

**OSAC REVIEW / SPRING-SUMMER 2025 (OSAC = Organization of Scientific Area Committees)**

**NAME OSAC UPDATE #17: ANSI/ASB Best Practice Recommendation 010, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2018**

**Forensic Anthropology in Disaster Victim Identification; Best Practice Recommendations for the Medicolegal Authority**

**\*Note:** A new edition is expected in 2025 , with some expected changes to this document

This best practice recommendation was drafted by the Disaster Victim Identification Subcommittee of OSAC. It completed the standards development process in the Disaster Victim Identification Consensus body of the AAFS Standards Board (ASB).

**(Like all OSAC developed Standards, Best Practices, and Guides, these are voluntary and separate from NAME standards and accreditation.)** Best practice documents provide vetted recommendations without requirements.

This is a summary of *ANSI/ASB Forensic Anthropology in Disaster Victim Identification; Best Practice Recommendations for the Medicolegal Authority*, and as such may leave out or misinterpret important details. **See link to the full document (below)**. Also the AAFS has developed checklists to supplement ASB documents. **See link to the checklist (below)**. (This particular checklist is a rehash of the document in a spreadsheet format.)

**Value:** When developing, or updating a mass fatality plan, this document can be provided to Anthropologists for discussion of their potential roles in such an event, and/or as an addition to the plan.

**SCOPE:** Disaster victim identification is most effective when a multi-disciplinary approach is used. Forensic Anthropologists' potential roles in such an incident include sorting human remains from non-biological and non-human remains; inventories of skeletal structures; estimation of age, sex, ancestry, and stature; and preliminary interpretation of skeletal trauma patterns.

**Preparedness:**

Forensic Anthropologists should contribute to the planning, implementation and management of the mass fatality response.

**Search and Recovery:**

Forensic Anthropologists can assist in maximizing recovery and preservation of human remains, and in maintaining the integrity of the provenience/context. This may speed identifications and reduce costs.

**Triage:**

Triage should be performed at or near the entrance to the disaster morgue. The goal of triage is to segregate all tissue from animal and plant matter, structural components, etc. Triage can assist in identifying and eliminating commingling of remains, by separating out all human tissue not attached via a tissue bridge.

Triage personnel must be able to distinguish human tissue from non-biological materials, and human from non-human tissues. Personnel are to be experienced with fragmented bone and soft tissue, and altered (burned) remains.

**Anthropology Station:**

- The primary role is to provide a rapid and succinct inventory of the human tissue.
- Specimens should enter the anthropology station only after quality photographic and radiologic (or CT) examinations have been completed.
- Descriptions include the bone or bones present, portion of bone represented, side, and other features useful for identification.
- Estimation of age at death, assessment of sex, determination of ancestry, and estimation of stature may be determined depending on the skeletal material present, and its condition.
- Other skeletal features that may facilitate identification may be documented, such as healing fractures.

**Reconciliation:**

Forensic Anthropologists should be included in all aspects of reconciliation committee functions. (reconciliation of antemortem and postmortem records)

**Full Document:**

<https://www.aafs.org/asb-standard/forensic-anthropology-disaster-victim-identification-best-practice-recommendations>

**Checklist:**

[https://www.aafs.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/MDI\\_ANSIASB%202010\\_Checklist%20V1.1\\_0.xlsx](https://www.aafs.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/MDI_ANSIASB%202010_Checklist%20V1.1_0.xlsx)