



Emergency Management & Homeland Security Division Informational Letter



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TO: Regional Homeland Security Planning Board Chairs, Local Emergency Management Coordinators, EMHSD District Coordinators

SUBJECT: Enhancement of Urban Search & Rescue Capabilities

Overview

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) is the process of locating, extricating, and providing initial medical treatment to victims trapped in collapsed structures, or rescuing or removing persons threatened or stranded in harm's way by any emergency or hazardous event when they cannot remove themselves. It includes technical rescue activities such as dive rescue and heavy lifting. A major disaster or civil emergency may generate conditions that vary widely in scope, urgency, and degree of devastation. Substantial numbers of people could be in life-threatening situations requiring prompt rescue and medical care. Because the mortality rate will dramatically increase beyond 72 hours, search and rescue efforts must begin immediately.

In 2007, the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD), in conjunction with input from local public safety agencies, took steps to initiate the enhancement of USAR Teams to respond to structural collapse emergencies or other incidents where collapse rescue capabilities are needed.

USAR in Michigan will focus efforts on response to emergencies encompassing the full range of natural and human-caused disasters. The team will respond to incidents that overwhelm local resources or, in the case of a state emergency, the team will provide an initial response until a full Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) team arrives.

Initiatives for 2007 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Cycle

As part of Michigan's 2007 HSGP Supplemental Program Guidance, a required project was identified to initiate the enhancement of USAR capabilities within the State of Michigan. For this grant cycle, the project was identified for regions 1, 2, and 6. As indicated, the implementation requirements for 2007 are to evaluate current capabilities within the region for USAR and initiate the enhancement of capabilities towards being a Type II team. The project excerpt follows:

"Initiating Enhancement of a Regional Urban Search & Rescue Response System

Urban search-and-rescue (USAR) 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 project identified the following regional implementation steps to be accomplished:

- 1. Conduct a self-evaluation of current USAR capabilities in the following areas: Operational Readiness, Logistics Readiness, and Management Readiness.**

This assessment is to be completed by May 1, 2009 and returned to the MSP/EMHSD via the EMHSD District Coordinator for the region. A template for conducting the assessment is attached.

2. Initiate enhancement of a NIMS compliant Urban Search and Rescue Type II Collapse Rescue Team task force capable of long-term and self-contained operations.

Upon completion of the template, the region will develop an USAR enhancement plan, consistent with the Regional Homeland Security Strategy, and initiate activities to reach the milestones identified in the enhancement plan. The plan must also address sustainment of the USAR team. **This enhancement plan is to be developed by July 10, 2009** and a copy provided to the MSP/EMHSD District Coordinator for the region. Additionally, the region must demonstrate progress toward implementation of the plan by addressing elements of the enhancement plan.

No specific funding was mandated to the regions in support of this project. However, as a required project, effort must be documented in addressing these two implementation steps. Progress needs to be reported in the quarterly project updates and annual inventory updates and provided to the MSP/EMHSD Performance and Reporting Unit as identified in the 2007 HSGP Sub-grantee Agreements.

Requirements for 2008 HSGP Grant Cycle

For the 2008 HSGP cycle, the regions will show substantial movement towards accomplishing the elements identified in the USAR enhancement plan. The region will provide MSP/EMHSD with specific milestones and target completion dates as part of the project approval process.

Capabilities

Michigan's USAR teams should be designed to provide a coordinated response to disasters in urban environments. Emphasizing the location and extrication of victims trapped in collapsed structures, confined spaces, or trenches in largely populated areas, the teams should be capable of responding to state and national disasters including earthquakes, widespread tornadoes, and man-made technological and terrorist events.

Regions 1, 2 & 6: USAR Type II: Operational Level includes equipment and personnel to conduct safe and effective search and rescue operations at structure collapse incidents involving the collapse or failure of heavy wall construction, high angle rope rescue (not including highline systems), confined space rescue, and trench and excavation rescue.

Incident Response Category

Structural collapse, collapse situations including light frame, heavy wall, heavy floor, and pre-cast concrete construction.

Initial Elements

- Designed to be logistically self-sufficient for the first 72 hours of operation.
- Each team capable of operating a minimum of a 12-hour shift on a disaster scene.
- Team members sufficiently cross-trained in search and rescue skill areas to ensure depth of capability and integrated operations.
- Each team brings its own equipment cache to the scene. The specialized equipment includes hydraulic jacks, rams, shoring, high-tech listening devices, hazardous material monitoring equipment, specialized victim location devices, breaching, breaking and lifting equipment, and specialized medical and triage equipment.
- Each team is designed for rapid deployment in an emergency.



Areas of Specialization

- Search operations
 - Physical
 - Canine
 - Electronic capabilities
- Rescue operations
 - Wood
 - Steel
 - Concrete structures (reinforced and unreinforced)
- Sophisticated medical treatment
 - Injured team members
 - Trapped victims
- Technical support for operations
 - Structural integrity assessments
 - Hazardous Materials assessments
 - Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
 - Liaison with heavy equipment operators

Region 3, 5, 7, & 8: Light Technical Rescue Support: The regions shall establish levels of operational capability needed to conduct operations at technical search and rescue incidents safely and effectively, based on hazard identification, risk assessment, training level of personnel, and availability of internal and external resources. (Consistent with NFPA 1670).

Incident Response Category

Structural Collapse, Rope Rescue, Confined Space, Vehicle and Machinery, Trench and Excavation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sgt. Gerald Badgett at 517.336.6354 or bagettg@michigan.gov.

Sincerely,



W. THOMAS SANDS, CAPTAIN
Deputy State Director of Emergency Management
and Homeland Security

WTS:JRP:ko

Attachments (2)

