



Incident Management Assistance Teams

FEMA has developed a next generation of rapidly deployable emergency response teams called Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs). The IMATs are full-time, rapid-response teams with dedicated staff able to deploy within two hours and arrive at an incident within 12 hours to support the local incident commander. The teams support the initial establishment of a unified command and provide situational awareness for federal and state decision-makers crucial to determining the level and type of immediate federal support that may be required.

IMATs were developed from an expanded concept of the former Emergency Response Teams (ERT) at the National and Regional levels. The plan is to establish three National IMATs with 16 fulltime staff, and 13 Regional IMATs staffed with 4 fulltime and 6 collateral duty personnel each. All ten FEMA Regions will have at least one Regional IMAT. Regions II, IV and VI will have two Regional IMATs. Currently, two National IMATs and ten Regional IMATs are operational. The remaining one National and three Regional IMATs will be established later this year.

IMATs provide a forward federal presence to facilitate the management of the national response to catastrophic incidents. The primary mission of a FEMA IMAT is to rapidly deploy to an incident or incident-threatened venue, provide leadership in the identification and provision of federal assistance, and coordinate and integrate inter-jurisdictional response in support of an affected state or territory.

IMATs are led by experienced, senior-level emergency managers and staffed with a core of permanent full-time employees, unlike FEMA's Emergency Response Teams (ERT), which were staffed on a collateral duty basis. When not deployed, the teams are responsible for building and maintaining a close working relationship with regional, state, tribal, and local emergency management officials, federal partners, and the private sector to support planning, training, exercising, and other activities in preparation for disaster response.

Both national and regional-level teams can be augmented with additional staff from other departments and agencies as needed and are supported by FEMA's Mobile Emergency Response Support elements. The teams are fully compliant with the National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System and they train and exercise as a unit.

- The National IMAT-West is located in Sacramento, California.
- The National IMAT-East and the third National IMAT are co-located in Herndon, Virginia.
- The Regional IMATs are located at the Regional Offices.

“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.”

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