

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

***NATIONAL  
URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE  
RESPONSE SYSTEM***

**A Component of the National Response Plan  
Emergency Support Function # 9**



**FEMA**

**RESCUE SPECIALIST  
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**National Urban Search & Rescue Response System  
Rescue Specialist Position Description**

**General Requirements**

1. Must be able to meet the physical requirements of the sponsoring agency with or without accommodations.
2. Must be available on short notice to mobilize within six hours of request and be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours for a response assignment of up to 10 days in austere environments.
3. Must be capable of improvising and functioning for long hours under adverse conditions.
4. Must maintain current inoculations for Diphtheria/Tetanus (or Tetanus only if there is a contra-indication to Diphtheria), Hepatitis A & B, Measles/Mumps/Rubella (if born after 1957), and Polio.
5. Must be able to function safely at heights and on or around rubble.
6. Must be aware of the signs, symptoms and corrective measures of critical incident stress syndrome.
7. Must understand and adhere to safe working practices and procedures as required in the urban disaster environment.
8. Must have a working knowledge of FEMA's US&R Response System, organizational structure, operating procedures, safety practices, terminology, knowledge of all task force equipment, and communications protocols.
9. Must have successfully completed the First Responder Operations Level for Hazardous Materials as per OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.120 Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response.
10. Must be currently certified in America Heart Association (or equivalent) Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation - Basic Life Support.
11. Must have a working knowledge of the Incident Command System including successful completion of the IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800 on-line courses.
12. Successful completion of the DHS/FEMA US&R Orientation Course or equivalent.
13. Successful completion of Respiratory Protection training and quantitative fit test per 29 CFR 1910.134
14. Successful completion of the DOJ Emergency Response to Terrorism, Basic Concepts or equivalent.
15. Successful completion of the FEMA/US&R WMD Enhanced Operations
16. Successful completion of Awareness Level training per NFPA 1670 including;
  - Confined Space Operations
  - Water Rescue Operations
  - Structural Collapse Operations

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17. Successful completion of GPS Awareness Level course (Garmin V or comparable)
18. Must understand the needs of and provide support to their counterparts within the task force for specific operations, techniques and application of tools and equipment.
19. Must possess training and experience in personal safety in US&R environments.
20. The authority having jurisdiction shall assure that the individual meets or exceeds the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's).

**Position Specific Requirements**

**RESCUE SPECIALIST**

The Rescue Specialist is responsible for performing the rescue function of the task force incident operation. The Rescue Specialist reports directly to a Rescue Squad Officer.

**Description of Duties**

The Rescue Specialist is responsible for:

- Implementing technical skills and operating equipment necessary for completing the rescue portion of the action plan
- Performing rescue operations under the direct supervision of a Rescue Squad Officer and providing periodic progress reports as needed
- The operation and routine field maintenance of rescue tools and equipment
  
- Adhering to all safety procedures
- Ensuring accountability and maintenance for all issued equipment
- Performing additional tasks or duties as assigned
- Evaluating and modifying rescue tactics as needed

**Position Requirements and Criteria**

Individuals who meet the following requirements and criteria will be eligible to become Rescue Specialists in the FEMA National US&R Response System. The intent of these requirements is to select personnel fully capable of providing the rescue tactics and techniques required in a disaster environment. The requirements and criteria for the position are identified in the following categories:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities

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**Knowledge**

The Rescue Specialist:

1. Must be a current state certified/licensed Emergency Medical Technician - Basic or equivalent by 7/1/2007. If individual was a team member prior to 7/1/06 the Rescue Specialist must be trained to basic first aid only.
2. Must be knowledgeable of safety considerations during US&R operations.
3. Must meet the prerequisites outlined in Chapter 3 NFPA 1006 (2000 Edition), Standards for Rescue Technician Professional Qualifications.
4. Shall have successfully completed the FEMA/US&R Structural Collapse Technician course. If team member prior to 7/1/04 Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) may sign team member off based on previous training and experience.

**Skills**

The Rescue Specialist should:

1. Be proficient in the skills required at the Technician Level for Structural Collapse as outlined in Chapter 5 NFPA 1670, Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents.
2. Be proficient in the skills required at the Technician Level for Rope Rescue as outlined in Chapter 6 NFPA 1670, Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents.
3. Be proficient in the skills required at the Technician Level for Confined Space Search and Rescue as outlined in Chapter 7 NFPA 1670, Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents.
4. Be proficient in the skills required at the Technician Level for Vehicle and Machinery Search and Rescue as outlined in Chapter 8 NFPA 1670, Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents.
5. Be proficient in the skills required at the Awareness Level for Water Search and Rescue as outlined in Chapter 9 NFPA 1670, Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents.
6. Be proficient in the skills required at the Technician Level for Trench and Excavation Search and Rescue as outlined in Chapter 11 NFPA 1670, Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents.
7. Be proficient in the skills presented in the FEMA/US&R Structural Collapse Technician course.
8. Understand specialized technical rescue terminology.
9. Be proficient in rescue strategy, tactics, and operations.

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**Abilities**

The Rescue Specialist must:

1. Be able to integrate with local resources, other US&R Task Forces and on-scene rescue teams.
2. Be able to use specialized extrication equipment (per manufacturers' specifications)
3. Be able to effectively communicate orally and in writing.

**General Operational Checklist**

**UPON ACTIVATION / AT TASK FORCE ASSEMBLY POINT**

- Receive notification of assignment and instructions from the initiating organization.
- Establish communications with the appropriate supervisor.
- Monitor mission-related information from local sources such as radio and television.
- Review the personal equipment checklist.
- Ensure that you have personal daypack, ear plugs, and warm clothes for flight.
- Report to the assigned Assembly Point at the prescribed time.
- Forward an accurate Responder Information Sheet to the Medical Team Manager.
- Complete check-in procedures to include medical screening.
- Ensure that you receive any appropriate issue of gear (radio, functional vest, etc.) pertinent to the position.
- Participate in task force briefings and meetings as requested.
- Carry out assignments as directed.
- Must not be under the influence of illegal substances or alcohol for the duration of the deployment.

**AT POINT OF DEPARTURE**

- Participate in task force briefings and meetings as requested.
- Carry out assignments as directed.
- Ensure that electronic equipment is turned off prior to boarding aircraft.

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**IN TRANSIT**

- ❑ Review the FEMA US&R Field Operations Guide for information pertinent to your position description, operational checklist, operational procedures, and safety procedures.
- ❑ Monitor mission-related information from local sources such as radio and television.
- ❑ Review disaster related information, as it becomes available.
- ❑ Take advantage of available travel time for rest prior to arrival.
- ❑ Carry out assignments as directed.

**ARRIVAL AT MOBILIZATION CENTER**

- ❑ Participate in task force briefings and meetings as requested.
- ❑ Carry out assignments as directed.

**ON-SITE OPERATIONS**

- ❑ Ensure your physical readiness through proper nutrition, water intake, rest, and stress control techniques.
- ❑ Participate in the task force daily briefings and meetings as requested.
- ❑ Ensure use of all safety practices and procedures.
- ❑ Ensure proper equipment needs are met and equipment is operational prior to each work period.
- ❑ Carry out assignments as directed.
- ❑ Report any signs/symptoms of incident stress, injury, fatigue, or illness in yourself/coworkers to your immediate supervisor.
- ❑ Brief your shift replacement fully on all ongoing operations when relieved at work cycle rotations.
- ❑ Prepare appropriate reports (i.e. Unit Logs ICS-214, etc.).

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**REASSIGNMENT/DEMOBILIZATION**

- ❑ Participate in the task force daily briefings and meetings as requested.
- ❑ Prepare personal belongings for demobilization.
- ❑ Carry out assignments as directed.
- ❑ Ensure the return of all items issued to you during the mobilization phase.
- ❑ Upon return, participate in the task force mission critique and incident stress management activities.
- ❑ Submit comments to your supervisor for inclusion in the after-action reports. This should include reviewing pertinent position descriptions, operational checklists, and procedures for recommended changes.

**Position Specific Operational Checklist**

**RESCUE SPECIALIST**

The purpose of this checklist is to define the duties and responsibilities of the Rescue Specialist during a mission assignment. The list is intended to be a general summary of actions. It should be understood that:

- 1) Some required actions may not be listed, but must be identified and assumed by this position.
- 2) Some actions may be the primary responsibility of another Task Force position, but may require assistance and coordination from this position.
- 3) The actions are listed in a general chronological order, which may require deviation.

**UPON ACTIVATION / AT TASK FORCE ASSEMBLY POINT** (see general operational checklist)

**AT POINT OF DEPARTURE** (see general operational checklist)

**IN TRANSIT** (see general operational checklist)

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**ARRIVAL AT MOBILIZATION CENTER** (see general operational checklist)

**ON-SITE OPERATIONS**

- Assist in the packaging and transfer of injured victims under the direction of Medical Team Manager, to local emergency medical services and other support networks
- Keep Rescue Squad Officer(s) apprised of any tactical accomplishments, issues, supply deficiencies and equipment malfunctions

**REASSIGNMENT/DEMOBILIZATION**

- Notify the assigned supervisor of the loss or potential maintenance requirements of any assigned tools and equipment.