

Target Audiences

1. First Responders

First responders are typically career emergency response professionals. These include emergency managers, fire/rescue/emergency medical services personnel, law enforcement professionals, hazardous materials (HAZMAT) professionals, and members of the active military when they are assigned to aid in disasters. In the realm of law enforcement, first responders include members of Special Response Teams (SRT), Tactical Response Teams (TRT), Hostage Response Teams (HRT), Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units, or a Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF).

2. Specialty/Extended Responders

Personnel in this category include individuals and teams with a designated role in disaster response. Prominent among these are staff members from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) team members, National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) personnel (including Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT), Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams (VMAT), Disaster Mortuary Response Teams (DMORT), state medical assistance team members, and National Guard. To deal with the psychosocial impact of disasters, disaster mental health teams and crisis counselor teams may be activated. Specialty/extended responders include full-time career responders and others who are activated as sanctioned federal or state “response assets” when disaster strikes.

3. First Receivers

The term “first receivers” is applied primarily to hospital- and clinic-based healthcare professionals who receive the surge of disaster-related medical and behavioral casualties. The flow of persons converging on area medical centers may include ambulance-transported and self-evacuated medical casualties, psychological casualties, family members of new arrivals, family members of inpatients already receiving care, and searching family members looking for loved ones from whom they have been separated during the disaster. Both medical and psychosocial personnel feature prominently among the ranks of first receivers.

4. Voluntary Responders

Disaster volunteers are persons who elect to respond to disaster events as members of teams assembled by voluntary organizations active in disasters. The United States has encouraged participation in Citizen’s Corps programs including Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and Medical Reserve Corps (MRCs) units. Voluntary organizations with disaster roles include the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based organizations. Duties may include distribution of vital supplies, provision of medical first aid, and psychosocial support. For individuals responding with these units, participation is typically voluntary and non-compensated.

5. Essential and Critical Infrastructure Responders

To ensure continuity of operations, working professionals are called upon to shift into disaster response mode within their own agency or organization. For many of these individuals, their disaster role is distinctly different from their daily occupational role. Some perform disaster roles as essential personnel to maintain operations and infrastructure for their own organizations. Others serve survivors from the disaster-affected community. Prime examples include personnel in critical infrastructure occupations such as public health, public utilities, public transportation, financial institutions, communications, and community healthcare (pharmacies, clinics, nursing homes, treatment centers).

SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION for Disaster Responders has been created to provide disaster responders of all ranks – first responders, specialty responders, first receivers, volunteer responders, and essential and critical infrastructure responders – with a set of lifestyle and team strategies to maximize disaster health and well-being. The outcome will be a more capable and timely disaster response.

Please note that **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION** is not limited to disaster responders. The identical framework is equally relevant for general public preparedness, but that is the focus for a separate version of this training.