



FEMA

Fact Sheet

NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM

The National Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Response System is a framework for organizing federal, state and local partner emergency response teams as integrated federal search and rescue task forces. The 28 National US&R Task Forces, complete with the necessary tools, equipment, skills and techniques, can be deployed by FEMA to assist state and local governments in rescuing victims of structural collapse incidents or to assist in other search and rescue missions.

The 28 task forces are located throughout the continental United States. Any task force can be activated and deployed by FEMA to a disaster area to provide assistance in structural collapse rescue, or, they may be pre-positioned when a major disaster threatens a community. Each task force must have all its personnel and equipment at the embarkation point within six hours of activation so that it can be dispatched and en route to its destination in a matter of hours.

NATIONAL US&R TASK FORCES

A Type I Task Force is made up of 70 multi-faceted, cross-trained personnel who serve in six major functional areas, including search, rescue, medical, hazardous materials, logistics and planning. These elements are supported by canines that are trained and able to conduct physical search and heavy rescue operations in damaged or collapsed reinforced concrete buildings. Each task force can be divided into two 35-member teams to provide 24-hour search and rescue operations. Self-sufficient for the initial 72 hours, the task forces are equipped with convoy vehicles to support over the road deployments and can be configured into Light Task Forces to support weather events such as hurricanes and tornadoes and other similar incidents.

US&R TASK FORCE CAPABILITIES

- Conduct physical search and rescue operations in damaged/collapsed structures;
- Provide reconnaissance to assess damage and needs, and to report results to appropriate officials;
- Render emergency medical care for trapped victims, US&R personnel and search canines;
- Survey and evaluate hazardous materials threats;
- Assess and shut off utilities to homes and other buildings;
- Operate in a known or suspected weapons-of-mass-destruction environment;
- Provide structural and hazard evaluations of buildings; and
- Stabilize damaged structures, including shoring and cribbing.

The scope of FEMA's search and rescue operations have been expanded over the last few years to address search and rescue operations on land and inundation environments, and to include large area and aeronautical searches, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Department of Interior/National Park Service, the Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. ###