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Albuquerque Fire Department USAR/NMTF-1 Policy Statement

Overview

The National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Response System, established under the authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 1989, is a framework for structuring local emergency services personnel into integrated disaster response task forces. There are 28 FEMA US&R Task Forces spread throughout the continental United States, complete with necessary tools and equipment, and required skills and techniques, can be deployed by FEMA for the rescue of victims of structural collapse.

Urban search-and-rescue (US&R) involves the location, rescue (extrication), and initial medical stabilization of victims trapped in confined spaces. Structural collapse is most often the cause of victims being trapped, but victims may also be trapped in transportation accidents, mines and collapsed trenches.

Urban search-and-rescue is considered a "multi-hazard" discipline, as it may be needed for a variety of emergencies or disasters, including earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, storms and tornadoes, floods, dam failures, technological accidents, terrorist activities, and hazardous materials releases. The events may be slow in developing, as in the case of hurricanes, or sudden, as in the case of earthquakes.

The State of New Mexico currently sponsors one of these task forces, New Mexico Task Force-1 (NMTF-1) and the Albuquerque Fire Department is the largest participating organization.

Purpose

The Albuquerque Fire Department is renewing it's commitment to NMTF-1 with the goal of developing a mutually beneficial relationship whereas AFD provides support to it's members that volunteer with the task force and USAR provides formal training opportunities and PPE to it's fire department members. AFD is encouraging interested Technical Rescue and Haz-Mat personnel to apply.

NMTF-1 is currently seeking to fill vacancies in the following areas:

Rescue Specialists, Haz-Mat Specialists, Medical Specialists, Technical Information Specialists, Technical Search Specialists, Safety Officers, Planning Officers

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Policy

AFD will support its members that volunteer with the NMTF-1 in the following ways.

1. Allow up to 20 department members to deploy with the task force for actual emergencies.
2. To the extent feasible, attempt to accommodate members requests for "time off" for formal training courses that benefit the department.
3. To the extent feasible, facilitate a means for on duty field personnel that volunteer with the task force, to attend task force monthly drills while on duty. The most senior on-duty department member that volunteers with the task force will coordinate this effort on the day of the drill. The most senior on-duty department member will also be responsible for providing and completing a field class sign up roster and forwarding this roster to the Technical Rescue Program Manager(s).
4. Assign one commander to the NMTF-1 Steering Committee and to attend the NMTF-1 managers meetings to represent AFD interests and to coordinate AFD personnel resources.

All current task force members and interested personnel are encouraged to review NMTF-1 "Policies and Procedures" document.

For more information on FEMA/USAR go to: www.fema.gov/usr/index.shtm

For more information on NMTF-1 go to www.nmtf1.org, this web site contains the annual training schedule. There's a password protected "members only" link on this web site that's available to current task force members. The member's only site uses a common user name and password. Contact a participating member for access.

Commander James Breen is currently the AFD/USAR coordinator.

Membership

In order to be considered a current/deployable task force member by NMTF-1, one must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Attend at least 4 task force meetings/training sessions per year
2. Plus an additional 16 hours of regularly scheduled meetings, off-cycle training or task force service.
3. Meet the minimum requirements for your position (additional time may be required to obtain and maintain qualifications).
4. Complete USAR Weapons of Mass Destruction Training

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2003 Task Force Schedule/Calendar

October 19 (C Shift) – Task Force meeting, 0900 hrs., (Sun), Specialty Training TBD, 100 Industrial NE

November 15 (A Shift) - TF meeting, 0900 hrs., (Sat), Specialty Training TBD, 100 Industrial NE

December 13 (B Shift) – Task Force meeting, 0900 hrs., (Sun), Specialty Training TBD, 100 Industrial NE

If interested, you're invited to attend any of the above Task Force Meetings. Contact Tom Romero or George Kniprath prior to the start of the meeting.