronic database at a later stage.

♦ Information is likely to include valuable personal items and photographs.

♦ A chain of custody is required to avoid misplacement of information and ensure the availability of evidence.

♦ Centralization and consolidation of information about the dead and missing is essential for increasing the possibility of finding a match between tracing requests for missing persons and available/known information of dead bodies (see Annex 1, Dead Bodies Identification Form and Annex 2, Missing Persons Form).

8. LONG-TERM STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF DEAD BODIES

Overview

♦ All identified dead bodies should be released to relatives or their communities for disposal according to local custom and practice.

♦ Long-term storage will be required for remaining unidentified bodies.

Method of disposal/Long-term storage

♦ Burial is the most practical method as it preserves evidence for future forensic investigation, if required.

♦ Cremation of unidentified bodes should be avoided for several reasons:

   ✴ Cremation will destroy evidence for any future identification.

   ✴ Large amounts of fuel are needed (usually wood).

   ✴ Achieving complete incineration is difficult, often resulting in partially incinerated remains that have to be buried.

   ✴ It is logistically difficult to arrange for the cremation of a large number of dead bodies.

Location of burial sites

♦ Careful thought must be given to the location of any burial site.

♦ Soil conditions, highest water table level, and available space must be considered.

♦ The site should be acceptable to communities living near the burial site.

♦ The site should be close enough for the affected community to visit.

♦ The burial site should be clearly marked and surrounded by a buffer zone that is at least 10m wide to allow planting of deep-rooted vegetation and to separate the site from inhabited areas.

Distance from water sources

♦ Burial sites should be at least 200m away from water sources such as streams, lakes, springs, waterfalls, beaches, and the shoreline.

♦ Suggested burial distance from drinking-water wells are provided in the following table. Distances may have to be increased based on local topography and soil conditions:

Recommended distance of graves from drinking water wells

Number of bodies	Distance from drinking water well
4 or less	200m
5 to 60	250m
60 or more	350m
120 bodies or more per 100m^2	350m

Grave construction

♦ If possible, human remains should be buried in clearly marked, individual graves.

♦ For very large disasters, communal graves may be unavoidable.

♦ Prevailing religious practices may indicate preference for the orientation of the bodies (i.e., heads facing east, or toward Mecca, etc.).

♦ Communal graves should consist of a trench holding a single row of bodies each placed parallel to the other, 0.4m apart.

♦ Each body must be buried with its unique reference number on a waterproof label. This number must be clearly marked at ground level and mapped for future reference.

♦ Although there are no standard recommendations for grave depth, it is suggested that:

✴ Graves should be between 1.5m and 3m deep.

✴ Graves with fewer than five people should allow for at least 1.2m (1.5m if the burials are in sand) between the bottom of the grave and the water table, or any level to which ground water rises.

✴ For communal graves there should be at least 2m between the bottom of the grave and water table, or any level to which groundwater rises.

✴ These distances may have to be increased depending on soil conditions.

9. COMMUNICATIONS
AND THE MEDIA

Overview

♦ Good public communication contributes to a successful victim recovery and identification process.

♦ Accurate, clear, timely, and up-dated information can reduce the stress experienced by affected communities, defuse rumors, and clarify incorrect information (see Chapter 11, Frequently Asked Questions).

♦ The news media (TV and radio, newspapers and the Internet) are vital channels of communication with the public during mass disasters. Journalists, both local and international, often arrive soon after the disaster.

Working with the media

♦ Generally, most journalists want to report responsibly and accurately. Keeping them informed will minimize the likelihood of inaccurate reporting.

♦ Engage proactively and creatively with the media:

　✳ A Media-Liaison Officer should be assigned both locally and nationally.

　✳ Establish a Media-Liaison office (as near as possible to the affected area).

　✳ Cooperate proactively (prepare regular briefings, facilitate interviews, etc.).

Working with the public

♦ An information center for relatives of the missing and the dead should be set up as soon as possible.

♦ A list of confirmed dead and survivors should be made available, and details of missing individuals recorded by official staff.

♦ Information should be provided about the processes of recovery, identification, storage, and disposal of dead bodies.

♦ Arrangements for death certification may also need to be explained.

Working with relief agencies

♦ Humanitarian workers and relief agencies, including United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, have direct contact with affected communities and may act as a source of local information.

♦ Aid workers are not always well informed and may give conflicting information, especially about the infectious risks of dead bodies.

♦ Providing correct information to aid agencies on management of the dead will further help to reduce rumors and to avoid incorrect information (see Chapter 11, Frequently Asked Questions).

Information management

♦ Care is needed to respect the privacy of victims and relatives.

♦ Journalists should not be allowed direct access to photographs, individual records, or the names of victims. However, authorities may decide to release this information in a managed way to help with the identification process.

♦ Soon after the disaster, a decision must be taken whether or not to provide information about the number of victims. The disadvantage of this is that these estimates will undoubtedly be wrong. The advantage is that official statistics may prevent exaggerated reporting by the media.

10. SUPPORT TO FAMILIES AND RELATIVES

Overview

♦ The dead and the bereaved should be respected at all times.

♦ The priority for affected families is to know the fate of their missing loved ones.

♦ Honest and accurate information should be provided at all times and at every stage of the recovery and identification process.

♦ A sympathetic and caring approach is owed to the families throughout the process.

♦ Mistaken identification should be avoided.

♦ Psycho-social support for families and relatives should be considered.

♦ Cultural and religious needs should be respected.

Identification of victims

♦ A family liaison focal point should be established to support relatives.

♦ Families should be informed about findings and the identification of their loved ones before anyone else.

♦ Families of the dead and missing must be given realistic expectations of the process, including the methods used and timeframes for recovery and identification of remains.

♦ Families should be allowed to report a missing relative and provide additional information.

♦ Identification should be conducted as speedily as possible.

♦ Children should not be expected to aid in the visual recognition of dead bodies.

♦ The need for relatives to view the bodies of their loved ones as part of the grieving process should be respected.

♦ Once identified, bodies should be released as swiftly as possible to their next of kin.

Cultural and religious aspects

♦ The overwhelming desire of relatives from all religions and cultures is to identify their loved ones.

♦ Advice and assistance from religious and community leaders should be sought to improve understanding and acceptance of the recovery, management, and identification of the dead bodies.

♦ Undignified handling and disposal of dead bodies may further traumatize relatives and should be avoided at all times. Careful and ethical management of dead bodies, including disposal, should be ensured, including respect for religious and cultural sensitivities.

Providing support

♦ Psycho-social support should be adapted to needs, culture, and context and should consider local coping mechanisms.

♦ Local organizations such as the National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, NGOs, and faith groups can often provide emergency psycho-social care for those affected.

♦ Priority care should be given to unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups. Where possible, they should be reunited and cared for by members of their extended family or community.

♦ Material support may be necessary for funeral rituals, such as burial shrouds, coffins, etc.

♦ Special legal provisions for those affected (i.e., rapid processing of death certificates) should be considered and publicized within the affected communities.

11. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Information for the public

1. Do dead bodies cause epidemics?

Dead bodies from natural disasters *do not* cause epidemics. This is because victims of natural disasters die from trauma, drowning or fire. They do not have epidemic-causing diseases such as cholera, typhoid, malaria, or plague when they die.

2. What are the health risks for the public?

The risk to the public is negligible. They do not touch or handle dead bodies. However, there is a small risk of diarrhea from drinking water contaminated by fecal material from dead bodies. Routine disinfection of drinking water is sufficient to prevent water-borne illness.

3. Can dead bodies contaminate water?

Potentially, yes. Dead bodies often leak feces, which may contaminate rivers or other water sources, causing diarrheal illness. However, people will generally avoid drinking water from any source they think has had dead bodies in it.

4. Is spraying bodies with disinfectant or lime powder useful?

No, it has no effect. It does not hasten decomposition or provide any protection.

5. Local officials and journalists say there is a risk of disease from dead bodies. Are they correct?

No. The risk from dead bodies after natural disasters is misunderstood by many professionals and the media. Even local or international health workers are often misinformed and contribute to the spread of rumors.

Information for workers

6. Is there a risk for those handling dead bodies?

For people handling dead bodies (rescue workers, mortuary workers, etc.), there is a small risk from tuberculosis, hepatitis B and C, HIV, and diarrheal diseases. However, the infectious agents responsible for these diseases do not last more than two days in a dead body (except for HIV, which may survive up to six days). These risks can be reduced by wearing rubber boots and gloves and practicing basic hygiene (i.e. washing hands).

7. Should workers wear a mask?

The smell from decaying bodies is unpleasant, but it is _not_ a health risk in well-ventilated areas, and wearing a mask is not required for health reasons. However, workers may feel better psychologically if they are using masks. The public should not actively be encouraged to wear masks.

Information for authorities

8. How urgent is the collection of dead bodies?

Body collection is _not_ the most urgent task after a natural disaster. The priority is to care for survivors. There is _no_ significant public health risk associated with the presence of dead bodies. Nevertheless, bodies should be collected as soon as possible and taken away for identification.

9. Should mass graves be used to quickly dispose of the bodies?

No. Rapid mass burial of victims is not justified on public health grounds. Rushing to dispose of bodies without proper identification traumatizes families and communities and may have serious legal consequences (i.e., the inability to recover and identify remains).

10. What should the authorities do with dead bodies?

Dead bodies should be collected and stored, using refrigerated containers, dry ice, or temporary burial. Identification should be attempted for all human remains. Photographs should be taken and descriptive information recorded for each body. Remains should be stored (i.e., using refrigeration) or buried temporarily to allow for the possibility of an expert forensic investigation in the future.

11. What are the potential mental health issues?

The overwhelming desire of relatives (from all religions and cultures) is to identify their loved ones. All efforts to identify human remains will help. Grieving and traditional individual burial are important factors for the personal and communal recovery or healing process.

12. How should bodies of foreigners be managed?

Families of visitors killed in a disaster are likely to insist on the identification and repatriation of the bodies. Proper identification has serious economic and diplomatic implications. Bodies must be kept for identification. Foreign consulates and embassies should be informed and INTERPOL contacted for assistance.

Information for responders

13. I am a volunteer; how can I help?

To be helpful you should promote the proper recovery and management of dead bodies and assist in recording necessary information. You might also assist with the recovery and disposal of the dead, under the direction of a recognized coordinating authority. However, you would first need to be briefed, advised, equipped, and supported for this difficult task.

14. I work with an NGO; how can I help?

Providing support for families and collection of information in collaboration with the coordinating authority will best help the surviving relatives. You may also promote proper identification and treatment of the dead. NGOs should not be asked to carry out the identification of dead bodies unless they are highly specialized for this task and work for and under direct supervision of a legal authority.

15. I am a health professional; how can I help?

The survivors need you more than the dead. Any professional help in fighting the myth of epidemics caused by dead bodies will be appreciated. Talk about this to your colleagues and members of the media.

16. I am a journalist; how can I help?

If you hear comments or statements regarding the need for mass burial or incineration of bodies to avoid epidemics, challenge them. Consult PAHO/WHO, ICRC, the IFRC or the Red Cross/Red Crescent locally. Quote this and other publications. Please do not jump on the band wagon of alarmists spreading incorrect information. Be professional.

ANNEXES

Note: Those interested in adapting or copying the forms in annexes 1-4 can consult or download them from the Internet, in MS Word or PDF format, at www.paho.org/disasters (click on Publications Catalog, and see the special page about *Dead Bodies in Disaster Situations*).

Annex 1
Dead Bodies Identification Form

Body/Body Part (B/BP) Code:
(Use unique numbering and include on
associated files, photographs or stored objects.)

Possible identity of body:

Person Reporting

Name: ....

Official Status: .... Place & Date: ....

Signature: ....

Recovery details (Include place, date, time, by whom, and circumstances of finding. Indicate if other bodies were recovered in the same area, including name and possible relationship, if identified)

B/BP Code: --

A. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A.1	**General condition** (mark one)	**a**	Complete body	Incomplete body (describe):		Body part (describe):	
		b	Well preserved	Decomposed	Partially skeletonized	Skeletonized	
A.2	**Apparent sex** (mark one and describe evidence)		Male	Female	Probably male	Probably female	Undetermined
			Describe evidence (genitals, beard, etc):				
A.3	**Age group** (mark one)		Infant	Child	Adolescent	Adult	Elderly
A.4	**Physical description** (measure or mark one)		Height (crown to heel):		Short	Average	Tall
			Weight:		Slim	Average	Fat
A.5	**a) Head hair**		Color:	Length:	Shape:	Baldness:	Other:
	b) Facial hair		None	Moustache	Beard	Color:	Length:
	c) Body hair		Describe:				
A.6	**Distinguishing features:** **Physical** (e.g., shape of ears, eyebrows, nose, chin, hands, feet, nails; deformities, missing limbs/ amputation.) **Surgical implants or prosthesis** (artificial limb.) **Skin marks** (scars, tattoos, piercings, birthmarks, moles, etc.) **Apparent injuries** (include location, side.) **Dental condition** (crowns, gold teeth, adornments, false teeth.) Describe any obvious features.		Continue on additional sheets if needed. If possible, include a sketch of the main findings.				

B/BP Code: --

B. ASSOCIATED EVIDENCE

B.1	Clothing	Type of clothes, colors, fabrics, brand names, repairs. Describe in as much detail as possible.
B.2	Footwear	Type (boot, shoes, sandals), color, brand, size. Describe in as much detail as possible.
B.3	Eyewear	Glasses (color, shape), contact lenses. Describe in as much detail as possible.
B.4	Personal items	Watch, jewelry, wallet, keys, photographs, mobile phone (incl. number), medication, cigarettes, etc. Describe in as much detail as possible.
B.5	Identity documents	Identity card, driving license, credit card, video club card, etc. Take photocopy if possible. Describe the information contained.

B/BP Code: --

C. RECORDED INFORMATION

C.1	**Fingerprints**	Yes	No	By whom? Stored where?
C.2	**Photographs of body**	Yes	No	By whom? Stored where?

D. IDENTITY

D.1	**Hypothesis of identity**	Explain reasons for attributing a possible identity.

E. STATUS OF BODY

Stored	Specify morgue, refrigerated container, temporary burial; describe location:
	Under whose responsibility:
Released	To whom and date:
	Authorized by:
	Final destination:

Annex 2
Missing Persons Form

Missing Person Number/Code:
(Use unique numbering and include it on associated
files, photographs or stored objects.)

Interviewer name:

Interviewer contact details:

Interviewee(s) name(s):

Relationship with missing person:

Contact details

Address: ....

Telephone: ....   E-mail: ....

Contact person for missing person, if different from above: (who to contact in case of news: name/contact details)

MP N°./Code: -- **Missing Persons Data**

A. PERSONAL DETAILS

A.1	**Missing person's name**	Include surname, father's and/or mother name, nicknames, aliases:				
A.2	**Address/Place of residence**	Last address and usual address if different from the former:				
A.3	**Marital status**	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Partnership
A.4	**Sex**	Male	Female			
A.5	**If female**	Unmarried name:				
		Pregnant	Children	How many?		
A.6	**Age**	Date of birth:		Age:		
A.7	**Place of birth, nationality, principal language**					
A.8	**Identity document** (Main details, N°, etc.)	If available, enclose photocopy of ID				
A.9	**Fingerprints available?**	Yes	No	Where:		
A.10	**Occupation**					
A.11	**Religion**					
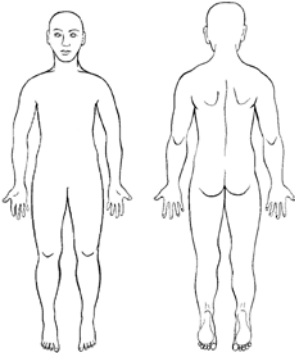
B. EVENT

B.1	**Circumstances leading to disappearance:** (use additional sheet if necessary)	Place, date, time, events leading to disappearance, other victims and witnesses who last saw Missing Person alive (incl. name and address):
	Has this case been registered/ denounced elsewhere?	Yes	No	With whom/where:
B.2	**Are other family members missing, and if so, have they been registered/ identified?**	List name, relationship, status:

MP N°/Code: --   **Missing Persons Data**
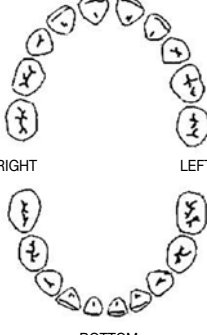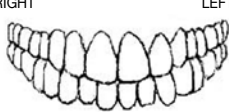
C. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

C.1	**General description** (indicate exact measure, or approximate AND circle the corresponding group)	Height (exact/estimated?):		Short	Average	Tall
		Weight:		Slim	Average	Fat

C.2	**Ethnic group/Skin color**	

C.3	**Eye color**	

C.4	**a) Head hair**	Color:	Length:	Shape:	Baldness:	Other:
	b) Facial hair	None	Moustache	Beard	Color:	Length:
	c) Body hair	Describe				

C.5	**Distinguishing features** **Physical** e.g. shape of ears, eyebrows, nose, chin, hands, feet, nails; deformities	Continue on additional sheets if needed. Use drawings and/or mark the main findings on the body chart.
	Skin marks scars, tattoos, piercings, birthmarks, moles, circumcision, etc.	
	Past injuries/ amputations include location, side, fractured bone, joint (e.g., knee), and if person limped	
	Other major medical conditions operations, diseases, etc.	
	Implants pacemaker, artificial hip, IUD, metal plates or screws from operation, prosthesis, etc.	
	Types of medications used at time of disappearance	

MP N°/Code: --- **Missing Persons Data**

C.6	**Dental condition**	
	Please describe general characteristic, especially taking into account the following: • Missing teeth • Broken teeth • Decayed teeth • Discolorations, such as stains from disease, smoking or other • Gaps between teeth • Crowded or crooked (overlapping) teeth • Jaw inflammation (abscess) • adornments (inlays, filed teeth etc) • any other special feature **Dental treatment** Has the Missing Person received any dental treatment such as • Crowns, such as gold-capped teeth • Color: gold, silver, white • Fillings (incl. color if known) • False teeth (dentures)- upper, lower • Bridge or other special dental treatment • Extraction Also indicate wherever there is uncertainty (for example, the family member may know that an upper left front tooth is missing, but is unsure which one).	

If possible, use a drawing, and/or indicate the described features in the chart below

If the missing person is a child, please indicate which baby teeth have erupted, which have fallen out and which permanent teeth have erupted and use the chart below

BABY/PRIMARY TEETH

ADULT/PERMANENT TEETH

MP N°/Code: --   **Missing Persons Data**

D. PERSONAL EFFECTS

D.1	**Clothing** (worn when last seen/at time of disaster)	Type of clothes, colors, fabrics, brand names, repairs: describe in as much detail as possible.
D.2	**Footwear** (worn when last seen/at time of disaster)	Type (boot, shoes, sandals), color, brand, size: describe in as much detail as possible.
D.3	**Eyewear**	Glasses (color, shape), contact lenses: describe in as much detail as possible.
D.4	**Personal items**	Watch, jewelry, wallet, keys, photographs, mobile phone (incl. number), medication, cigarettes, etc: describe in as much detail as possible.
D.5	**Identity documents** (which the person was/might have been carrying when last seen/ at time of disaster)	Identity card, driving license, credit card, video club card, etc. Take photocopy if possible. Describe the information contained.
D.6	**Habits**	Smoker (cigarettes, cigars, pipes), chewing tobacco, betel nut, alcohol, etc. Please describe, incl. quantity.
D.7	**Doctors, medical records, X-rays**	Give details of doctor, dentist, optometrist, or other.
D.8	**Photographs of missing person**	If available, enclose photos or copies of photos as recent and clear as possible, ideally smiling (with teeth visible). Also, photos of clothing worn when disappeared.

Note: The information collected in this form will be used for the search and identification of the missing person. Its content is confidential and any use outside of the intended context will need explicit consent by the interviewee.

Place and date of interview: ....

Interviewer signature: ....   Interviewee signature: ....

If requested, a copy of this form with contact details of interviewer should be made available to the interviewee.

Note: Those interested in adapting or copying this form, please download it, in MS Word or PDF format, at www.paho.org/disasters (click on Publications Catalog, and see the special page about *Dead Bodies in Disaster Situations*).

Annex 3
Sequential Numbers for Unique Referencing

See Chapter 6, Box 6.1, for recommended unique numbering (place-team/person-number).
When using the list below, cross each number off the list when it is used to avoid using it twice.

001	051	101	151	201	251	301	351	401	451
002	052	102	152	202	252	302	352	402	452
003	053	103	153	203	253	303	353	403	453
004	054	104	154	204	254	304	354	404	454
005	055	105	155	205	255	305	355	405	455
006	056	106	156	206	256	306	356	406	456
007	057	107	157	207	257	307	357	407	457
008	058	108	158	208	258	308	358	408	458
009	059	109	159	209	259	309	359	409	459
010	060	110	160	210	260	310	360	410	460
011	061	111	161	211	261	311	361	411	461
012	062	112	162	212	262	312	362	412	462
013	063	113	163	213	263	313	363	413	463
014	064	114	164	214	264	314	364	414	464
015	065	115	165	215	265	315	365	415	465
016	066	116	166	216	266	316	366	416	466
017	067	117	167	217	267	317	367	417	467
018	068	118	168	218	268	318	368	418	468
019	069	119	169	219	269	319	369	419	469
020	070	120	170	220	270	320	370	420	470
021	071	121	171	221	271	321	371	421	471
022	072	122	172	222	272	322	372	422	472
023	073	123	173	223	273	323	373	423	473
024	074	124	174	224	274	324	374	424	474
025	075	125	175	225	275	325	375	425	475
026	076	126	176	226	276	326	376	426	476
027	077	127	177	227	277	327	377	427	477
028	078	128	178	228	278	328	378	428	478
029	079	129	179	229	279	329	379	429	479
030	080	130	180	230	280	330	380	430	480
031	081	131	181	231	281	331	381	431	481
032	082	132	182	232	282	332	382	432	482
033	083	133	183	233	283	333	383	433	483
034	084	134	184	234	284	334	384	434	484
035	085	135	185	235	285	335	385	435	485
036	086	136	186	236	286	336	386	436	486
037	087	137	187	237	287	337	387	437	487
038	088	138	188	238	288	338	388	438	488
039	089	139	189	239	289	339	389	439	489
040	090	140	190	240	290	340	390	440	490
041	091	141	191	241	291	341	391	441	491
042	092	142	192	242	292	342	392	442	492
043	093	143	193	243	293	343	393	443	493
044	094	144	194	244	294	344	394	444	494
045	095	145	195	245	295	345	395	445	495
046	096	146	196	246	296	346	396	446	496
047	097	147	197	247	297	347	397	447	497
048	098	148	198	248	298	348	398	448	498
049	099	149	199	249	299	349	399	449	499
050	100	150	200	250	300	350	400	450	500

Note: Those interested in adapting or copying this form, please download it, in MS Word or PDF format, at www.paho.org/disasters
(click on Publications Catalog, and see the special page about *Dead Bodies in Disaster Situations*).

Annex 4. Body Inventory Sheet

Body ID Number	Recovery		Storage		Information recorded		Characteristics (Apparent)			Remarks
	Date	Place	Date	Location	Dead Bodies Identification Form	Photos	Sex	Age	Presumed identity	
					Y-Yes N-No	Y-Yes N-No	M-male F-female U-unknown	I-infant C-child A1-adolescent A2-adult E-elderly		

Note: Those interested in adapting or copying this form, please download it, in MS Word or PDF format, at www.paho.org/disasters (click on Publications Catalog, and see the special page about *Dead Bodies in Disaster Situations*).

Annex 5
Supporting Publications

de Ville de Goyet, Claude. 2004. Epidemics caused by dead bodies: a disaster myth that does not want to die. *Rev Panam Salud Publica* 15(5):297-299. Available at: http://publications.paho.org/english/editorial_dead_bodies.pdf.

ICRC, 2004. *Operational Best Practices Regarding the Management of Human Remains and Information on the Dead by Non-Specialists.* Available at: www.icrc.org.

ICRC, 2003. Report: *The Missing and Their Families.* Available at: www.icrc.org.

INTERPOL(DVI). *Guide on Disaster Victim Identification.* Available at: www.interpol.int/public/DisasterVictim/Guide.

Morgan O. 2004. Infectious disease risks of dead bodies following natural disasters. *Rev Panam Salud Publica* 15(5):307-12. Available at: http://publications.paho.org/english/dead_bodies.pdf.

Morgan OW, Sribanditmongkol P, Perera C, Sulasmi Y, Van Alphen D, et al. (2006) *Mass Fatality Management Following the South Asian Tsunami Disaster: Case Studies in Thailand, Indonesia and Sri Lanka*. PLoS Med 3(6): e195. Available at: www.plosmedicine.org.

Pan American Health Organization. 2004. *Management of Dead Bodies in Disaster Situations.* Washington, D.C., ISBN 92-75-12529-5 (English); ISBN 92-75-32529-4 (Spanish). Available at http://publications.paho.org/english/index.cfm.

Annex 6
International Organizations involved in the development of this document

Pan American Health Organization, Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), Area on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief

In 1976, the Pan American Health Organization created this program in response to a call by the Member Countries to establish a technical unit to strengthen health sector disaster preparedness, response, and mitigation activities. The main objective of the Area on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief has been to support the health sector in strengthening national disaster preparedness programs and coordinating all sectors involved in disaster preparedness. This support is channeled to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in three principal areas:

♦ *Disaster Preparedness.* Preparing the health sector to face disasters is a permanent and ongoing responsibility. Disaster preparedness enhances the capacity of the health sector to respond to all types of disasters, create awareness of the associated public health risks, and improve the knowledge and skills of all health actors. Technical areas of work include information dissemination and management, hospital disaster preparedness, mass casualty management, evaluation of damage and needs, and humanitarian supply management.

♦ *Risk Reduction.* PAHO/WHO encourages the Ministries of Health to promote a national culture of disaster prevention. Its own technical contribution focuses on the safety of health facilities. As an example, countries are urged to use existing knowledge and tools to build new hospitals with a level of protection that helps ensure they remain operational in disaster situations. They are also encouraged to examine the vulnerability of existing health facilities and incorporate appropriate disaster mitigation measures. PAHO/WHO applies this same strategic approach to risk reduction in water and sewerage systems to safeguard this critical infrastructure.

♦ *Disaster Response.* In disaster situations, PAHO/WHO mobilizes its extensive network of public health experts to survey damage and provide an authoritative assessment of health sector needs, conduct epidemiological surveillance, detect potential health risks, monitor water quality, and improve the overall coordination and leadership in the health sector. The humanitarian supply management system, SUMA, is activated to help bring order to the chaos that often results from the massive influx of international aid. PAHO/WHO also summarizes and publishes the lessons learned from major disasters in an attempt to improve the management of future emergency situations.

For more information, please visit: www.paho.org/disasters

World Health Organization, Health Action in Crises

Within WHO, the principal objective of the Health Action in Crises Department is to reduce avoidable loss of life, burden of disease, and disability in crisis-prone and crisis-affected countries. WHO works with local authorities, civil society, other international organizations, and NGOs in responding to the health aspects of crises. The major activities of WHO in a crisis are to:

♦ Measure ill-health and promptly assess health needs of populations affected by crises, identifying priority causes of ill-health and death;

♦ Support Member States in coordinating action for health;

♦ Ensure that critical gaps in health response are rapidly identified and filled;

♦ Revitalize and build capacity of health systems for preparedness and response.

WHO brings together expertise in epidemic response, logistics, security coordination, and management. It works in coordination with, and strengthens the response to health crises provided by other UN teams (typically the United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Organization for Migration, and the World Food Programme). Whether in Country Offices, Regional Offices, or at Headquarters, the WHO network for Health Action in Crises (HAC) provides information and services, and mobilizes partners to agree on standards and courses of action.

For more information, please visit: www.who.int/hac/en

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral, and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence, and to provide them with assistance. This involves:

♦ Visiting prisoners of war and security detainees.

♦ Searching for missing persons.

♦ Transmitting messages between separated family member.

♦ Reuniting dispersed families.

♦ Providing safe water, food and medical assistance to those in need.

♦ Promoting respect for international humanitarian law.

♦ Monitoring compliance with that law.

♦ Contributing to the development of that law.

Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavors to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

For more information, please contact: www.icrc.org

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the world's largest humanitarian organization, providing assistance without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class, or political opinions.

Founded in 1919, the International Federation has a membership of 183 Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, a Secretariat in Geneva, and more than 60 delegations strategically located to support activities around the world. There are more societies in formation. The Red Crescent is used in place of the Red Cross in many Islamic countries.

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. Vulnerable people are those who are at greatest risk from situations that threaten their survival, or their capacity to live with an acceptable level of social and economic security and human dignity. Often, these are victims of natural disasters, poverty brought about by socio-economic crises, refugees, and victims of health emergencies.

The Federation carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters, and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of its member National Societies. The Federation's work focuses on four core areas: promoting humanitarian values, disaster response, disaster preparedness, and health and community care.

The unique network of National Societies—which cover almost every country in the world—is the Federation's principal strength. Cooperation between National Societies gives the Federation greater potential to develop capacities and assist those most in need. At a local level, the network enables the Federation to reach individual communities.

The Federation, together with National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, make up the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

> **For more information, please visit: www.ifrc.org**

Annex 7

Mass Fatality Plan Checklist for
Ministries of Health and National Disaster Offices

The Pan American Health Organization has developed a checklist on mass fatalities that can serve as an annex to any National Health Sector Emergency Management Plan or National Disaster Management Plan. It is based on the London Resilience Mass Fatality Plan, 2006 and Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters: A Field Manual for First Responders.

The checklist contains the essential elements that should be addressed by Ministries of Health and Disaster Management Offices as they develop a mass fatality plan. The plan does not need to be standalone; it can be an annex to the National Disaster Management Plan. As such, the mass fatality annex only needs to focus on elements unique to a mass fatality.

It is important that countries exercise their plans on a regular basis to evaluate organization's capability to execute one or more portions of the plan and to promote preparedness.

Recommendations for Organizing the Plan: We recommend that the plan can be organized first by "essential elements" with specific activities to deal with fatalities caused by various types of disasters.

The Essential Elements

I. Introduction and Purpose

♦ Outline the purpose of the plan.

♦ List assumptions of a Mass Fatality Plan.

♦ Define the scope of the plan and local hazards that can create mass fatalities, i.e. type, frequency, level of impact, etc.

♦ List members of mass fatality coordination committee/key partners, stakeholders in the planning and implementation process.

II. Activation

♦ Describe the activation process and identify who or what agency will be responsible for activating the Plan, i.e. Same authority as in the National Health Sector Emergency Management Plan or the National Disaster Management Plan.

♦ Include a call out chart and attach roles and responsibilities to each individual for this phase of the plan.

III. Command and Control

♦ Discuss with local health, law enforcement and disaster management officials where/how mass fatality fits in with national plans.

♦ Discuss role of health authorities, NGOs and national disaster offices during mass fatalities.

♦ Discuss legal authority for handling of dead bodies from the point of examination by a physician/pathologist to the actual burial process. Consider the investigative needs of law enforcement agencies.

♦ Outline the local incident command structure and provide an organizational chart for chain of command, including operations, logistics, planning, and finance/administration. Reference all hazards/emergency operations plan as appropriate.

IV. Logistics

♦ Consider arrangements for providing transportation for the movement of the deceased/remains/personal effects.

♦ Storage facilities for temporary morgues may involve the commandeering of 20/40 ft refrigerated containers. Remember that each container has limited capacity and requires considerable quantities of fuel – the cost of which can be substantial.

♦ Emergency communications with all relevant parties must be done through secured channels that are not easily accessible by the media and general public.

♦ Provision of resources – are there national/regional stocks available that can be used i.e. coffins, body bags, waterproof labels, dry ice etc.

♦ There may be the need for provision of portable electrical supply and water to field sites.

♦ Designate a trained individual supporting team members to mange and oversee logistical arrangements.

♦ Identification of local and regional technical specialists/resources and arrangements for obtaining their services through agreements.

V. Welfare

♦ Mention provisions that will be made for handling the welfare needs of family and friends including a designated area for viewing/identifying bodies (consider cases where bodies have to be isolated as in the case of some epidemics).

♦ Discuss with the medical examiner the process involved in releasing or allowing for burial of the dead and the recognized forms of burial in the country. Ensure that provisions are made in the plan for addressing local cultural and religious needs of the community.

♦ Include linkages with local Crisis Intervention Teams or psycho-social support teams and define procedures for their activation based on level of assistance that they can provide.

VI. Identification and Notification

♦ Identify a team of persons from law enforcement, health authority, social services etc. who can serve to identify the deceased (with use of forensic procedures), securing the remains and reuniting with family/friends. Consider the local rescue and recovery procedures in place and how these will be linked to the work of this team. A physician or pathologist should determine how partial remains would be handled and these decisions included in the plan.

♦ Include information regarding the legal rights of the deceased, e.g. Law Enforcement Acts, Interpol Resolution AGN/65/res/13 (1996), humanitarian laws and other ethical and social norms.

♦ Arrangement for viewing of bodies should be included, facilities identified and arrangements for setting these up as well. Consider how the bodies will be stored and presented and who will be responsible for these activities.

♦ The matter of investigation should be carefully considered and the relevant information included – review legislation relevant to inquests, registration of death, insurance procedures, criminal actions etc.

♦ The plan should consider disaster situations when specialist identification teams are not available or the scale of the disaster exceeds local capacity. Arrangements for external assistance and/or local arrangements to facilitate identification at the local level should be considered.

VII. International Dimensions

♦ Mass fatality incidents may involve foreign nationals. These may be foreign workers living in the affected areas, tourists, illegal immigrants or relatives of affected families.

♦ The mass fatality plan should be distributed to foreign embassies or consulates of countries from which large tourist populations arise.

♦ Many countries deal with illegal immigrants on a regular basis and therefore procedures should be available to support this element of the plan. Include all provisions for repatriation of victims to home country – consult with Immigration and Attorney General's chambers and consider finances for such actions.

♦ Department of Foreign Affairs or Governor's Offices should be consulted on arrangements for returning victims who are nationals from your country who died in the country where the disaster has occurred. Arrangements for receiving these victims should be included in the plan and provisions for handling the deceased once they have been received .

♦ Consider special arrangements that may be required such as embalming and how the death certificates will be issued.

♦ In the event that tourists or high level officials are involved and their remains are being shipped, consideration must be given to the sensitivity of such situation and the controlled release of information to the local and international media. Consult the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization resolution on the International Transportation of Human Remains (1966) (www.interpol.int/Public/DisasterVictim/Guide/appendices.asp#c).

♦ Identify the national and regional INTERPOL counterparts and define arrangements for requesting their assistance when required.

VIII. Site Clearance and Recovery of Deceased Victims

a. Clearly define procedures for photographing victims/body parts and placement of proper identification tags – what tagging system will be used as per police procedures and who will be responsible for keeping accurate records of these. Also consider where these procedures will take place (collection point) and provision of adequate security measures.

b. Procedures for photographing, labeling and securing personal effect must also be included in the plan – who will be responsible for these processes? Most likely assigned to the Police. Are resources available such as digital cameras with sufficient memory?

c. Provisions should be made for a victim audit (may be advisable to have an external group to the police) to verify that the correct procedures were followed. The plan must define who, where and how this will be performed.

d. In certain situations such as criminal and/or terrorist attacks the disaster site must be preserved for investigative purposes – whose responsibility will this be and how will it be done, This should be outlined in the plan in a step by step format – consult with a law enforcement agency on this matter.

IX. Mortuary

e. For storage and body preparation local morgue facilities and funeral homes – location, capacity, resources etc., should be listed in the plan with relevant contact details. Transportation to these facilities must be considered. The plan should consider the development of national/regional stocks of coffins, body bags etc. MOUs can be developed with private morgue/funeral homes and included as part of the plan. Consult with Attorney General's Chambers on these arrangements.

f. Ensure that the plan addresses issues such as individuals who die while being transported and those who die in hospitals as a result of injuries sustained from the disaster. In some countries they are passed through the same procedures as those who have died at the disaster site.

g. Consider arrangements for handling the media and for security at these facilities.

h. A general principle should be applied – hospital mortuaries should **NOT** be used unless numbers are manageable especially in the case where there is only one available hospital. Temporary mortuary facilities should also be considered.

i. Ensure that law enforcement agencies identify and provide procedure for securing routes for transporting victims to identified morgue facilities.

X. Disposal Final Arrangements

♦   Procedures for returning the deceased to families must be clearly defined – these can be provided by the physician/pathologist. The wishes of the family for returning partial remains must also be considered.

♦   Discussions should take place with the physician/pathologist and social welfare or other relevant local agencies regarding the disposal/burial of unclaimed victims/remains. The legal issues must be considered and discussed with the Attorney General's Chambers. Ensure that these are clearly documented in the plan.

XI. Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN)

♦   Include procedures for handling such events including how remains should be handled, personal protective equipment, decontamination requirements and procedures and ongoing monitoring of the site and any remains or items removed and where cold storage facilities can be located.

♦   Consider decontamination arrangements for vehicles and other storage equipment and facilities and environmental impacts along with requirements for evacuation or isolation of surrounding communities.

♦   Arrangements with external agencies may have to provide for risk assessments and advice on viewing, return of bodies, burial, cremation and repatriation. Identify such agencies in the plan and establish MOUs accordingly.

XII. Public Information and Media Policy

♦   Many countries have National Public Information Plans and Policies. These can be applied to this element of the plan. Official statements should be channeled through the relevant media centers either at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) or incident command post in the field. Information from all sites, i.e. mortuary, hospital, family viewing areas, should be channeled to the NEOC for compilation.

♦   Media should be restricted from entering mortuary facilities or crisis intervention centers/family viewing areas – include procedures for securing these areas and for channeling information to the media center.

♦ Procedures for releasing names of deceased should be clearly defined in the plan especially considering large numbers of unidentified deceased victims. Provisions should be made for setting up facilities for the public to enquire about missing/ deceased persons and these site should be away from the hospital and mortuary.

XIII. Health and Safety

♦ Consider provisions for the welfare and psychological needs of responders – the local Crisis Intervention Teams or mental health services can lend support in this area. Consider how volunteers from the Red Cross and other similar services can be accommodated to provide such support – once they are trained.

♦ There may be a need to identify and equip rest areas – whose responsibility will this be and how will the resources be acquired should be established locally.

♦ Provision should also be made to determine how responders who have lost family members and friends will be handled and by whom.

XIV. Disaster Mortuary Plan

♦ In many countries it is the responsibility of the Police to set up and manage the documentation of the deceased at the mortuary and for evidential continuity. Relevant forms, procedures and a layout of the mortuary should be included in the plan.

♦ In the event of a large scale event involving numerous victims it may be necessary to establish a mortuary management team. The composition of the team should be included in the plan along with call out procedures and responsibilities for each individual.

♦ Include as part of this element the mortuary procedures to be followed: Registration and arrival, storage, examination and photographing, cleaning of body, radiography, fingerprints, Odontology, re-bagging, embalming, viewing, release of body, bodies not claimed, repatriated bodies, DNA and toxicology, documentation, securing of property, equipment list, waste disposal, staffing, visitors, health, safety and welfare.

Management of the dead is one of the most difficult aspects of disaster response. It has profound and long-lasting consequences for survivors and communities. Globally, disasters claim thousands of lives each year. However, care of the deceased is often overlooked in disaster planning and the absence of guidance for first responders has recently been highlighted following several large disasters.

Immediately after a major disaster, identifying and disposing of human remains are often done by local communities. Forensic specialists may not be available or unable to rapidly access the affected area. There are simple steps that first responders can take to ensure the dead are treated in a dignified way and that can assist in their identification.

This *Field Manual for First Responders* presents simple recommendations for non-specialists to manage the recovery, basic identification, storage and disposal of dead bodies following disasters. It also makes suggestions about providing support to family members and communicating with the public and the media.

This manual will be useful during the immediate response to a disaster and where forensic response is unavailable. Furthermore, it will be useful for those preparing mass fatality disaster plans. The recommendations are relevant for local, regional and national authorities as well as for non-governmental organizations.

The principles outlined in this document are being implemented and promoted by a variety of organizations, including the Pan American Health Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

This document can be viewed on Internet at:
www.paho.org/disasters (click on Publications Catalog)

MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.