



US&R PROGRAM DIRECTIVE 2012-015

DATE: December 7, 2012

FOR: National Urban Search & Rescue Response System
Task Force Representatives

FROM: Fred Endrikat, Branch Chief
Urban Search & Rescue

RE: Incident Support Team Administration

The purpose of this National Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Response System (the System) Program Directive (PD) is to clarify FEMA policy related to effective management and administration of US&R Incident Support Teams (IST). Several previous Directives, issued over time, addressed policy and procedures about the recruitment, application, appeal, appointment, rostering and deployment of IST personnel. The intent of this PD is to consolidate and revise this IST administrative direction in one place.

This PD recinds and supersedes the following previously issued US&R PD :

- US&R Program Directive 2011-005 Incident Support Team Administration (April 7, 2011)

This PD addresses the following IST Work Group recommendation:

- IST Work Group Recommendation 2012-003, Tenure.

IST ADMINISTRATION PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

IST Member Requirements

Appointed IST Members shall:

1. Comply with the US&R Code of Conduct.
2. Maintain Fully Deployable status with their Task Force.
3. Be regularly available during assigned roster months, responsive to information requests, and able to deploy during scheduled months.
4. When rostered, be available to deploy for a minimum of 14 days.

5. Perform satisfactorily when activated as indicated in the Performance Evaluation Process to include completion of all follow-up documentation and after action reporting.
6. Participate in required IST training and other scheduled meetings.

Monthly IST Rostering Procedure

To maintain the integrity of the IST, rostered members shall not accept any other deployment in the month they are rostered or are scheduled to be rostered. Indicating unavailable status for a scheduled month to accept another deployment assignment is grounds for removal from the IST.

The following procedure will be used to roster each IST for their scheduled month:

1. On the 15th of the month prior to a rostered IST's scheduled on-call month based on the System's current annual Rotation Model, the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer (or their designee) will send a message through the FEMA Emergency Notifications System (ENS) to all of the IST members scheduled to be rostered to state their availability in the designated scheduling mechanism.
2. By the 21st of the month prior to their scheduled month, each member will state whether they are available or unavailable.
 - a. If a member is unavailable for more than four **non-consecutive** days or for more than seven **consecutive** days they will be replaced for the entire month with a qualified alternate.
 - b. If a member fails to declare their availability by the 22nd of the month, the member will be replaced by a qualified alternate.
 - c. If a rostered member must be replaced more than two months in a calendar year, the member will be considered for removal from the IST.
 - d. Vacancies of four days or less will not be backfilled on the monthly roster and only filled if there is an actual activation.
3. After the 22nd of the month, the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer (or their designee) will notify the affected IST Leader (ISTL) of the identified vacancies.
4. The FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer (or their designee) will fill the identified vacancies on the monthly roster according to the following guidelines in the following order:
 - a. If the IST Leader position is vacant, the Deputy IST Leader will be moved up and will select their Deputy from the IST Leader Alternates List of qualified personnel.
 - 1) If the vacancy is in the Deputy IST Leader position, the IST Leader will select a qualified person from the Alternate List.
 - 2) If neither IST Leader is available, the FEMA US&R Operations Section Chief will select the IST Leader from the list of qualified personnel on the Alternate List.
 - b. If the roster vacancy can be filled by the Deputy in the same Section Chief position, the Deputy Section Chief will be moved up to fill the vacancy.
 - c. The remaining vacancies will be filled in the following priority order:

- 1) With a qualified member from the Alternate List who has attended the IST Training and who is not assigned to another IST, then;
- 2) With a qualified member from the Alternate List who has not attended the IST Training course. This alternative may be bypassed if both key members of a position are unavailable (IST Leaders and Section Chiefs), then;
- 3) From members of another rostered IST with notification to the appropriate IST Leader.

NOTE: This should be a last resort as this has the potential of affecting the deployment of multiple IST's at one time. If this is necessary then:

- i) First take from the previous months rostered IST then;
 - ii) Take from the next months' expected IST roster
- 4) From other members of the System who are not on a rostered IST or Alternate List, who meet the FEMA and/or All-Hazards IMT requirements for the vacant position through ESF #4 (USFA/USFS).

NOTE: For the vacant positions on the expanded IST i.e. single resource order from ESF #4 for logistics or planning support, members of State or Federal Incident Management Teams who meet the FEMA and/or All-Hazards IMT requirements may be selected.

- d. Once an alternate member has been determined, the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer (or their designee) will contact the affected members' Task Force Representative (TFR) to obtain Sponsoring Agency approval for the assignment.
5. To be on the IST Alternate List, each member must maintain one single contact number and one single e-mail contact. Due to time constraints it is not possible to have multiple contacts for each individual.
 6. The Alternate List will be maintained by functional position with the members in alphabetical order.
 7. When any vacancy occurs, the first person from the list of qualified individuals will be offered the position. If they decline or fail to respond within 12 hours the next person is contacted. This will go on until someone accepts the position. When the need arises again, the FEMA US&R Branch staff will start with the next person on the list after the one who was selected. Regardless of the timeframe used (5 to 31 days) the person is shown as accepting the position for that month from the Alternate List.
 8. Once the roster is finalized, but no later than the second to last day of the month, the roster will be forwarded to the FEMA US&R Operations Section Chief and IST Leader for approval.
 9. Once the roster is approved but not later than the last day of the month, the roster will be distributed by the FEMA US&R Branch to the System.
 10. Each TFR must review the distributed roster and notify the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer (or their designee) immediately if there is a conflict with one of their members.

11. It is the responsibility of each rostered IST member for the month to keep the FEMA US&R Branch staff up-to-date as to their status to avoid any unnecessary delays in the event of activation. Failure to do so may constitute grounds for removal from the IST.
12. Any changes that occur with personnel during the month will be communicated between the FEMA US&R Branch, the affected IST Leader(s), and the affected Task Force Representative(s) (TFR).

IST Activations

1. When an IST is activated, the FEMA US&R Branch shall alert the rostered members of that month's IST using the FEMA ENS.
2. The FEMA US&R Branch shall issue an Activation Order for the IST members to each effected task force. The TFR must accept or decline the mission in the prescribed timeframe.
 - a. IST members SHALL NOT begin making travel arrangements until their TFR has accepted the mission.
 - b. IST members must follow their task force procedures established for activations.
3. Vacancies occurring at the time of activation will be filled using the same guidelines established for filling monthly vacancies.
4. The FEMA US&R Branch will make every attempt to activate and demobilize the IST members together. Except in extreme and unusual circumstances every attempt will be made to limit the length of the deployment for each member to no more than 14 days.
5. In cases where more than one IST is needed, the current rostered team will be activated first followed by the coming month's rostered IST and lastly by previous month's rostered IST.

IST Initial Application Process

1. Each January the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer, the IST Leaders, and the IST Work Group Chair will determine which IST position(s) are open for recruitment. The goal is to maintain two-deep of qualified individuals on the Alternates List in each of the functional positions.
2. These open positions and their specific requirements will be announced to the System by the FEMA US&R Branch no later than January 30th of each year.
3. System members are eligible to apply under the following conditions:
 - a. They must complete the IST Member application for each position they are interested in, up to a maximum of three positions.
 - b. They must supply supporting documentation that verifies their qualification(s).
 - c. They must include a Letter of Support from their Sponsoring and Participating Agency (if applicable).

NOTE: Members currently rostered in an IST position or as an Alternate do not need to re-apply unless they intend on changing positions or adding positions to the maximum of three.

4. Applications and all required documentation will be forwarded electronically in PDF format by the TFR to the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer on or before the closing date specified but no later than April 30th.
5. The FEMA US&R Branch, working with the IST Leaders and IST Work Group Chair, will establish an IST Selection Ad Hoc Work Group (AHWG) comprised of the following members as a minimum:
 - a. FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer
 - b. Two current IST Leaders
 - c. One Divisional Task Force Representative (TFR-D)
 - d. IST Work Group Chair
 - e. IST Work Group members (or other System members) determined to be subject matter experts (SMEs) for the positions being reviewed.
6. The FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer will forward all applications and supporting documentation to the IST Selection AHWG members on or before May 15th.
7. The IST Selection AHWG will conduct a conference call to review all of the applications and make their selections on or before June 15th.
8. The FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer will notify each applicant as to the final determination of their application(s) no later than July 15th. The letter will:
 - a. be copied to the applicant's TFR and,
 - b. specify the deadline for an appeal if the application was rejected (21 days from the date of the letter).
9. After the appeals process has concluded, a final roster will be issued by the FEMA US&R Branch no later than August 31st of each year.
 - a. New members will be added to the Alternate List.
 - b. All new members will be eligible for the next available IST Training course.

Appeals Process

1. Members that feel the scores given in the selection process were not reflective of the information contained in their application should communicate their concerns and provide relevant supporting documentation to their TFR.
2. The TFR will review the application and resume along with the supporting information and determine if an appeal is warranted.
3. If the TFR feels an appeal is warranted they shall submit a memo electronically in the prescribed timeframe to the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer indicating their intention to appeal.

4. The FEMA US&R Branch will establish an IST Appeals AHWG on or before July 31st. The Appeals AHWG will be comprised of the following members:
 - a. FEMA US&R Branch Representative (non- voting)
 - b. Three Subject Matter Experts
5. The FEMA US&R Branch Representative will act as the facilitator for the appeals process and forward all documentation to include the original application, original supporting documentation, and the selection score sheet regarding each appeal to the Appeals AHWG members after the deadline for appeal has past, but no later than August 10th.
6. The Appeals AHWG will review all documentation prior to the scheduled conference call and, if further clarification is needed, has the right to request other supporting documentation to assist in their final appeal determination. This request must be made through the FEMA US&R Branch Representative to the TFR.

NOTE: No new documents that were supposed to be part of the initial application can be introduced as part of the appeal. Only clarification documentation that supports the original application can be submitted as part of the appeal.

7. The FEMA US&R Branch Representative will coordinate a conference call with the Appeals AHWG members to review each appeal. This conference call should be conducted no later than August 20th.
8. If the independent review score given by the Appeals AHWG is more than one point different from the score given by the IST Selection AHWG, an adjustment shall be made to the member's application. If the score is different by one point or less, the score will stand as it was originally determined.
9. The FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer will notify each member through their TFR as to the final disposition of their appeal. The decision of the IST Appeals AHWG is final.

IST Rostered Service

The following should guide the FEMA US&R Branch and the IST Leaders in the evaluation of rostered ISTs and consideration for filling IST vacancies.

1. Annually, the FEMA US&R Branch and IST Leaders will evaluate the rostered IST for its team dynamics, capabilities, vacancies, and growth.
2. Members assigned to a rostered IST position will remain in that position for at least five years or until such time as they resign or are removed for just cause.
 - a. Members who move up due to a vacancy prior to serving a full first term, would begin a new term and be considered for additional time up to seven years total in the new position (i.e.; Deputy Plans moves up to Plans after serving less than two full year as a Deputy).
 - b. Members with no additional assignment options or who those that do not qualify for another position, may serve an additional two years for a total of seven years (i.e., PIO, US&R Specialist, Safety, Structures Specialist, and HM Specialist).

- c. Members transferring from one rostered IST to another IST while maintaining the same IST position do not restart the five year period.
3. After serving five years in a rostered position, IST members may serve additional time on an IST but will be evaluated annually congruent with the first provision in this section.
4. During the annual IST review, members may be rotated off the IST if they have met provision two of this section. Members rotating off the IST would be placed on the Alternate List unless they request otherwise.
5. Members rostered in an IST position may request to be placed on the Alternate List if they cannot fulfill their response requirements of the position. If this occurs, the individual could only return as a rostered IST member if selected in the annual IST application process.
6. Every effort will be made to mentor, train, and shadow members on the Alternate List to ensure that the System maintains a qualified pool of candidates for the rostered IST positions.

Process for Filling Annual Vacancies

Vacancies for those IST members who have completed a five year cycle (or in some cases described previously a seven year cycle) in a rostered IST position, will occur on December 31st of the IST members last year. Mid-term vacancies are those which occur anytime in the cycle, but prior to the end of the established term. All annual vacancies in rostered IST positions will be filled in accordance with the following process:

1. The FEMA US&R Branch Chief will appoint IST Leaders and Deputy IST Leaders.
2. If the position is one in which there is a qualified Deputy on the same rostered IST, the Deputy should be moved up (e.g., rostered and qualified Deputy Planning Section Chief fills Planning Section Chief vacancy).
3. In cases where there is no Deputy, the vacant position(s) will be advertised to the System by the FEMA US&R Branch for 30 days.
4. Personnel on another rostered IST or on the Alternate List who have already qualified for the vacant position may send a letter of interest, accompanied by a Letter of Support from their Sponsoring and Participating Agency (if applicable), to the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer.
5. After the posted closing date, the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer will notify the IST Leaders and the IST Work Group Chair of those members who have applied.
6. The IST Work Group Chair will verify that all applicants are eligible for the position they applied for.
7. The FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer will schedule a conference call with the IST Leaders to make the selection(s) to fill the vacancy(s) from the list of qualified applicants (current members of an IST roster or on the alternate list). The decision of the IST Leaders is final.

8. Once the selection(s) have been made, the FEMA US&R Branch IST Project Officer will notify all applicants of the selection results.
9. A final roster will be issued to all task forces by the FEMA US&R Branch.

Removal of a Rostered IST Member

1. The US&R Branch will review IST Leader and Deputy Leader participation and performance annually and identify any leaders that may be considered for removal and provide justification for such removal in writing.
2. IST Leaders and Deputy Leaders shall review member participation and performance annually and identify any members that may be considered for removal and provide justification for such removal in writing.
3. The IST Leader, through the FEMA US&R Branch Chief shall notify the individual and the Sponsoring Agency of the individual's removal in writing.
 - a. Depending on the severity of the issue, the FEMA US&R Branch Chief will determine if the member would be eligible to apply for an IST position in the future.
 - b. This decision will be included in the final disposition letter.
4. The affected individuals TFR may appeal the removal in writing to the FEMA US&R Branch Chief.
5. A task force may remove an individual from participation in an IST at any time with written notification to the FEMA US&R Branch Chief.

APPROVAL

The required actions are approved for FEMA National US&R Response System implementation:
Signed:

Fred Endrikat, Chief, Urban Search and Rescue Branch

December 7, 2012
Date

Re-Implementation Date: Immediate

Expiration/Review Date: 3 years from the date of this Program Directive

Distribution:

- US&R Task Force Representatives
- US&R Strategic Group
- US&R Operations Group
- US&R Branch Staff
- FEMA Regional ESF #9 Representatives