



INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

FAQ

Q: What is the International Assistance System?

A: The International Assistance System Concept of Operations (IAS CONOPS) is a detailed plan for processing offers, submitting requests, and accepting foreign offers of assistance (commodities or personnel) to support response and relief efforts in the United States. The IAS was created to integrate foreign assistance into a domestic disaster operation.

Q: When is the IAS CONOPS utilized?

A: Always available to support domestic disaster operations, the IAS is used if the U.S. Government (USG) requests assistance, or decides to accept international offers of assistance in support of USG diplomatic interests.

Q: How does this affect state, local, or tribal agreements that are already in place?

A: The IAS CONOPS applies only to formal transactions between foreign governments or international organizations and the USG, during domestic disasters following a Stafford Act declaration. The IAS does not apply to foreign offers made directly to state, local, or tribal governments. It does not supplant existing bi-lateral agreements that a federal agency, under its own authority, or a state, local or tribal government may have with another country. It is recommended that all direct bilateral foreign assistance received by a state, local or tribal government be reported to the Department of State to ensure efficiency in disaster response.

Q: How can the international community best help the American people following a major disaster?

A: The best way to support survivors of disaster in the United States is through a cash donation to a voluntary relief organization operating in the affected region. A list of these organizations can be provided by the Department of State or FEMA.

Q: How does a foreign government submit an offer of assistance to the U.S. government?

A: In general, the USG does not expect to require international assistance. When appropriate, however, offers of assistance should be submitted to the Department of State through the U.S. Embassy, the Department of State country desk officer, or the Department's task force that is addressing the disaster. This process will also be used for foreign military assistance offered to the Department of Defense.

Q: What happens to the assistance donated by a foreign country?

A: Acceptance is based on an assessment of crucial requirements to protect lives and property. The USG will also consider regulatory constraints and the ability to absorb the donations into domestic operations. Resources accepted under the IAS become the property of the USG, and will be used for response and recovery assistance. The USG reserves the right to retain the assistance for any future disaster.

Q: How can I learn more about the International Assistance Systems and the IAS/CONOPS?

A: For further information, domestic entities should contact FEMA's International Affairs office at fema-international@dhs.gov. Abroad, foreign governments should contact the U.S. embassy. Within the United States, foreign governments should contact the State Department country desk officer and/or Crisis Management Support at ses-o.cms@state.gov.

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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."