

Specialized Capabilities of Emergency Response Sectors

There are several emergency responses sections sectors of emergency response, Law Enforcement, Public Works, Fire and Rescue Services, Emergency Medical Services, and Emergency Management. These sectors are well known by many people and are essential to the protection and rehabilitation of people in at-risk situations. However, many people are unaware of the multiple specific teams that work with these sectors to approach specific situations. This document acts as an overview for these teams.

Tactical Teams

Teams of personnel with special training to handle high risk situations, such as hostage rescue and counterterrorism operations. While they are often associated with law enforcement, they also cross into the realm of fire and rescue and EMS.

Hazardous Devices/Public Safety Bomb Disposal Teams

Personnel specially trained in the investigation and disarming of explosive devices. They sometimes work with fire departments.

Canine (K-9)/Explosives Detection Canine Units

Utilized for search and rescue, evidence search, and suspect apprehension. K-9 units are often specifically used because of their ability to detect narcotics, explosives, tobacco products, and other substances.

Public Safety Dive Teams

Teams of personnel with specialized training and equipment for underwater rescue, investigation, and recovery of evidence. They may be a part of law enforcement, fire and rescue, or EMS organizations.

Search and Rescue Unites (SAR)

The SAR unit is a team of personnel that are trained to initiate medical stabilization of distressed individuals on location. These teams specialize in these on site rescue missions, differentiating them from your average law enforcement team. Many states and local jurisdictions maintain SAR capabilities. Federal SAR roles and responsibilities are divided amongst the following primary agencies: Urban SAR (FEMA); Maritime/Coastal/Waterborne SAR (U.S. Coast Guard) ; and Land Sar (US Department of the interior and Department of Defense).

Hazardous Materials Response Units (HMRU)

The HMRU are trained to control actual or potential leaks, spill, discharges, or releases of hazardous materials (HAZMAT). The HMRU often associate their services with fire departments, LE organizations, and other federal departments that have HAZMAT related responsibilities (U.S. Coast Guard); and Land SAR (U.S. Department of the Interior and Department of Defense).

Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP)

A facility that has been assigned to answer 9-1-1 calls and route them to emergency services personnel. A PSAP may act as a dispatch center.

National Guard WMD-Civil Support Teams

National Guard WMD (weapons of mass destruction) Teams are specialized to provide support to civil authorities during domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) incidents. Civil Support Teams (CSTs) also provide assistance:

- Identifying chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents and substances
- Assessing current or projected consequences
- Advising on response measures
- Assisting with requests for additional support

Fusion Centers

A State government-designated facility that provides information sharing and analysis for an entire State or major urban area. Other names include "Information Analysis Center," "Counter Terrorism Information Center," and "Regional Intelligence Center."