

Miami-Dade College Prepares Students For Catastrophic Event Exercise

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MIAMI (CBSMiami) — A catastrophic event exercise that's as real as it gets took place at Miami-Dade College's North Campus.



"It's not a question of if, it's a question of when there'll be a mass fatality incident in the state of Florida, and so we get together with a lot of various agencies to prepare and we have a portable morgue unit," said Liam Smith with Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System.

The school is hosting the annual Florida Mortuary Operations Response System Preparedness Exercise over the next two days. School officials say is the first time the event is hosted in South Florida and the first time Miami-Dade holds a drill of this magnitude.

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“Once a year we have a full-scale training where we bring all of our team members who are forensic specialists from around the state,” said Jason Byrd with Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System.

Dentists, anthropologists, pathologists, crime scene technicians and mortuary officers from all over the state all come together to work in a mobile morgue.

“We have a portable morgue unit and we have a victim’s information center and a morgue identification center, and when all three combined are able to gather the necessary data, we’re able to return the loved ones to their families,” said Smith.

Participants not only work with mannequins but with cadavers. Miami-Dade College says the cadavers come from the state anatomical board and they’re paid for their use.

“There are some areas that are using the mannequins and some areas that are using the real dead bodies and that’s so they can get the real world experience to what it would be to really respond to one of these catastrophic events, and actually have to work with dead bodies,” said Raimundo Socorro with Miami-Dade College.

“Our ultimate goal for this type of training is to better interface with the local medical examiner’s office, make them aware of the resources the state of Florida has and to be better prepared to assist the state of Florida in a mass disaster or mass fatality event,” said Byrd.

Miami-Dade College said 130 participants took part in the event.

Last week, [Broward College held a similar event](#) in Davie.

Oralia Ortega

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Oralia Ortega joined the CBS4 News team in September of 2014. The Emmy award-winning journalist has more than a decade of experience as a reporter and anchor in cities throughout the country, but she’s especially pleased to be back reporting in...

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