SUMMARISED STANDARDS FOR CASUALTY RECORDING
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SUMMARISED STANDARDS FOR CASUALTY RECORDING

This document is a short, simple and accessible summary of the *Standards for Casualty Recording*. The full document is available at [www.everycasualty.org](http://www.everycasualty.org).

The *Standards for Casualty Recording* were developed by the Casualty Recorders Network of Every Casualty Counts to promote best practice, encourage harmonisation and enable wider use of casualty recorders’ work. They are not intended to be used as operational guidance. Instead, the Standards aim to encourage casualty recorders to consider important aspects of good practice and how these can be applied to their own casualty recording projects.

As well as assisting casualty recording practitioners, these Standards aim to make casualty data easier to use and share. They provide casualty data end-users with objective, measurable criteria that help them decide whether and how to use the casualty data presented by different sources.

To widen the reach and use of the Standards, this summary has been translated into a number of the most relevant languages for existing and potential casualty recorders. For further information and resources, please contact Every Casualty Worldwide.
PRINCIPLES OF CASUALTY RECORDING

Five core principles were agreed on during the development of the Standards. All the standards presented here are informed by these principles, and they should be upheld throughout the work of any project.

1. **Do no harm**

Avoiding further harm to the living is such a fundamental principle of casualty recording, derived from medical ethics, that it can override the other four principles. It applies across all aspects of casualty recording, from data collection through to security policies and data publication.

2. **Transparency**

Casualty recorders should be as transparent as possible about all aspects of their activities, including organisational structure, methodology and security policies for staff, witnesses and data. Transparency fosters trust in the data, helps to ensure it is interpreted accurately, and encourages helpful scrutiny.

3. **Inclusiveness**

Casualty recorders do not have to be politically neutral, but they must strive to include all events and fatalities which occur within the scope of the project, using definitions that apply to all parties equally. Casualty recorders should state clearly what data, if any, they exclude from their recording and why. This may include, for example, difficulties gathering information from communities opposed to the casualty recorder’s political or community affiliation.

4. **Consistency**

Consistency, particularly in the methods for data collection and processing, is crucial for ensuring that casualty records can be used for meaningful comparisons across time and place. When methods change in response to changing external circumstances they must be carefully considered, and clearly indicated, to ensure consistent data quality.

5. **Responsibility**

Casualty recorders must act responsibly toward all those affected by or involved in their work, including their sources and staff. The exercise of responsibility should be transparently observable, so as to build the trust of those providing and using their information.
FUNDAMENTAL DATA COLLECTION GOALS FOR CASUALTY RECORDERS

Casualty recorders set their information gathering requirements in accordance with the specific goals of their project. However, there is a minimum package of fundamental information that all casualty recorders should strive to include. These are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Location</strong></th>
<th>Record the highest available level of detail, for example the name of the town or village or even full GPS coordinates if possible.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date / Time</strong></td>
<td>Record the highest level of detail available, including date and time if known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sources</strong></td>
<td>Record source categories such as news reports, official documents, crowdsourcing, or witness testimony. Sources should usually be retained, with links to casualty records. Sensitive sources, such as witness testimony, should be protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of casualties</strong></td>
<td>When identifying information about the individuals killed in a specific incident is not available, record the number of victims as an interim measure until further detail can be obtained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
<td>Record the name of each casualty, using close knowledge of local naming conventions. Ensure it is possible to include different names for the same individual when necessary (for example, nicknames or noms de guerre).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>Record each victim’s date of birth, or age at the time of their death or disappearance. If this information is not available, record whether the victim was a child or an adult using transparent and consistent criteria. Further categories such as baby, infant, teenager, or elder, should be applied consistently if used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex/gender</strong></td>
<td>Record the sex/gender of each person whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Details of death</strong></td>
<td>This information can be organized in different ways, for example by weapon, medical cause of death or a description of the incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors involved</strong></td>
<td>Record the groups and / or individuals reported to have been involved in the incident, including conflict parties present and groups or individuals that claimed responsibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STANDARDS FOR CASUALTY RECORDING

1. Organisational Transparency

Casualty recorders must always:

- be transparent about their mission and motivations for recording.
- make information about their methodology transparent and publicly accessible.

Casualty recorders should try to:

- provide information about political or other affiliations which might compromise their commitment to inclusive recording.
- make the organisational structure of their organisation transparent and accessible to all stakeholders.
- make information on funders transparent and publicly accessible.

2. Methodology

Casualty recorders must always:

- have clear means of dealing with both documentary evidence and witness statements.
- have a consistent and well-organised system for information processing, while also leaving room for human judgment and flexibility.
- systematically record specified pieces of information.
- have a process for corroborating and evaluating the data collected.
- have a system for resolving disagreements between sources.
- have ways to avoid or resolve duplicate recording.

Casualty recorders should try to:

- use multiple independent sources for each record to the extent possible.
- be aware of all the potential sources that are available to them, and their strengths and limitations.
- consider using a rating scale to grade the reliability of each source, and is open to review.
- not reject any source that can provide relevant information, even if the information given is minimal.
- store every relevant document.
- aim to corroborate their data with multiple independent sources.
- establish procedures to ensure consistent data entry.
- keep all data entries open to correction and the incorporation of new information.
• divide the casualty recording process between different people to simplify the work and minimise human errors.
• consider having staff members review each other’s entries before confirming an incident/individual.

3. Definitions and Categorisation

Casualty recorders must always:
• set clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, which are openly explained.
• choose definitions and categories appropriate to their context and purpose.
• determine an initial set of information points, categories, and definitions before starting the casualty recording initiative and apply these consistently in their recording process.

Casualty recorders should try to:
• have an option to characterise information as “uncertain” or “provisional” when this is the case.
• consider categorisation issues when building their database.
• record the deaths of unidentified individuals to the level of detail possible.
• consult and/or compile databases of missing persons, to help clarify the fate of unidentified casualties.

4. Security

Casualty recorders must always:
• be aware that risks change and identify the particular risks attached to each phase of the casualty recording cycle.
• obtain informed consent from witnesses appropriate for all the purposes their information will be used.
• clearly define relationships with all staff members through written or oral contracts, requiring confidentiality and exclusivity when appropriate.
• ensure all staff are aware of, understand, agree to and have access to the security measures put in place to protect them.
• develop and provide security protocols to their staff, including training as needed.
• guarantee a level of access to psychological support for their staff.
• have a data storage plan before they begin collecting data, including back up provisions.
• account for legal, technological and human factors when addressing data security matters, including data protection laws.
• clearly define their data security requirements when sharing data with other stakeholders.
• plan for the possibility of a data breach.
• thoroughly assess whether the tools they use meet their data security purposes.

Casualty recorders should try to:
• undertake continuous risk assessment to ensure the security of the people they involve in their casualty recording activities.
• analyse what risk is attached to the kind of data they collect.
• only collect information that they need and can protect appropriately.
• be aware of providers of humanitarian relief and human rights support in the area in which they operate, so they can direct witnesses to them for assistance as needed.
• provide different levels of access to sensitive data within the organisation, on a need-to-know basis.
• plan how they will archive their data when the project ends.

5. Publishing Casualty Recording Data

Casualty recorders must always:
• signal if/when published information is insufficiently corroborated to be considered fully confirmed.

Casualty recorders should try to:
• consider all the ways their data may be useful, and to whom, when making decisions about what to publish.
• identify their reasons for deciding not to publish particular data.
• aggregate published data in line with project objectives but always bear in mind the ultimate objective of recognising every casualty.
• assess and identify the most effective ways to communicate their data.
• always try to publish their data in the local language(s) of the region their activities are based on.
• consider undertaking outreach activities to engage important target audiences with their data.
• strive to share their data as widely as possible to avoid duplication of work, but decide the level of detail they will provide on a case-by-case basis.