



# FEMA

# Fact Sheet

## National Urban Search & Rescue Response System

The National Urban Search & Rescue Response System established under the authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 1989, is a framework for organizing federal, state and local partner emergency response teams as integrated federal disaster response task forces. The System's 28 Urban Search & Rescue task forces, complete with the necessary tools, equipment, skills and techniques, can be deployed by FEMA to assist state and local governments in rescuing survivors 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 mobilize all its personnel and equipment within four hours of activation if traveling by ground, or arrive at the embarkation point within 6 hours of activation if being transported by air so that it can provide this life saving capability as quickly as possible.



### National Urban Search & Rescue Response System Task Forces

A Type I task force is made up of 70 multi-faceted, cross-trained personnel who serve in six major functional areas to include: search, rescue, medical, hazardous materials, logistics and planning. This task force also includes technical specialists such as physicians, structural engineers, and canine search teams. A task force is 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. The task forces can also be configured as a Type III Urban Search & Rescue task force for searching lighter construction usually encountered in weather related events such as hurricanes and tornados. Self-sufficient for the initial 72 hours, the task forces are equipped with convoy vehicles to support over-the-road deployments.

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*"FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards."*

## US&R Task Force Capabilities

- Conduct physical search and rescue operations in damaged/collapsed structures.
- Emergency medical care for entrapped survivors, task force personnel and search canines.
- Reconnaissance to assess damage and needs and provide feedback to local, state and federal officials.
- Assessment/shut off of utilities to houses and other buildings.
- Survey and evaluate hazardous material threats.
- Provide structural and hazard evaluations of buildings needed for immediate occupancy to support disaster relief operations.
- Stabilizing damaged structures, including shoring and cribbing.
- Hazardous Materials Equipment Push Packages for operations in a contaminated environment.
- Urban Search & Rescue operations in a water environment.

## National US&R Response System Incident Support Teams

In addition to the individual task forces, the System has three rostered Incident Support Teams. An Incident Support Team provides a group of highly qualified specialists readily available for rapid assembly and deployment to a disaster area to manage and support deployed system task forces. They also furnish federal, state, and local officials with technical assistance in acquiring, coordinating, and using Urban Search & Rescue resources.

The scope of FEMA's search and rescue operations have been expanded over the last few years to address various search and rescue operations to include large area searches, and involve numerous federal partners such as the U.S. Coast Guard, the Department of the Interior/National Park Service, and the Department of Defense.



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