



## Hurricane Season 2009 Approaches Are You Ready for Deployment?

Did you know that at the height of any federally-declared disaster, more than 70 to 85 percent of deployed FEMA employees are Reservists?

Hurricane Season 2009 begins June 1. Are you ready to be deployed?

An average season has 11 named storms, six hurricanes and two major hurricanes, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). During the 2008 Hurricane Season, FEMA's available disaster workforce staffing was particularly critical. A record number of consecutive storms struck the United States – in one of the more active seasons in the 64 years since NOAA began keeping comprehensive records. A total of 16 named storms formed in 2008, according to NOAA's National Hurricane Center. The storms included eight hurricanes, five of which were major hurricanes at Category 3 strength or higher. These numbers fell within the ranges predicted in NOAA's 2008

pre- and mid-season outlooks -- issued in May and August.

As last year's storms intensified along the southeastern and northern Gulf coasts – and because of a shortage of available personnel – the FEMA Administrator placed all employees on alert for possible disaster response assignments.

For Reservists, the Conditions of Employment (COE) "extraordinary circumstances" clause was activated. Under that clause, which all Reservists sign when they are hired, they must make themselves available in ADD – or provide a valid reason why they aren't, with appropriate documentation. After this activation, the Disaster Reserve Workforce Division (DRWD), FEMA Regions, and some Headquarters Cadre Managers, conducted a call out campaign to Reservists who were listed as not being available. The calls to more than 2700 Reservists resulted in more than 900 being deployed during the critical time period.

## BEST Survey Measures Employee Engagement

Overall, 7,840 FEMA employees responded to the Building Engagement, Strengths, and Talent (BEST) Workforce Initiative survey last December and January — 1976 Reservists and 5864 PFTs/COREs.

Managed by Gallup, Inc., the survey is a critical tool designed to improve FEMA's workplace culture and give all employees the opportunity to identify the Agency's strengths and weaknesses. Employees were asked 12 questions relating to basic job needs, management support, teamwork and growth — including whether they get learning opportunities, supervisor recognition, and basic materials and equipment to do their jobs.

Gallup staff recently presented the survey results to DRWD leadership and explained how employee engagement can impact FEMA's mission, as well as employee productivity and turnover.

The survey indicates that employee engagement is lower

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## You Wanted to Know . .

What happens if you refuse an assignment because of location or personnel, but are willing to go somewhere else?

*Turning a deployment request down when your status denotes availability is documented on your record as a "refusal" of the assignment request. This documentation is available to your Cadre Manager and Staffing Point of Contact (SPOC) to consider when making deployment decisions.*

Is there a standard for progression in status/pay scale and advancement in efficiency level, or is it left to the Region?

*Yes. The August 13, 1992 Grant Peterson memorandum, endorsed by Director's Policy No. 1-99 of March 3, 1999, outlines criteria for DAE pay scale progression and efficiency level advancement. Limited space precludes duplicating the applicable content here; however, the Peterson memo can be located via FEMA Intranet pathway: Bulletin Board/Deployment Information/DAE Policy FEMA Instruction 8600.1 /File Item: FEMA 8600... (Pages 25-26). Note: DRWD is currently working on re-issuing and updating these criteria to incorporate the present administrative structure for Disaster Reservists.*

Is there a cadre-specific list of EMI courses that Reservists are eligible to take?

*EMI training courses are listed at <http://training.fema.gov/courses>. You must work through your Cadre Manager to attend on-site courses, and to see if you meet target audience criteria for a particular class. As cadre specific credentialing plans are developed, training for specific performance levels will be outlined.*

*FAQs are informational only and do not establish agency policy.*

## Letter from Philip A. Nowak, Acting DRWD Director

To our Reservists,

The past 12 months have witnessed some promising new-start activities across the Disaster Reserve Workforce (DRW). These are important because they are helping us build a force of Reservists ready to deploy anywhere, anytime, that disaster victims and their communities need FEMA.



*Ready to go 24 x 7!*

Being ready to deploy: this is why credentialing the workforce is so important to Agency success, and why we have so visibly focused on credentialing. Three Headquarters directorates recently approved credentialing plans for their cadres; and we expect at least six more credentialing plans to be completed by the end of September.

Credentialing plans, along with the Position Task Books produced by EMI, provide you and your Cadre Manager a road map of what you need in order to build skills and to be that ready, available resource for FEMA.

Of course, those credentialing plans aren't much good if there isn't a steady source of people who want to become Reservists. That is why we are working with representatives from Human Capital and Security to standardize how we hire new Reservists, and why we are working towards a more systematic approach to recruiting.

Credentialing plans and a correctly sized workforce fall short of the mark of a DRW ready to go if we do not provide training opportunities to enable you to learn and practice those hard earned skills. We are working closely with our partners at EMI to shape a broader approach to deliver training to you before you are asked to deploy.

And against this backdrop of doing things that enhance DRWD

readiness as a whole, we continue to press for benefits such as permanent policies on holiday pay, premium pay, and sick leave accrual.

Within the next few weeks, expect to see substantial improvements in the DRWD web "portal"-- changes that will make the portal a far more reliable tool to access information when you are not deployed or not logged on to a FEMA computer. And of course, I urge you to keep in touch with us through the DRWD e-mail in-box: [FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov)

As you can see, we have a lot of balls in the air. We are making a program that will help you become more ready to go, one which will support you better - and one which will make you want to stay.

Updating DRWD web portal to allow DRWD control of site postings.  
Building a Reservist email distribution list.

Monitoring progress of NFC & systems changes to finalize holiday leave pay, administrative leave pay and sick leave accrual.

Working with DRWD Regional Liaisons as we look to standardize hiring nationwide.

## Program Management Branch



Layne Smith  
Branch Chief

The Program Management Branch is continuously researching disaster workforce issues and policies that affect you.

Here are a few things that are completed, or are in the works:

First, the web portal that provides access to DRWD information from home computers is up and running. DRWD now directly maintains this site, ensuring more reliable and timely postings.

Second, we are continuing to work on updating policies. You will soon be hearing about clarification on the length of reappointments for Reservists, and how appointments impact opportunities for promotion.

Third, we have requested the National Finance Center, which administers the payroll system, to add codes in Web TA to allow Reservists to get holiday premium pay and administrative leave pay.

And, finally, we are compiling a list of personal e-mail addresses so you can receive information when you are not deployed. So far, more than 3,000 Reservists have signed up for this service. When complete, the list can be broken down by Cadre or Region.

You can participate by sending a request to [FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov). Please include "E-mail Participation" in the subject heading, and your Cadre and Region in the body.

## Building Your Credentialing Portfolio

Credentialing is the process whereby you will be designated with a proficiency level to reflect your training and experience as Trainee, Basically Qualified, Fully Qualified or Expert relative to your Cadre position title.

You are responsible for creating the portfolio that reflects your skills and experience. Your Cadre Manager will enter this into a migration tool for proficiency determination. The estimated completion date for Reservists to migrate to the new credentialing framework is March 2011; however, you can begin now to corral the documents needed, i.e., task book assessments, performance appraisals, licenses, certifications letters of recommendation, and training records.

There are three sources for training records: the Training Information Access System (TIAS), for independent study courses and EMI courses - including the four independent study courses IS 100, IS 200, IS 700, and IS 800 (<http://netctraindl.fema.net>); the FEMA Employee Knowledge Center, for online training courses (<http://kc.fema.net>); and, the Automated Deployment Database (ADD), for courses taken while deployed to a disaster.

*Learn more about the What/Why/Who/When/How of Credentialing from your Cadre Manager or DRWD Regional Liaison.*

## External Affairs

### Private Sector Outreach Closes Communication Gap

FEMA's Public Affairs, Intergovernmental Affairs, Congressional Affairs and Community Relations all reach out to their constituents. Until recently, however, there was no special outreach to private sector organizations, their members or employees. Now, FEMA is closing that gap with a Private Sector Division.

Division representatives working DR-1830-MN have reached business partners in the greater Red River Valley area through key activities such as a "Business After Hours" event sponsored by the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce.

As part of ESF 15-External Affairs, Private Sector Division staff serve as a central point of information and collaboration between federal disaster response/recovery efforts and the private sector - including businesses, associations, for-profits, academic institutions and other non-governmental organizations.

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HQ Private Sector Reservist Chad McCormick explaining FEMA programs etc. to local businessperson at the Fargo-Moorhead "Business After Hours" event sponsored by the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce.

## Readiness Branch



Paul Geiger,  
Branch Chief

### *Coming to a Joint Field Office Near You . . .*

Since February 2009, DRWD has been on the road to JFOs in Texas, Iowa, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, and Washington, educating the deployed force on FEMA's Agency-Wide Credentialing initiative. We have reached more than 400 personnel from all Cadres, and representatives of every Region. The "road team" consists of Readiness Branch personnel and DRWD Regional Liaisons.

Our audience is guided through a 5-tier agenda that addresses: What is Credentialing? What is FEMA's Credentialing Program? Who is involved in governing the program? What are the components? How will existing Reservists be Credentialed (Migration)?

Our Q&A session has proved to be very important in shaping the message going forward. Reviewing concerns raised in the field puts us in the best position to continue on a path that will ensure the workforce is aware of the successes and challenges in this historic undertaking. Stay tuned, we may be coming to a JFO near you. To see the questions asked by Reservists at briefings go to: [http://online.fema.net/office\\_management/drwd/docs/credentialing/Credentialing%20FAQ.pdf](http://online.fema.net/office_management/drwd/docs/credentialing/Credentialing%20FAQ.pdf)

## Security Trains for the Future

*Don Pope, Chief Disaster Security Operations Branch*

FEMA's Office of Security manages almost 100 Security Disaster Reservists. In April, 52 of them attended a week-long Security Cadre Annual Recertification training at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI). The newly selected N-IMAT West Security Officer attended as well, promising a smooth transition of operations from the IMAT to Reservists upon their arrival at a JFO.

One topic of discussion was the realignment of the Security Cadre within the newly established Disaster Security Operations Branch. This important change ensures that the Cadre has a dedicated commitment from the Chief Security Officer to support all disaster assignments.

A review of duties and responsibilities revealed that within the last four years, the Cadre has undergone a major transformation associated with managing JFO Security operations. These changes include operational, administrative and technological processes that are specific to security operations. These practices are employed on large scale operations, as well as some of the Category 2 assignments.

Additionally, the Mission Assignment process was a critical training initiative. As a result of the Mission Assignment training, all Security Reservists are now classified as Project Officers. As Project Officer, the Security Manager now has the authority to annotate and approve all mission assignments relative to disaster security operations where the cadre member is assigned.

The Security Cadre has volunteered to be one of the initial cadres involved with the Disaster Reserve Workforce Division's (DRWD) Credentialing program, which will ensure that FEMA's Disaster Workforce meets national standards of performance. During the EMI training, DRWD and EMI staff provided an overview of the credentialing process, including information on how the program directly relates to the job-specific task books.



E980

## Security Recertification Training

April 2009

## Deployment Branch



Tracy Haynes  
Branch Chief

### *Ignoring the Deployment Process: Part One*

DRWD will soon be reaching out to Regional Administrators, Federal Coordinating Officers, Program Managers and other key leadership in an effort to boost Agency-wide education about standard workforce deployment protocol.

B y - p a s s i n g t h e Deployment Branch process in ADD is the issue at hand.

No Reservist is to be deployed without a call from the Deployment Branch that manages ADD.

When Reservists report to a job site without being listed as deployed in ADD, that deployment is invalid.

Valid deployments require moving a request from the Cadre Manager through the appropriate Staffing Point of Contact to the Deployment Branch. It is the Deployment Branch that contacts the workforce member directly to finalize the deployment request.

Invalid deployments may result in an immediate return home of inappropriately deployed workforce members. On-going non-compliance with the process will be documented in a report to the Cadre Manager, and may result in the suspension of the workforce member's available status. More about this in the next issue of On Call.

## Headquarters Employee Gains Field Experience

*Karen Murphy, Disaster Assistance Directorate Correspondence Branch*

A voluntary deployment to Iowa in June 2008 was my first step into the Reservist/DAE world.

FEMA's Disaster Assistance Directorate leadership offered a field experience to any interested individual. And I was curious.

I was subsequently deployed to work with the Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) Group at the Joint Field Office in Iowa. The work with VAL was very different from my Headquarters duties in the Correspondence Branch, where we respond to inquiries from the White House and Congress, which means quick action to ensure an immediate resolution.

The VAL mission in the field requires employing a process to help a community launch a recovery plan and take charge of its own future. FEMA's role is to furnish the human and capital infrastructure, get the parties talking, and then stay very far in the background. The job is finished when the community has the capacity to proceed on its own.

I compare a first-time deployment for a Headquarters staffer to a disaster Reservist's first experience -- where the individual reporting for duty has unknown strengths, goes where needed, and does what is required to pick up bits of knowledge in many areas.

And somehow, from somewhere, the energy required for the 12-hour days appears.

**National Travel 1-800-294-8283  
Remember, do NOT travel until  
officially deployed by ADD!**

## Private Sector Outreach

*(Continued from page 3)*

During disasters, Private Sector Division specialists rapidly identify the economic stakeholders in a disaster area and then launch a strong communications outreach effort as quickly as possible. The team shares timely information on available resources or recovery tips with private sector organizations in the declared disaster areas via e-newsletters, conference calls, business advisories and other means. Not only is an "engaged relationship" established early on in a disaster, but the various private sector organizations better understand the manpower and supply contributions they can make to assist an effective emergency response and recovery effort.

**Reminder to update your  
availability status every 30 days  
by calling ADD 1-888-853-9648**

### **"My Pay Matters" Replaced**

The Human Capital Division Work-Life Services Branch has implemented a new Customer Service Team that will replace My Pay Matters.

If you have a question about your pay and compensation (my EPP), worker compensation or other issues, please contact the Customer Support Center at [fema-hc-worklifeservice@dhs.gov](mailto:fema-hc-worklifeservice@dhs.gov) or 1-866-896-8003

Service hours are Monday-Friday, 7:30am - 5:30pm, ET.

The Work Life Services team will answer phone calls and e-mails within the next business day and follow up on your request until it is resolved.

## BEST Survey

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than it should be -- 26 percent for both the Disaster Reserve Workforce and PFT/CORES. In comparison, 30 percent of the U.S. working population is engaged, according to Gallup.

In addition, the survey showed that while the Disaster Reserve Workforce population is exceeding the organizational benchmark for knowing the mission and purpose of the organization, the group measured lower than the overall FEMA group on job progress in the last six months. Job progress was described as a two-way conversation between a manager and an employee about progress on achieving goals.

The survey is only the beginning of the BEST Workforce Initiative — a five-year plan to build a better FEMA and increase employee engagement throughout the Agency.

DRWD is looking at ways to get Reservists' input on the survey findings, develop plans for change, execute those plans, and keep everyone informed on how FEMA plans to organize and implement changes based on the feedback.

To learn more about the BEST Workforce Initiative, talk to DRWD leadership, e-mail [FEMA-BEST-Workforce-Initiative@dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-BEST-Workforce-Initiative@dhs.gov) or go to the BEST Workforce page on the FEMA Intranet [http://online.fema.net/human\\_capital/best\\_workforce.shtm](http://online.fema.net/human_capital/best_workforce.shtm)

Submit news and articles that may be of interest to Reservists for On Call publication:  
[FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov)  
Deadline: June 10

## Life in the Reservist Lane

Juanita Arp, Region V Reservist

Sometimes Reservists have some interesting adventures getting to and finding deployment sites. Here are some of my unique experiences.

For three years Jimmy, my then-fiancée, drove a semi over the road and when I was not deployed I traveled with him. We lived in the semi; it was called a condo because you could stand up in it, even from the seats. It had two bunks, a small closet, a TV and refrigerator. My suitcase, with FEMA things, was stored under the bottom bunk.

One time we ran into a situation at an airport, when a police officer directing traffic told us we couldn't drive up or park the semi. But he changed his mind and let Jimmy drop me off with my luggage.

Once we were heading for Cincinnati when I got the call to go to Kansas City. Jimmy said he would drop me at the Cincinnati airport. I didn't have to be there for a couple days, and after Jimmy talked to his dispatcher, he was able to pick up a load going to Kansas City – and he dropped me off at my hotel. That deployment was pretty good.

Jimmy's dispatcher kept finding him runs to Kansas City, so he got to visit me a lot.

Another time when I was deployed to Kentucky, I was close enough to home to drive my car. Jimmy's dispatcher sent him on runs to Cincinnati, and he was able to go past my hotel on his trips – so we spent more time together.

Jimmy doesn't drive trucks anymore -- now he's an EMT and he drives ambulances. The problem now is he works 20-hour shifts and not always the same shifts. We live in a small mountain town, with no taxi service to the airport. So, I have to rely on him to take me to the airport, and have to arrange my flights by his work schedule.

I was recently deployed to Nebraska and went home on rotation. Going home was fine, but going back became a real challenge because of Jimmy's schedule and transportation issues. No semi. I ended up driving with visiting family members to Moline, Illinois, and then going on to Nebraska.

### What's Your Story?

If you have a unique deployment experience you'd like to share, send an e-mail to [FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov) and we will consider it for an upcoming issue of "On Call." Please put "newsletter submission" in the subject line.

### Useful Sites

External Affairs Initiatives, Activities and General Information for Reservists

<http://www.fema.gov/pao/daeinfo.shtm>

EMPs online Independent Study courses

<http://training.fema.gov/IS/>

Disaster Workforce task books and online assessment guides

<http://www.learningservices.us/fema/taskbooks/index.cfm>

DRWD latest news, FAQs and more. Enter your user name and password

<https://portal.fema.gov>