

The Role of EDRT Members

An Elder Death Review Team (EDRT) comprises various organizations and professions that share their diverse information, expertise, assistance, and inter-agency collaboration. The following paragraphs describe how each participating organization or agency contributes to the EDRT, thereby enhancing the team's effectiveness and collaboration in reviewing elder deaths, identifying risk factors, and improving prevention-system response efforts.



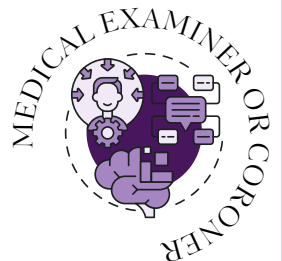
Law enforcement is often the first to respond to an elder death scene and plays a key role in ensuring public safety, investigating the death, identifying potential crimes, and initiating arrests when appropriate. Their participation on the Elder Death Review Team (EDRT) provides valuable insight into case status, scene investigation, criminal histories, evidence collection, and interviewing practices. Law enforcement members act as liaisons, helping to coordinate with other agencies and jurisdictions, facilitating participation from additional officers when needed.

Adult Protective Services (APS) investigates reports of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of older and vulnerable adults, and connects individuals and families with needed services. On the EDRT, the APS representative provides information about the case, including prior reports, the individual's history, and factors that may have contributed to risk. They offer expertise on elder abuse prevention and intervention, help identify system gaps, and support improved coordination between social services and other agencies involved in the review.



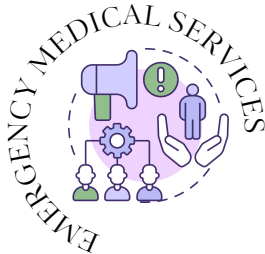
The prosecutor or district attorney is responsible for pursuing criminal charges when an elder death involves suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Their involvement helps define legal standards related to elder safety and justice in the community. On the EDRT, they provide insight into case status, prior prosecutions, and reasons why a case may or may not be prosecuted. They offer legal expertise, support the development of prevention and prosecution strategies, and serve as a liaison to other prosecutor offices, helping to strengthen collaboration across the justice system.

The medical examiner or coroner determines the cause and manner of death when an elder dies under suspicious, unexplained, or unexpected circumstances. Medical examiners are typically physicians with training in pathology or forensics, while coroners are often elected officials and may not have medical training. On the EDRT, they provide critical information such as autopsy findings, toxicology reports, and scene investigations. They educate the team on injury patterns, medical terminology, and causes of elder death, and help improve coordination between investigative and medical systems by sharing insights and records relevant to the case.



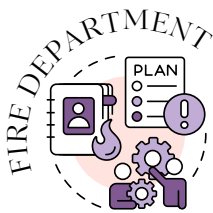
Public health agencies are responsible for vital records, health data, and implementing strategies to prevent illness, injury, and death. On the EDRT, public health representatives provide key information such as death certificates, immunization records, agency contacts with the deceased, and relevant health statistics. They offer expertise in prevention programs, data analysis, and community health trends, and may share insights from home visits or services to high-risk individuals. Public health professionals also help strengthen collaboration across systems by linking the team to broader health resources and initiatives.

Geriatricians and other health care providers bring specialized knowledge of the medical, cognitive, and functional needs of older adults. On the EDRT, they offer insight into the deceased's medical history, diagnoses, treatments, and patterns of care. They help interpret medical findings, explain health conditionals common in aging populations, and access records from hospitals or clinics. Their expertise supports the identification of abuse, neglect, or preventable causes of death, and they help strengthen collaboration by connecting the team with the broader medical community and guiding prevention efforts tailored to older adults.



EMS Professionals are often the first responders to the scene of an elder death and provide vital information through run reports, observations at the scene, and medical interventions performed. They offer expertise on EMS protocols, emergency procedures, and scene dynamics. EMS representatives help the team understand pre-hospital care, support discussions on scene preservation, and contribute to case reviews with insight from their training and experience. They also serve as a liaison to the broader EMS community, promoting collaboration with law enforcement and other agencies involved in the investigation.

An elder law attorney brings expertise in legal issues affecting older adults, including guardianship, powers of attorney, advance directives, financial exploitation, and elder abuse. They can help the team understand the legal context of a case, interpret relevant documents, and identify potential gaps or misuse in legal protections. Their insight supports system improvements by highlighting legal risks, advocating for policy changes, and helping ensure older adults' rights and interests are protected throughout the review process.



Fire department personnel bring critical expertise in investigating fire-related deaths and identifying prevention strategies. They can provide information on the presence and functionality of safety devices like smoke detectors, details from the fire scene, and potential causes of fire. Their knowledge supports the team's understanding of fire safety, response timelines, and ways to prevent future fire-related fatalities among older adults.

Hospital staff can provide essential medical records from emergency, inpatient, or outpatient services related to the elder's care and treatment. They offer insight into medical conditions, interventions, and outcomes, and help the team understand hospital protocols and procedures. Hospital representatives also support the team by facilitating access to records, educating members on relevant medical issues, and identifying opportunities to improve hospital practices that may prevent future elder deaths.



Mental health professionals contribute valuable insight into psychological factors that may have impacted the elder or their caregivers. They can provide information on mental health histories, interpret psychological evaluations, and help identify ongoing needs for mental health services. These professionals also offer guidance on grief, trauma, and counseling resources, and support the team with debriefing and emotional wellness following challenging case reviews.