



**FEMA**

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# Fact Sheet

## **FEDERAL INCIDENT RESPONSE SUPPORT TEAM (FIRST) OVERVIEW**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Federal Incident Response Support Team (FIRST) is designed to be a highly responsive and flexible Federal incident management team that will operate within the Incident Command System (ICS) framework of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) under the National Response Plan (NRP). The FIRST is a forward extension of the Emergency Response Team-Advanced (ERT-A) providing the ERT-A Team Leader, and after a Stafford Act Declaration the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), with the capability to support State and local response on scene.

The mission of the FIRST is to support State and local response by expediting the delivery of life-saving Federal assistance. The FIRST will deploy rapidly to Incidents of National Significance requiring response operations and support State and local responders by assisting in providing initial situation assessments for local, State and Federal officials, determining Federal support requirements, supporting Federal resource ordering through established State procedures, and integrating Federal assets into the State and local response. They will also be able to assist with communications back to local, State and federal emergency operations centers and authorities.

The FIRST has an Incident Command System (ICS) structure and each team has five permanent team members including a Team Leader, Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and a Communications Unit Leader. A State may choose to assign a person(s) to respond with the FIRST. Other Federal expertise may be assigned to augment the FIRST on an as-needed basis. This expertise may come from other Federal agencies (OFAs) including, but not limited to, the Department of Defense, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, or from other FEMA program elements such as Urban Search and Rescue, National Disaster Medical System, and Mobile Emergency Response Support Systems.

The FIRST is considered a National Asset but is stationed in a FEMA Region and on a day-to-day basis reports to the Regional Response and Recovery (R&R) Division Director. The R&R Division Director, who is responsible for all aspects of readiness in a Region, will ensure the FIRST works on an ongoing basis with other Federal partners, States, and through the States, with appropriate local governments to build relationships, conduct trainings, and be prepared and ready to carry out their mission.

*FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.*

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