



INSARAG Guidelines 2026

Volume 5: Operational Field Guide

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Group on 10 March 2026**

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Note: Every listed appendix is located in the section *Guidance Appendices* on www.insarag.org

Abbreviations

AAR	After Action Report
AoO	Area of Operation
ASR	Assessment, Search and Rescue Level
BMS	BoO Medical Station
BoO	Base of Operation
Con.	Construction
CP	Command Post
DVI	Disaster Victim Identification
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Position System
Hazmat	Hazardous material
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICMS	INSARAG Coordination and Management System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMT	Incident Management Team
IOD	Injury on Duty
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
LO	Liaison Officer
MAP	Medical Action Plan
MEDEVAC	Medical Evacuation
MIL	Medical Incident Log
OCHA	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator
RCM	Rapid Clearance Marking System
RDC	Reception/Departure Centre
SAR	Search and Rescue
SLS	Security Level System
UCC	USAR Coordination Cell
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNJLC	United Nations Joint Logistics Centre
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
VHF	Very High Frequency

VOSOCC Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre

1 Introduction

The INSARAG Guidelines comprise five volumes:

Volume 1: Policy describes the INSARAG methodology for international urban search and rescue (USAR) operations and the policy that underpins it.

Volume 2: National Capacity Building defines capacity building as the process of identifying and supporting existing Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) resources or developing new capacities.

Volume 3: Operations is targeted at the INSARAG Operational Focal Point, the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team management, the INSARAG Team Focal Point, and the INSARAG Secretariat with the purpose of providing guidance in the training, preparations and coordination of a USAR team for national and/or international operations.

Volume 4: INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification aims to ensure a USAR team preparing to undergo an IEC/R has a deep understanding of the expected planning, preparation and delivery requirements.

This Volume 5: Operational Field Guide targets all USAR managers and team members and is designed to be a quick-reference guide that assists with field and tactical information for all missions, exercises and training sessions. The Operational Field Guide follows the five components of USAR capability: management, search, rescue, medical, and logistics. It also includes a section on Safety and Security.

The INSARAG Guidelines 2026 have been endorsed by the INSARAG Steering Group. All volumes, Guidance Appendices and materials from the Technical Reference Library can be downloaded from www.insarag.org.

The appendices of Volume 5 include the INSARAG Marking Systems, check-sheets for the establishment of a Reception and Departure Centre (RDC), and a USAR Coordination Cell. They can be found in the Guidelines Appendices on www.insarag.org, appendix 5.28: *INSARAG Marking and Signalling Systems*, appendix 5.5: *RDC Establishment Checklist*, appendix 5.6: *RDC Briefing Form*, and appendix 5.12: *UCC Establishment Checklist*.

Further information can be found in appendix 3.1: https://www.insarag.org/images/UCC_Handbook_v_22_Aug_-_ilovepdf-compressed_1.pdf *USAR Coordination Handbook*, and the Virtual OSOCC online learning module.

The pocket-sized field operations handbook is designed to allow individual USAR teams to add other reference material relevant and specific to their team to assist in rescue operations.

Overview of the USAR response cycle and USAR teams' functions:



Figure 1: The international USAR response cycle

The following checklists provide guidance for teams on methodologies to effectively manage the five elements of a USAR deployment. The examples detailed in the volume are not exhaustive nor are they prescriptive. They serve to assist teams with the set up and efficient running of a large-scale event. They serve also to provide collective examples that will assist teams to better interoperate in multi-agency environments.

Teams should fully assess their specific configuration and individual team requirements when preparing for, a responding to, emergencies as a USAR team. The tables listed below should be adjusted when responding in a flexible way, other than USAR.

2 Management

2.1 Mobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
Do you have approval to go?	- Gather as much current information as possible on the affected country and the actual situation to aid in the decision-making process. - Liaise with the team's governing agencies to determine whether the USAR team will be deployed on the mission.	Appendix 5.1, Appendix 5.3
Do an internet information search of open source material, check the VOSOCC for further information. Upload team data.	If intending to mobilise and or deploy make an entry on the VOSOCC detailing the USAR team's travel details including its special needs upon arrival in the affected country.	Appendix 5.1, Appendix 5.3, Appendix 5.7
Is your team ready for deployment/availability?	- Conduct an initial planning session to determine the team's readiness to deploy. - Ensure departure is possible within ten (10) hours after the request for assistance is accepted by or on behalf of the affected country. - Communicate internally within the team and through the governing agencies. - Provide passenger lists and equipment manifests, ensuring the cache is deployable to the affected country.	Appendix 5.1, Appendix 5.3, Appendix 5.4, Appendix 5.7
Brief the team members on the current situation.	Provide a written and verbal briefing to all deploying personnel.	Appendix 5.3
Is there a contact in affected country?	- Determine the Country focal point for incoming assistance. This may be the embassy or National Emergency Management Agency. - Check VOSOCC for details.	Appendix 5.3
Brief team on plan of action and cultural awareness.	Provide a written and verbal briefing to all deploying personnel.	Appendix 5.3

Check for any changes to assignment before departure.	• Develop contingency plans to allow for changes to cache, personnel and equipment based on available information about the situation (i.e. staffing, specialist components, special hazards, transportation, etc.)	Appendix 5.3, Appendix 5.4
Check on media arrangements for the mission.	• Assume that the local agencies will manage all media and do not release any information without the express permission of the LEMA.	Appendix 5.3
Ensure accountability systems for all personnel.	• Seek a security briefing from the LEMA and/or the local law enforcement agencies.	Appendix 5.7, Appendix 5.13
Update the national focal point of the teams' status.	• Ensure a constant flow of information and intelligence to and from the LEMA.	
Arrange and fund transportation to the affected country.	• Develop an independent team transport plan.	
Develop a plan of action regarding safety and security issues, moving to and from the disaster sites, logistics and specialised teams if required (i.e. reconnaissance team, liaison, team, identify the BoO and zone, etc.)	• An Incident Action Plan (IAP) is a detailed plan outlining actions needed to reach one or more objectives. • The IMT will determine the IAP based on allocated tasks from the UCC.	
Ensure a plan of action on arrival.	• Develop an initial IAP based on known conditions. Liaise with local authorities to receive updates ASAP.	
Establish the RDC and UCC.	• If the team is the first into the affected country, they are to establish an RDC at the infill point and a UCC at a strategic position relative to the impact site.	Appendix 3.1, Appendix 5.5, Appendix 5.12
Prepare all documents for RDC and UCC.	• Provide trained and qualified personnel to establish and sustain the coordination	Appendix 5.5, Appendix 5.6, Appendix 5.11,

	function within the RDC and UCC, if required.	Appendix 5.12, Appendix 5.13
Do you have appropriate forms for assessment?	• Ensure a cache of paper and electronic versions of all forms are available.	
Prepare for customs immigration.	• Passport photos (x4). • Identification cards. • Record of immunisation. • Microchips and vaccination certificates of dogs, including scan reader. • Personnel lists and equipment manifest.	
Check on transport arrangements in-country.	• Liaise with the UCC or LEMA.	
Check on load/unload availability for cache.	• Liaise with the UCC or LEMA.	
Prepare for meeting with the UCC.	• Representatives of the IMT are to provide the UCC with their needs and their capabilities. • Provide paper copies of all requests.	Appendix 5.13, Appendix 5.14
Meet with the UCC to discuss BoO site, suppliers, other teams, local suppliers, INSARAG, safety and security and reporting.	• Representatives of the IMT are to provide the UCC with their needs. • Provide paper copies of all requests.	Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.19, Appendix 5.20
Liaise with point of contact back in the home country.	• Establish two-way communication links with home agencies and provide regular site reports.	
Prepare media statements.	• Develop an overarching media plan that details the requirements for social media posting for both the team and team members. • Ensure that all information is vetted by a LEMA representative prior to dissemination.	Appendix 5.2

Prepare plan of operations.		
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2.2 Operations		
Action	Description	Reference
Ensure the team follows the affected country policies, which includes the USAR team leader working with the UCC and only within the requirements of the LEMA.	To avoid creating confusion it is vital that only activities sanctioned by the UCC or LEMA are undertaken by the teams.	Appendix 5.3
Ensure the IMT enters the affected area country via RDC and receives a briefing and information on the current situation.	- Teams must register with the RDC on arrival in the affected country. - The RDC will provide information on transport and BoO locations as well as other situational and cultural considerations. .	Appendix 5.5, Appendix 5.6, Appendix 5.10
Ensure the IMT attends a briefing at the UCC to receive information on the current situation and to receive their first taskings.	- Prior to commencement of any operations the team IMT is to request a meeting with UCC staff to receive first taskings. - Note no operations are to commence other than the establishment of a BoO without UCC approval or request.	Appendix 5.11, Appendix 5.12, Appendix 5.13
Gather and document information from the UCC.		Appendix 5.13
The IMT needs to gain information from the UCC regarding:	- Current situation updates. - Chain of command. - Points of contact. - Team assignments - Safety and security considerations. - Communications plan. - Length of operational periods to accomplish assigned tasks. - Guidance for patient handover from the USAR team to local medical system as well as medical treatment and medical evacuation plans for an injured USAR team member. - Map of disaster sites. - Safety and security issues regarding site evacuation. - Logistics support available to the team.	Appendix 5.13

	• The reporting schedule including situation reports, operational briefings, etc. • Communications methods available and in use. • USAR team logistical support locally available. • How reports and requests are transmitted to and from the UCC. • Site location and information. • Information regarding the affected area prior to the event. • Availability of specialised equipment. • General population demographics, languages and anticipated numbers of victims. • Information on infrastructure assessments. • Identified objectives of the assignment. • Translators. • GPS Datum.	
Brief the UCC on the team capabilities using the USAR team Fact Sheet.	• Provide a copy of team fact sheet in either electronic or paper copy. • Provide additional information as needed.	Appendix 5.4
Assign one position to be the point of contact between the team and the UCC. This may assist communications between the team and the UCC. Develop and implement an initial Incident Action Plan of action for the operational period.	• Actions to consider are: • Develop an initial IAP to achieve the initial objectives of the LEMA. • Gather information to establish the extent of the issue. • Develop an IAP for sustained operations. • Consider appropriate actions including Assessment, Search and Rescue Level (ASR) Level. • Establish internal team briefing schedules. • Provide regular briefings to the UCC on progress. • Order additional resources as required. • Identification of outcomes. • Evaluation and review of operations. • Update of the IAP.	Appendix 5.22
Identify logistical requirements of the team and forward these to the UCC daily. The UCC will coordinate with the LEMA	• Fuel. • Timber. • Compressed gases (to include medical oxygen).	

officials for the supply of the required local support including:	• Heavy lifting and other specialised equipment and/or support personnel (i.e. local emergency responders, local civilian volunteers, NGOs, military personnel, etc.) • Debris removal plan.	
Check coordination needs with other teams.	• To be done at regular UCC meetings.	
Brief all teams on the operation, including safety.	• IMT to conduct regular whole of team briefings.	Appendix 5.14, Appendix 5.19, Appendix 5.25, Appendix 5.26
Report information on the VOSOCC and update it.	• It will usually be the role of the LEMA to update the VOSOCC. Do not publish information on the VOSOCC without prior approval from the LEMA.	Appendix 5.26
Build a rotating system (shift system).	• Medium and heavy teams are to ensure 24-hour operations. • Light teams need to work with the UCC to ensure continued operations commensurate with their capacity.	
Prepare a plan for media and execute.	• Request the UCC to provide information on the requirements of the LEMA for interacting with the media. • Brief team personnel on the procedures for interacting with the media.	Appendix 5.2
Establish effective communications with team members	•	
Establish plans for medevac, transport, site evacuation, media, communications and hazmat	•	Appendix 5.19, Appendix 5.20
Prepare meeting requirements (including internal meetings) with the UCC/LEMA and	•	Appendix 5.14, Appendix 5.26

coordinate own country briefings as requested.		
Assess the potential BoO sites identified by the UCC.	• The UCC may task a USAR team to identify potential BoO locations for arriving international USAR team.	Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.18
Maintain a detailed operations log listing the chronological order of events and activities during the mission for each worksite; a site-specific report should be completed.	• The log can be maintained electronically or via manual entry and should include: • Number of rescues and body recoveries. • Other activities undertaken. • Details of potential worksites. • Safety and security considerations. • A sketch of the worksite • Operational shortfalls regarding equipment, supplies, personnel, etc.	Appendix 5.26
The USAR team leader is required to attend scheduled UCC briefings to ensure the team is kept informed of current issues and latest developments.	•	Appendix 5.13
Have your necessary risk assessment forms?	•	Appendix 5.23, Appendix 5.24
Perform risk assessment with specialist (engineers, hazmat and security personnel).	•	Appendix 5.23,

2.3 Demobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
Liaise with LEMA prior to consideration of demobilisation.	•	Appendix 5.13
Ensure effective briefing to the LEMA once demobilisation is approved.	•	
Manage the VOSOCC and post regular updates.	•	Appendix 5.25
Notify UCC that all assignments are complete.	•	Appendix 5.13, Appendix 5.1
Facilitate in-kind donations.	• As determined by the LEMA/UCC.	
Coordinate transportation for team.	•	
Provide mission summary.	•	Appendix 5.33
Ensure timely availability for further taskings.	•	
Notify home representatives of the pending return.	•	
Develop a return to readiness plan.	•	
Disestablishment of BoO.	•	
Ensure all members are accounted for.	•	

Ensure effective communication with all parties.	•	
Prepare a press release.	• As determined by the LEMA/UCC.	Appendix 5.1
Ensure exit from the Area of Operation (AoO) is conducted via the RDC at the designated exit point.	• The RDC will be established and operating to ensure that all outgoing teams are correctly processed. Teams are to ensure that they liaise with the RDC prior to final demobilisation and transport from the AoO.	
Develop pre-determined procedures in the event of situation that requires immediate evacuation of the BOO, or Worksite to a safe location.	• In the event of a sudden change in conditions it may be necessary to evacuate the BoO or worksite. It is vital that all personnel are aware of the signal indicating the need for an evacuation and the immediate actions to take.	Appendix 5.20
Unplanned demobilisation of the team.	• Circumstances at the AoO may change such that continued operations are not possible. If a team needs to withdraw from the AoO and time permits, follow the procedures for a standard demobilisation. If circumstances require a rapid removal of the team, notify the UCC and move all personnel to a safe environment as quickly and as safely as possible.	Appendix 5.20

2.4 Post Mission		
Action	Description	Reference
Manage the VOSOCC and post approved updates.	•	
Close the mission on the VOSOCC when completed.	•	
Perform an analysis of USAR team operations, training, gaps, and personnel issues.	• Develop a structured debriefing process.	Appendix 5.34
Ensure all groups (Rescue, Search, Logistics and Medical) complete report on mission.	•	Appendix 5.34
Ensure injury follow-ups as well as short and long-term stress management issues are addressed.	• Ensure a post mission mental wellness check is offered to all personnel.	
Post-mission vet check recommended.	•	
Ensure post mission report is completed. The post mission report is to include a lesson learnt section.	• The INSARAG Secretariat requests that a copy of the USAR team Post Mission Report is received in a timely manner; preferably within 45 days of the teams return.	Appendix 5.33, Appendix 5.34

3 Search

3.1 Mobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
<i>Technical Search General</i>		
Ensure equipment is available for technical search, e.g. Search cameras.	Establish search equipment as permanent element of the USAR cache.	
Coordinate with rescue, logistics, and medical elements.	Ensure that there is no duplication of equipment in other caches.	
Report back to management.	Provide a documented record of all available equipment.	
<i>Dog Search</i>		
Ensure availability of dog microchips, immunisation documents, travel documents and other health reports.	Develop a portfolio of information pertaining to the dogs that can be provided on request.	
Ensure appropriate caging and/or containment for dogs is available.	Use fit for purpose cages only. Makeshift enclosures may cause injury to the animals.	
Check on cultural issues regarding dogs.	Seek a briefing from the team leader prior to departure.	Appendix 5.3
Consider transport option for dogs, e.g. cages.	Use fit for purpose cages only. Makeshift enclosures may cause injury to the animals.	
Consider relief stations for dogs.	Dogs need regular breaks to work effectively in the field.	
Check dog health risk of affected country, e.g. extreme weather.	Constantly monitor weather conditions and do not use the dogs in extreme heat or cold.	

Check on emergency evacuation plan for the dogs.	• Seek a briefing from the team leader prior to departure.	Appendix 5.19, Appendix 5.20
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3.2 Operations		
Action	Description	Reference
<i>Technical Search General</i>		
Develop a safety and security plan and brief the team.	A thorough risk assessment needs to be undertaken prior to attempting a search.	
Determine search strategy and reconnaissance.	Determine whether the search will be conducted using personnel or listening equipment or other methods such as thermal imaging cameras or drones. The search methodology may impact other activities and needs to be clearly communicated to the IMT.	
Liaise with local authorities regarding additional victim information from locals and first responders.	Those on the scene and familiar with the area will be the best source of information. Consider conducting quick interviews before evacuating people from the scene.	
Liaise with local authorities regarding advice on building structure.	Local councils and city officials will often have detailed plans of buildings.	
Can verbal or visual contact be made with victims?	A surface line and hail search should be the first step in establishing the location of trapped victims.	
Liaise with local authorities to determine tactics.	Many agencies will have detailed plans to respond to major emergencies. USAR team need to ensure their activities are coordinated with local arrangements.	
Ensure communications with all other team functions.	All activities of the team need to be coordinated by the IMT. Teams should follow their instructions and not deviate without approval from the IMT.	
Are personnel familiar with the evacuation signalling system?	Aftershocks and other conditions may cause further movement and collapse of structures. Teams need to be ready to evacuate immediately the need arises.	

Ensure effective accountability system for all personnel.	• No activity should be commenced without an accountability system in place prior to the activity.	
Ensure appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).	• Your PPE is the last line of defence against injury. It should never be comprised.	
Ensure re-commissioning of all equipment and return to logistics.	• Ensure that equipment is ready for the next assignment as soon as practical. Liaise with the logistics function to replace consumable items as soon as they are used.	
<i>Dog Search</i>		
Ensure rest time for dog and rotation of personnel (shift system).	• Dogs require regular rest breaks to work effectively. Over working the dog will reduce their effectiveness.	
Apply dog, acoustic and optical senses when necessary in an integrated way.	• The removal of material that may mask scents or block vision may assist the dog's effectiveness.	
Are dog/personnel available for other tasking's or priorities?	• Maintain effective communication to facilitate the optimal use of the dog team.	
Search leader should consider:	• The physical readiness of searchers through proper nutrition, water intake, rest and stress control techniques. • Site assessment to include safety, structural, hazmat risks, number of victims and any other information relevant to the search. • Ensure proper equipment needs are met and equipment is operational prior to each work period. • Ensure use of all safety practices and procedures. • Briefs, debriefs and observes the dog team during search. • Reports relevant information to appropriate USAR team manager and coordinates any follow-up or reassignment activities. • Brief shift replacement fully on all ongoing operations when relieved at work cycle rotations.	

	• Report any signs/symptoms of incident stress, injury, fatigue, or illness in searchers to immediate supervisor. • Participate in USAR team daily briefings and meetings as requested.	
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3.3 Demobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
<i>Dog Search</i>		
Ensure that appropriate caging and/or containment for dogs is available.	• Use fit for purpose cages only. Makeshift enclosures may cause injury to the animals, especially during transport.	
Ensure the readiness of the dogs (health, fitness, hygiene, diet, etc.) for travel, including all specialised gear and equipment.	• Conduct a full examination of the dog and provide for food and water for the journey. If possible, transport all the dogs together.	
Ensure that the dogs have an opportunity to relieve themselves immediately prior to departure.	• Failure to allow this may result in injury the animal.	

3.4 Post Mission		
Action	Description	Reference
The Search Leader prepares and delivers a report on the mission to their USAR team.	Each element of the task force is required to provide a daily report to the IMT. This report assists with the daily sitrep provided to the OSOCC and LEMA.	Appendix 5.25
A post mission veterinary check is recommended.	Dogs should be thoroughly checked prior to resuming normal activities.	
Attend USAR Post Mission debriefing.		Appendix 5.33
Perform an analysis of USAR team operations (performance and tactics, training gaps, personnel problems, new needs for the members).	A search specific debrief is advised to seek best practice for the activities undertaken. This will inform training activities going forward.	
Analysis of the team behaviours and needs in the Preparedness phase.		

4 Rescue

4.1 Mobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
Check on readiness of equipment.	All equipment needs to be checked regularly to ensure operational readiness. Comprehensive records should be kept of these checks.	
Is cache appropriate for affected country?	Seek a pre-deployment briefing from the IMT to ensure all equipment is appropriate for the conditions e.g. extreme cold conditions.	Appendix 5.3
Check on rescue tactics with structural engineers.	Advice from qualified engineers should be sought prior to operations in, or in close vicinity of, damaged buildings.	
Liaise with hazmat and security over tactics/issues.	Check for hazardous conditions including leaking pipes, sewers etc. Ensure the area is secured by local authorities prior to starting operations.	Appendix 5.23
Coordinate with rescue, logistics, and medical elements.	Local rescue units may be in your location. Always liaise to ensure your proposed activities are consistent with the overall strategy.	
Report back to management.	Provide regular sitreps to the IMT.	

4.2 Operations		
Action	Description	Reference
Follow the affected country's policies and procedures regarding incident operations.	Ensure that all operations are consistent with the strategic intent of the incident controller in your area of operation.	Appendix 5.3
Develop a safety and security plan and brief the team.	Conduct a risk assessment and ensure all team members are aware of the risks and preventative actions	Appendix 5.19
Apply INSARAG Marking System.	Only use the INSARAG system so that following teams are familiar with the markings.	Appendix 5.28
Check assignment and define strategy and determine what equipment is required on existing information.		
Liaise with Logistics for transport/check on fuel.	Ensure that you have large enough vehicles to carry the required equipment. Don't have personnel carry heavy equipment long distances.	
Check availability of extra rescue equipment.	Local suppliers may be able to support components for rescue equipment.	
Coordinate with medical component to ensure the ability to provide emergency medical care from the time of initial access and throughout extrication.	Rescue is a patient-driven activity	
Check on-site safety during tunnelling, shoring, stabilising medical treatment, victim extrication, O2 dust.	Refer to the Risk Assessment prior to all activities.	
Ensure evacuation point.	It is good practice to clearly mark the evacuation point. Signage or flags may assist.	Appendix 5.20

Are personnel familiar with the evacuation signalling system?	Three long horn blasts should signal an evacuation.	Appendix 5.28
Ensure appropriate handover to other shift or other emergency services.	Provide a written and verbal handover to the oncoming team.	Appendix 5.26
Manage reporting system both internal and external.	Provide a written report of all activities to the IMT. Include such information as number of victims found or released. Status, i.e. live or deceased. Any injuries to personnel and any problems encountered.	
Ensure re-commissioning of all equipment and return to logistics.	Work with the logistics team to have the equipment made operationally ready for the next assignment as soon as practicable.	
Ensure effective accountability system for all personnel.	Accountability systems will form part of the risk assessment process.	
Consider decontamination.	All personnel should wash their hands prior to leaving the work site and should shower prior to entering the BoO. Clear clean and dirty areas should be established.	
Ensure debrief on return to BoO.	Crews should be involved in a hot debrief prior to being dismissed.	Appendix 5.25

4.3 Demobilisation

Action	Description	Reference
Brief the UCC on structural stability concerns and make recommendations regarding further operations.	Provide a comprehensive report on all operations and the condition of the premises on extraction.	Appendix 5.13

4.4 Post Mission

Action	Description	Reference
The Rescue group prepares and delivers a report on the mission to their USAR team.	A rescue specific report should be completed as soon as practical. This report should detail all operations and make recommendations for improvements.	Appendix 5.25, Appendix 5.34
Full team debrief should occur.	All personnel should be involved in the debrief process and be encouraged to provide feedback.	

5 Medical

5.1 Mobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
Ensure deploying USAR personnel have:	- Personal prescribed medication (suggested stock for one month) - Immunisation record. - Documentation to support right to clinical practice for medical providers.	
Ensure pre-deployment medical checks been completed	- Documented medical evaluations should be carried out on all personnel. - Report any personnel to management who do not meet medical requirements for deployment	
Initiate gathering medical intelligence remotely and continue throughout all phases:	- Any prevailing endemic medical situations (e.g. prevalence of HIV/AIDS, rabies, etc.) - Determine need for country-specific prophylaxis (e.g. malaria). - Unusual or site-specific medical conditions and appropriate precautions (e.g. vectors, poisonous plants, animals, etc.). - Altitude and or extreme weather considerations. - Medical Evacuation Plan (as known at the time). - Local medical command structure. - Availability of medical oxygen - Availability of international and local medical resources (e.g. hospitals, field hospitals) to include care of dogs. - Casualty handover procedure. - Casualty transport capabilities. - Fatality management procedure including Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) procedures as determined by the LEMA. - Disposal requirements for medical waste	Appendix 5.3, Appendix 5.19, Appendix 5.20

Review USAR team policy for dealing with team member injury or death during deployment.	• Injuries should be treated primarily by the team medical component but may require additional resources and or evacuation. • An injury resulting in a death of a USAR team member will need to be managed according to USAR team policy in collaboration with UCC and local authorities.	
Initiate accountability and security of the controlled drugs.	• All controlled drugs need to be secured and tracking initiated. Only authorised medical personnel should access controlled drugs during the deployment.	
Initiate medical team records.	• Maintain records for any medical team activities to include: ○ Individual patient treatments ○ Medical team activities ○ Summary of patient treatments provided ○ Daily health and welfare checks	
Coordinate with USAR team personnel responsible for hazmat and safety on known and potential incident hazards.	• Share knowledge on known risks including potential hazardous material incidents or exposures.	

5.2 Operations		
Action	Description	Reference
Prepare medical facilities at the BoO	• Ensure rapid set up of medical treatment area to address any urgent medical issues	
Perform on-going accountability and maintenance of the medical cache and treatment area	• Undertake daily maintenance of the BoO medical treatment area to ensure it is clean, tidy and functional. • Ensure accountability and security of the controlled drugs • Track use of medical consumables • Monitor medications that require refrigeration, as required. • Record any equipment faults, damages or losses. • Advise USAR Medical Manager of any equipment concerns or low-stock items.	Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17
Ensure medical capability on during search and rescue operations.	• Provide appropriate medical capability during search and rescue operations. • Monitor health and welfare of the team members during operations. • Establish a medical evacuation plan for the worksite. • Provide USAR medicine to entrapped patients at first contact • Monitor patients for potential negative impacts from rescue operations (e.g. dust, noise, falling debris) and coordinate mitigation measures with rescue personnel as required. • Ensure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (e.g. eye, hearing and respiratory protection) is applied to patients during the disentanglement and extrication process. • Ensure accountability and security of the drugs on-site. • Safeguard the medical equipment cache.	
Conduct daily check of medical evacuation plan for possible changes.	• Incorporate changes as required	

Ensure hygiene standards are maintained both at BoO and worksites.	• Work with logistics staff to ensure implementation and maintenance of good hygiene practices	
Maintain health checks and monitor personnel and dogs regularly.	• Implement regular health checks on team members • Consider the following: ○ Stress-related health problems and implement stress management techniques as appropriate (e.g. fatigue). ○ General state of health – monitor trends (e.g. diarrhoea). ○ Hydration status. ○ Nutrition status.	
Participate in daily USAR team briefings and conduct the daily medical briefing.	• A representative from the medical teams should be part of team management meetings.	
Coordinate with the personnel responsible for Hazmat and Safety	• The potential for hazardous materials contamination or exposures • Documentation of potential exposures per home team protocol. • Decontamination requirements for various contaminants or exposures. • Identify and implement treatment options for hazardous materials exposures.	Appendix 5.23
For any USAR team member undergoing medical care at outside medical facilities	• Ensure team member is accompanied at all times. • Consider providing medical supplies as required to reduce impact on local capabilities	
Implement isolation procedures as required	• For any team member with a potentially communicable condition that could impact team operations, ensure they are isolated according to team procedures.	

5.3 Demobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
Medical cache donations.	- Identify medical equipment and appropriate consumables to be donated, if any. - Coordinate with UCC to identify an appropriate recipient for donated items (e.g. local health authorities, other international organisations).	
Coordinate the repatriation of any USAR team members hospitalised whilst on deployment.	If the team member cannot be repatriated with the rest of the team, other team members should be assigned to accompany them until they can be repatriated.	
Prior to departure from the affected country, consider conducting a health and welfare check on team members.		
Perform basic decontamination, packing and loading of the medical cache.		
Pack items requiring refrigeration appropriately for transport.		
Ensure accountability and security of the controlled drugs		

5.4 Post Mission		
Action	Description	Reference
Ensure appropriate medical follow-up of team members on return to home country.	- Consider both physical and mental health well-being conditions that may require follow up - Consider both immediate and long term follow up needs	Appendix 5.34
Complete and submit all medical paperwork.	Ensure appropriate storage of medical records	
Participate in USAR team post-mission debriefing.		
Report on the operational readiness of the USAR medical component of the team and its equipment cache once restored.		
Complete medical contribution to the AAR as required by USAR team policy.	The medical manager should conduct a debrief and consolidate all information for the AAR.	

6 Logistics

6.1 Mobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
Ensure having sufficient logistics support, equipment and staff to set up and maintain a BoO for the duration of the mission, including:	• Sufficient food and water. • Equipment storage and maintenance facilities. • Sanitation and hygiene facilities for the team for the duration of the mission. • Sufficient and appropriate medical supplies. • Dog rest and exercise areas. • Appropriate shelter for the prevailing weather. • Communications equipment. • Power generation and lighting. • Transportation.	Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.18
Check all transport documents, hazmat, and equipment.	• Personnel lists and equipment manifest.	
Check on air transport.		
Do you have self-sufficiency (food and water) for the duration of the mission?		
Do you have ability to purchase and/or acquire supplies (fuel)?		
Check on availability of transportation in affected country.		
Check on capabilities of designated arrival at country airport.	• Make contact with airport security. • Liaise with airport authorities regarding unloading. • Prepare unloading/loading plan.	Appendix 5.10

	• Monitor cache during unloading/loading.	
Check on communications in team and affected country and prepare a communications plan.		
Coordinate with other elements of team to ensure all cache requirements.		
Do you have food/drink for transport?		
Liaise with all other elements of team regarding priorities of cache.		
Do you have a transport plan?	• Gather information on transport routes/mobility. • Establish a route plan. • Check on vehicles and drivers and ensure security briefing, advise on routes. • Develop and route a contingency plan.	
Prepare questions for the UCC regarding BoO, water, fuel and sanitation.		Appendix 5.15
Prepare logistics plan to service multiple sites.		
Consider BoO reconnaissance and establish GPS coordinates.		Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.18
Establish BoO plan in affected area.		Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.18

Ensure you have an overarching BoO plan and staffing plan.		Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.18
Ensures updates on security level and situation on arrival.	Develop a Safety and Security Plan.	Appendix 5.19, Appendix 5.20
Ensure suitable personnel accountability systems are functional for all personnel.		
Ensure briefing of all personnel.		Appendix 5.1, Appendix 5.3, Appendix 5.7, Appendix 5.28
Compile transport documentation. Identify aspects that may require additional or supplementary logistical support, e.g. climatic conditions.		
Report back to management.		

6.2 Operations		
Action	Description	Reference
Consider the following when selecting a BoO site:	• Locations provided by the LEMA/OSOCC/UCC. • Suitably sized areas (minimum size 50 x 40 m). • Locations should be as safe and secure as the environment allows. • Close proximity to the UCC and worksites. • Allow easy access to transportation. • Environmental considerations (hard-surfaced, good drainage, etc.) • Close proximity to logistics and support resources. • Should be situated in an area that does not influence communications (satellite). • A team of trained USAR Logistics Specialists should be responsible for BoO maintenance.	Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.18, Appendix 5.19, Appendix 5.20
Select and set up the site based on mission priorities and available resources to include:	• Equipment stock and maintenance area. • Medical treatment area. • Management area. • Communications centre. • Food preparation and feeding area. • Personnel lodging area. • Sanitation and hygiene area. • Vehicle parking. • Transportation access areas. • Search dog areas. • Briefing area. • Generators and lighting should be strategically placed to ensure a safe and secure environment.	Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.18
Coordinate with external/internal parties for supplies and logistics.		

Prepare and ensure effective transport plan.		
Ensure adequate food and suppliers for personnel and dogs, within roster system.		
Support the management in security and safety measures in BoO.		Appendix 5.19
Ensure adequate waste management procedures are in place. Liaise with LEMA or UCC on how to link with local waste management arrangements for the area. Consider methods to store and then remove waste as needed.	• Consider the following: ○ Sewage and wastewater. ○ Rubbish, including food waste. ○ Medical waste, including contaminated medical waste. ○ Contaminated wastewater from personal decontamination procedures. ○ Hydrocarbon waste including fuels and oils.	
Prepare evacuation plan and demobilisation plan.		Appendix 5.32

6.3 Demobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
Activate the demobilisation plan.		Appendix 5.32
The BoO site should be restored to its original state as far as is possible.		
Coordinate the demobilisation with LEMA/OSOCC/UCC.		Appendix 5.32
Provide resources for logistical requirements during demobilisation (preparing of manifests, packing and loading, etc.)		
Ensure relevant communication links are maintained during the demobilisation phase.		
Ensure correct documentation for logistics.		
Equipment is to be recommissioned, checked and packed for return to country, with consideration to the following:	Quarantine issues that may arise during demobilisation. Possibility of re-deployment while en-route home. Gifting of equipment and/or resources. The BoO site should be restored to its original state if possible.	
Consider donation/gifting to affected country.		

6.4 Post Mission		
Action	Description	Reference
Ensure all cache items are ready for immediate deployment.		
Attend USAR Post Mission debriefing.		Appendix 5.33
Equipment should be cleaned, checked and re-stowed ready for re-use.		
Share lessons learned with management in written format.		

7 Safety and Security

7.1 Mobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
Ensure all personnel are mission ready to deploy to the event. Considerations for mission ready status are:	• Have appropriate documentation (i.e. passport, visa, Certificate of Vaccination, emergency contacts for next-of-kin). • Have appropriate PPE for the incident environment. • Have appropriate clothing for the climate. • Have undertaken appropriate security training.	UN BSAFE course.
Equipment and supplies.	• Safety practices are incorporated into the packaging, labelling, storing, and movement of personnel and equipment. • Operator manuals should accompany specialised equipment. • Team members must be trained in the use of their equipment, PPE, hazard identification and mitigation procedures. • Sufficient quantities of food appropriate for entry into the affected country are available and will not adversely affect personal health and performance. • Adequate water is available for the initial phase and that there is sufficient water purification equipment to support the team's needs. • Sufficient sanitation and hygiene provisions are available for deployment.	
Security.	• Level 1 — Minimal. • Level 2 — Low. • Level 3 — Moderate. • Level 4 — Substantial. • Level 5 — High.	Appendix 5.19

	• Level 6 — Extreme.	
Assign the security and safety function to a team member.		
Identify the general and disaster-specific safety issues and include in the initial team briefing.	• Identify the environmental conditions at the disaster area. Before departure, identify and brief the team on the hazards associated with modes of transport that will be used to travel to the affected country and those most likely to be encountered for transport within the affected country.	Appendix 5.23, Appendix 5.3, Appendix 5.19
In transit monitor and enforce compliance with established safety and security practices.		
Receive briefing from the RDC and or OSOCC/UCC on safety and security aspects including:	• Type and condition of transport equipment. • Local driving customs. • Movement of equipment. • Any special hazard considerations (i.e. road conditions, land mines, animals, infrastructure, weather, looting, civil unrest, criminal acts, restricted areas, check point procedures, escort procedures, etc.) • Identify local medical capabilities available in case of an emergency during transportation to the disaster site (in coordination with USAR medical component personnel).	
Implement security procedures as appropriate.	• Vehicle inspection programme. • Ensure reserve fuel supply. • Movement procedure, i.e. only move about in pairs etc. • Establish evacuation routes. • Establish a safe haven.	

	• Implement a roll call system. • Establish communications protocols.	
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7.2 Operations		
Action	Description	Reference
Liaise with OSOCC/UCC on safety and security issues.	Note that the safety and security conditions can change rapidly. Ensure constant communications with local authorities.	
BoO sites and travel routes.	Continually conduct a risk/hazard analysis of the BoO, travel routes and assigned zone and take appropriate mitigation action.	
BoO perimeter control.	Establish BoO and worksite perimeter control procedures using physical barriers or other measures to delineate the BoO site.	Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.18, Appendix 5.19
Daily briefings.	Ensure safety and security considerations are included in the plan of action and briefings.	Appendix 5.19, Appendix 5.20
Evacuation procedures.	- Ensure a warning system and evacuation plan is established, briefed and exercised. - Regular roll-call of all personnel should be maintained throughout the mission. - Ensure that team personnel adhere to the “buddy system.”	Appendix 5.20, Appendix 5.28
Provide adequate lighting for security of BoO and worksites.		Appendix 5.16, Appendix 5.17, Appendix 5.18
Continually monitor weather forecasts.		
Base hygiene.	Ensure biomedical control measures are adhered to (i.e. body recovery, patient handling, sanitation, hygiene etc.)	

	• Ensure personnel and equipment decontaminating practices are followed prior to leaving the worksite and entering the BoO.	
Ensure that all team personnel have reliable means of communications.	• Each member should carry radio or other means of communication always when outside of the BoO.	
Shift rosters.	• Ensure adequate rest, rotation, hydration, and feeding of team members.	

7.3 Demobilisation		
Action	Description	Reference
Personnel considerations during this phase include:	• Mitigating fatigue. • Monitor team members for signs of stress. • Preventing loss of concentration and motivation. • Maintaining team discipline ensuring regular information exchange.	

7.4 Post Mission		
Action	Description	Reference
On the return to the home base, the following safety and security issues should be considered.	• Safety and security concerns are incorporated into the Post Mission Report. It is imperative that the safety findings and lessons learned are highlighted and incorporated into future training sessions, field exercises and operational guidelines. • Safety equipment and supplies must be restocked.	Appendix 5.33, Appendix 5.34
Attend USAR Post Mission debriefing.		Appendix 5.33

8 Hazardous Materials Operations

Generally, the following tactics should be adopted while assessing a site that is suspected to be contaminated:

If a site is deemed contaminated teams should assess whether they have the means to safely work in this environment. Teams should not commit to a contaminated site without conducting a thorough assessment of their hazmat capability for short or longer-term operations. Teams could develop a PPE-level map or decision matrix. If it is deemed appropriate that a team can work in a contaminated environment the following should be considered:

- Ensure a safe approach – always upwind and up-slope.
- Ensure clear command and control arrangements are in place and well understood by all present.
- Secure the site as best as possible to ensure the safety of others.
- Attempt to identify the contaminant (UN Numbers, Dangerous Goods or Hazchem Codes).
- Assess the potential harm and minimise, where possible, environmental contamination.
- Call in assistance – expert advice/additional resources, if possible.
- If within the teams' capability – render safe.
- Always assume the worst until proven otherwise.

Decontamination can be both equipment and labour intensive; therefore, consideration should be given to avoiding overextending the teams' capability in this area.

Whenever protective clothing or equipment is used, decontamination strategies need to be considered.

Prior to committing resources to a contaminated site, the following should be considered:

- A risk analysis should be conducted based upon hazard/risk assessment and the site survey
- Particulate exposure is common in the collapsed structure environment. Consider referencing the Medical Working Group Technical Reference Note for mitigation procedures ("Particulate exposure for rescuers and dogs in the collapsed structure environment" at [INSARAG.org](https://www.insarag.org))
- Teams should evaluate the risk in relation to the rescue of viable patients versus recovery of the dead
- Teams should also consider other search and rescue priorities within the immediate vicinity

While undertaking search and rescue operations at any worksite teams should consider the following issues and implement a monitoring regime for the duration of the operations:

- Oxygen levels.
- Flammability of substance or surrounding atmosphere.
- Toxicity levels.
- Explosive limits.

- Radiological emissions and monitoring.

The following considerations may also affect the decision on whether to conduct search and rescue operations:

- Refer to UN/OSHA levels A thru D
- Condition of voids – if the hazard can be easily isolated or mitigated and this is carried out, the situation is considered rendered safe and operations are to continue.
- Time required to access victims – this will be an estimate of the time required to get to the first victim. It should include the time it would take to mitigate hazards, cut through floors, walls, roofs, etc., and to shore and brace the access route as well as relevant adjacent structures if required.
- Special occupancy information – increased attention and monitoring will be given to certain types of target hazards, especially those involving nuclear energy, radiological elements, specialised military facilities, chemical manufacture, and biological production or storage.
- Decontamination – careful planning is needed to ensure the team has procedures in place that provides adequate decontamination of members including dogs.
- Go or No-go conditions – and subsequent risk assessments:
 - Time required to complete the assignment.
 - Protection and limitations of available personal protective equipment.
 - Results of the risk-benefit analysis.
 - Resource status.
 - Security and safety considerations.

The following should be considered when undertaking detection and monitoring:

- Detection and monitoring are required of both the Operational Worksites and BoO.
- Operational Worksite detection and monitoring should be performed by the assigned hazmat specialist in the team and include the following:
 - Establishing safe perimeters of each assigned structure.
 - Establishing clean entry points of each assigned structure.
 - Plan for the need to monitor additional voids or potential spaces encountered during operations.
 - Establishing decontamination-sites – including the appropriate disposal of contaminated run-off.
 - Ensuring decontamination of assigned tools and equipment, including protective clothing.
 - Ensuring decontamination of assigned transportation vehicles.

Refer to Guidance Appendix 5.23: *Hazmat Evaluation Guide*.

Note: USAR team deployed with Hazmat capabilities can assist to identify potential chemical hazards following disasters such as toxic spills. They would mark off the danger zone to warn others and immediately report this threat to the UCC, who, in turn, would coordinate with the LEMA.

Appendices

Overview of relevant Guidance Appendices to Volume 5, hosted on www.insarag.org.

- Appendix 5.1:** Ethical Considerations for USAR teams
- Appendix 5.2:** Media Management Guide
- Appendix 5.3:** Country Information - Affected Area Information Template
- Appendix 5.4:** USAR Team Fact Sheet
- Appendix 5.5:** RDC Establishment Checklist
- Appendix 5.6:** RDC Briefing Form
- Appendix 5.7:** Security Briefing
- Appendix 5.8:** Aircraft Capacity
- Appendix 5.9:** Types of Helicopters Typically Used During Disaster Operations
- Appendix 5.10:** Airfield Assessment
- Appendix 5.11:** Assignment of Teams
- Appendix 5.12:** UCC Establishment Checklist
- Appendix 5.13:** UCC-LEMA Meeting Form
- Appendix 5.14:** Standard Meeting Agenda Form
- Appendix 5.15:** Assignment Briefing Package Form
- Appendix 5.16:** Base of Operations - Icons
- Appendix 5.17:** Base of Operations - Layout
- Appendix 5.18:** Management Tent - Layout
- Appendix 5.19:** Safety and Security Plan - Template
- Appendix 5.20:** Evacuation Plan - Template
- Appendix 5.21:** Appendix void
- Appendix 5.22:** ASR Levels
- Appendix 5.23:** Hazmat Evaluation Guide
- Appendix 5.24:** Worksite Triage Form
- Appendix 5.25:** Worksite Report Form
- Appendix 5.26:** Incident Sector Situation Report
- Appendix 5.27:** Zone Report
- Appendix 5.28:** INSARAG Marking and Signalling Systems
- Appendix 5.29:** Victim Extrication Form
- Appendix 5.30:** Patient Treatment Form
- Appendix 5.31:** Humanitarian Needs Identification Form
- Appendix 5.32:** Demobilization Form
- Appendix 5.33:** Mission Summary Form
- Appendix 5.34:** Post Mission Report Form