

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 991

Short Title: Establish DMORT. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives B. Jones and Colvin (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery, if favorable, Rules, Calendar,
and Operations of the House

April 14, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE DISASTER MORTUARY OPERATIONAL RESPONSE
TEAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 166A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
Article to read:

"Article 7.

"Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams.

"§ 166A-70. Purpose; establishment.

Purpose; Establishment. – There is hereby established the Disaster Mortuary Operational
Response Team within the Division of Emergency Management of the Department of Public
Safety. The purpose of DMORT is to support local mortuary services on location through
assisting emergency response and recovery operations after declared disasters. The Director of
Emergency Management shall oversee DMORT within the Division.

"§ 166A-71. Definitions.

Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this Article:

(1) Board. – The North Carolina Board of Funeral Service.

(2) Department. – The Department of Public Safety.

(3) Director. – The Director of the Division.

(4) Division. – The Division of Emergency Management of the Department of
Public Safety.

(5) DMORT. – Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team.

"§ 166A-72. Structure; organization.

(a) Objective. – DMORT shall consist of several licensed and trained professionals
whose primary goal is to respond to disaster areas or mass fatality incidents to identify victims,
reunite victims with family members and loved ones, recover, decontaminate, and examine
victims, and transport deceased individuals to families and counties of residence.

(b) Team Members. – DMORT team members shall consist of, at a minimum, all of the
following trained professionals:

(1) Licensed funeral directors.

(2) Licensed funeral service professionals.

(3) Medical examiners.

(4) Licensed dentists and dental hygienists.

(5) Licensed embalmers.



- (6) Fingerprint specialists or examiners employed by or retired from the State Bureau of Investigation.
- (7) Administrative specialists employed by or retired from the Department of Public Safety or any of its subdivisions.
- (8) Various licensees of the Private Protective Services Board.
- (9) Various trained forensic specialists.
- (10) Trained diagnostic radiologic technologists.

(c) Oversight. – The Director of the Division shall oversee the organization of DMORT and coordinate the development and updating of a response plan utilizing DMORT's primary objectives. The Director shall integrate DMORT into the North Carolina Emergency Operations Plan for disaster response and recovery.

(d) Expenses. – Within available appropriations, the Division shall spend the necessary funds for training, equipment, and other items necessary to support the operations of DMORT. The Division may also administer any grants of other funds made available for DMORT, in accordance with applicable rules and regulations approved by the Director of the State Budget.

(e) Training. – The Division shall coordinate with DMORT for periodic training for membership in DMORT for each team member and coordinate with the appropriate State agencies and organizations, including the North Carolina Board of Funeral Service, the Medical Care Commission, the Department of Health and Human Services, local emergency management departments, first responder associations and organizations, and any other State agency or organization the Division deems appropriate.

"§ 166A-73. Specialized operations; transportation services.

(a) Specialized Operations. – DMORT shall specialize in the following operations when responding to a disaster:

- (1) Tracking and documenting human remains and personal effects.
- (2) Establishing temporary morgue facilities.
- (3) Assisting in the determination of cause and manner of death.
- (4) Collecting ante-mortem data.
- (5) Collection of medical records, dental records, or DNA of victims from next of kin to assist in victim identification.
- (6) Performing postmortem data collection.
- (7) Documentation during field retrieval and morgue operations.
- (8) Performing forensic dental pathology and forensic anthropology methods.
- (9) Preparing, processing, and returning human remains and personal effects to appropriate recipients.
- (10) Processing and re-internment of disinterred remains.
- (11) Providing technical assistance and consultation on fatality management and mortuary affairs.

(b) Transportation Services. – DMORT shall provide transportation services for the returning of victims to counties of residence and family members for proper burial or cremation. Any transportation service rendered after a disaster shall make all reasonable attempts to comply with State and local law and Board rules when transporting human remains within the emergency area in the State. Once the transportation of the human remains is outside the emergency area, DMORT shall comply with all State and local laws and Board rules.

"§ 166A-74. Immunity.

Members of DMORT shall be protected from liability under the provisions of G.S. 166A-19.60(a) while active on DMORT missions pursuant to authorization from the Division."

SECTION 2. The Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management, and the North Carolina Board of Funeral Service may adopt rules to implement the

1 provisions of this act. Both the Division and the Board shall coordinate in rulemaking to
2 implement this act.
3 **SECTION 3.** Section 1 of this act becomes effective October 1, 2025. The remainder
4 of this act is effective when it becomes law.