



Netherlands Forensic Institute
Ministry of Security and Justice

Dealing with disasters
with the **Netherlands Forensic Institute**



NFI Forensic
response
to disasters

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a white lab coat and purple nitrile gloves. The person is holding a red-tipped pipette tip in their right hand and another red-tipped pipette tip in their left hand. They are positioned over a black multi-well plate with several wells containing blue and green liquids. The background shows a laboratory setting with various pieces of equipment, including a black tray with several clear plastic containers and a white box. The lighting is bright, highlighting the person's hands and the lab equipment.

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Dealing with disasters

NFI Forensic response to disasters

The Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI) is an agency of the Netherlands Ministry of Security and Justice, and strives to be the most innovative and client-oriented provider of forensic services and tools in the world, with a broad national and international client base.

The NFI provides state-of-the-art products and services to international police forces and public prosecution offices, as well as to international criminal courts, tribunals, governmental organisations and special investigative services. The services offered by the NFI cover the areas of forensic casework, education and training, including consultancy. With over 30 forensic disciplines, the NFI is one of the few institutes to offer such an extensive range of high-tech forensic products and services within one organisation.

In the area of disasters the NFI offers a threefold approach. The NFI:

1. can provide advice on effective management of disaster scenes, can provide the tools to assist and can provide training courses in the field of crime scene management;
2. can provide high-quality crime scene investigation assistance at the site of the disaster;
3. possesses state-of-the-art expertise for scientific examinations of the trace evidence recovered from the scene.

Consultancy and training on a forensic response to disasters

There is always the possibility of a disastrous event occurring and protocols need to be in place on how to deal with these events. Effective preparation involves not only having the appropriate processes and tools in place, but also ensuring that there is existing capacity to handle these events. Proper training is crucial in this preparation.

The NFI can assist in these preparations by providing advice on effective management of these scenes and providing the tools to assist. The NFI can also provide training courses in the field of crime scene management using the scientific approach, and contribute to capacity-building programmes by training crime scene investigators in how they can best conduct a crime scene investigation, in their own country, using the resources available to them.

A key to forensic knowledge; NFI Academy

The NFI Academy provides education and training in the area of forensics to international governmental organisations. The level of the training and/or education is tailor-made to the needs of the client, and can vary from a practical to an academic level. Training and education can be given at the NFI, or in-house at the client's location. Facilities for 'learning at a distance' can also be made available.

With a view to maximising the results of the scientific investigation of a scene, it is important to ensure that the emergency services, frequently the first responders, consider the impact of their actions on the forensic trace evidence. The NFI Academy offers training in the field of forensic awareness, catering especially for the emergency services and first responders. This practical training focuses on the development of forensic knowledge and skills that can be used in the event of small-scale and large-scale incidents where forensic examinations are also carried out.

Support at the scene

If a disaster has occurred, such as an air crash or bombing, a large-scale forensic examination normally begins as soon as possible. It is crucial that the work is carried out carefully and to a high standard despite the considerable pressure of time. The NFI can relieve the local authorities of a great deal of tasks and offers considerable added value. The NFI is on standby 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can:

- immediately dispatch a scientific support coordinator to the incident location to advise the local authorities on the best investigative approach;
- provide a complete operational team of experienced crime scene investigators or, if required, one or more members to a pre-existing team;
- assemble an international team of experts from a variety of countries.

State-of-the-art crime scene investigation techniques

The NFI crime scene investigations team has extensive experience of working in countries all over the world, including Lebanon, Djibouti, Indonesia, Venezuela and Bonaire. The NFI has also undertaken assignments for a number of international organisations such as the international tribunals and special courts.

The NFI crime scene investigations team works with state-of-the-art investigation techniques. For example, crime scenes can be visualised and/or reconstructed using 3D-modelling software. This can provide, for example, an oversight on the location of exhibits recovered from a scene, and also assist in the determination of the trajectory of projectiles, speed of movement of vehicles and in the reconstruction of bomb scenes. This modelling technique is also particularly useful in visually presenting the evidence at court, often referred to as an Electronic Presentation of Evidence (EPE).

The specialists of the NFI have knowledge in the field of forensic investigations as they relate to CBRNe (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear substances and/or explosives) incidents. This specific knowledge means that the NFI regularly receives requests for its assistance. Commissioning organisations such as the police, intelligence agencies and other international parties such as the UN, OCPW and the EU, often request the expertise of the NFI in the event of CBRNe incidents.

Bonaparte disaster victim identification (DVI) system

In the case of a disaster involving a large number of fatalities, the quick recovery and identification of the remains of the victims is of great importance. Disaster victim identification (DVI) is greatly facilitated by the advent of modern DNA technologies. In the event of such a disaster, the NFI can take responsibility for the identification of all the victims. With this in mind, the NFI and Radboud University Nijmegen have developed the Bonaparte software system. Bonaparte DVI is a next-generation software system designed to facilitate quick victim identification in cases concerning mass fatalities, such as terrorist attacks, airline crashes and natural disasters. In 2010, Bonaparte was successfully utilised by the NFI for the rapid identification of the victims of the air disaster in Tripoli.

Casework: wide range of high-quality forensic examination techniques

The NFI is also perfectly equipped to analyse the exhibits collected by your own people and/or the NFI crime scene investigators. The NFI offers more than 30 forensic research disciplines under one roof, varying from biological examinations of people, animals and plants to examinations of substances and items, and digital and audiovisual examinations. All of these disciplines avail of the latest technologies and scientific insights. The NFI maintains a high quality standard and is accredited to ISO/IEC standard 17025.

Interdisciplinary teamwork

This extensive range of high-tech forensic products and services offers considerable added value for you, the client. In order to fully benefit from this, the NFI can offer you the service of the IDFO (interdisciplinary forensic research) approach, providing insight, overview and substance. Following a disaster, numerous requests for investigations may be submitted to the various expert departments within the NFI. To maintain an overview of such investigations/cases and in order to ensure optimal research results, a designated IDFO coordinator and a forensic advisor ensure, in close cooperation with you and the NFI experts, the thorough content-based and process-based coordination of the separate NFI examinations. This enables the various research avenues to be properly structured and considered, resulting in the most probative scenario being considered first, thus achieving the most coherent forensic end result.





Information

For more information on the products and services of the Netherlands Forensic Institute, please contact:

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