



Mortality Review and Death Investigations



Outline & Objectives

Introduction of Program and Participants

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Provide students with an overview of the content of the training program;
2. Provide students with an understanding of the teaching methods that will be used in delivering the content; and,
3. Create an environment that allows students to be comfortable talking to the instructor and their fellow participants.

Module I: The Significance of Death

The objective of this module is to identify those unique issues that are raised by addressing death as an “incident,” including understanding the relationship of death incidents to concepts of incident management.

Module II: Classifying Deaths

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Create a typology of all deaths, including definitions for the following variations: expected, unexpected, accidental, medical, suicide, mistreatment (abuse and neglect), homicide, and suspicious death;
2. Understand the relationship of this typology to the proper classification of deaths in the incident management and mortality review processes.
3. Practice applying this typology to a set of facts in order to properly classify deaths.

Module III: Mortality Review and the Incident Management Process

The objective of this module is to familiarize the participants with the various elements of the mortality review process and their relationship to the incident management process.

Module IV: Death Investigations: An Introduction

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Practice applying elements of the mortality review process to the facts of a case when seeking to triage responses to deaths;
2. Review the concept of the investigatory question; and,
3. Practice developing investigatory questions for various types of deaths.

Module V: Explanation: Proximate, Antecedent and Root Cause

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Identify and distinguish among proximate, antecedent and root causes of an incident (particularly those involving death); and,
2. Practice applying the definitions associated with each to a set of facts.

Module VI: Special Problems When Conducting Death Investigations

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Identify those investigative practices which may be difficult to implement in cases of unexpected deaths;
2. Discuss the difficulty in acquiring certain evidence (e.g., autopsy reports) in a timely and thorough manner in cases of an individual's death; and
3. Determine the role of an autopsy report in a death investigation.

Module VII: Conducting Interviews During Death Investigations

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Explore the interaction between the emotional circumstances of a death, particularly an unexpected death, and the need to interview friends and family in a timely manner;
2. Introduce the need for an interview to family, particularly in light of the possibility of legal liability associated with any particular death; and,
3. Identify the best manner to preserve testimony of family members when they do not constitute incident witnesses in an investigation.

Module VIII: Day #1 Review

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Review the content of the first day of the training program; and,
2. Allow students to identify those elements that have been most helpful in understanding the mortality review process.

Module IX: Medical Review: The Form

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Familiarize students with the medical review format which will be used for all deaths; and,
2. Allow students to assess potential difficulties in using the medical review form.

Module X: Using the Medical Review Results

The objective of this module is to allow students to practice using medical review results to better understanding the relationship between the medical review process to other elements of the larger mortality review process.

Module XI: Root Cause Analysis: Introductory Questions

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Identify the role of the root cause analysis in the context of mortality review; and,
2. Identify problems that members of a root cause analysis committee are likely to encounter when participating in that process.

Module XII: Root Cause Analysis: Asking Why?

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Explore the central role of the question “why” in conducting a root cause analysis;
2. Identify the relationship between proximate cause, antecedent cause and root cause on the matrix used to display the root cause process; and,
3. Provide an opportunity to understand the use of research methodologies in answering the question “why”.

Module XIII: Mortality Review: General Questions

The objective of this module is to review the relationship between the overall mortality review process in the context of the medical review, death investigation and root cause analysis processes.

Module XIV: Mortality Review: Considering Data I

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Practice analyzing incident data in the context of a particular death; and,
2. Identify the types of data that will help a mortality review committee understand how to best avoid unexpected deaths.

Module XV: Mortality Review: Considering Data II

The objective of this module is to practice developing recommendations to prevent unexpected deaths based on the incident data considered in module XLV.