

# The NDMS Disaster Medical Assistance Teams

- **DMATs are the responsibility of the Federal Government as prearranged sources of support.** A DMAT consists of a volunteer group affiliated with NDMS. Although a DMAT consists of approximately 35 individuals in each deployable unit, each particular team may consist of more than three times that number to provide some redundancy for each job role on the DMAT in the event a key person is unavailable at the time of deployment. Each DMAT is composed of members with a variety of health or medical skills. Included among the ranks of a team are many support personnel such as communications, logistics, maintenance and security. Many teams also maintain a Critical Incident Stress Management sub-unit. Teams within 500 miles of a disaster usually travel by ground, whereas those greater than 500 miles from the site travel by air (usually military aircraft).
- DMATs are categorized according to their ability to respond. A Level-1 DMAT can be ready to deploy within 8 hours of notification and then remain self-sufficient for 72 hours with enough food, water, shelter and medical supplies to treat about 250 patients per day. Level-2 DMATs lack enough equipment to make them self-sufficient but are able to deploy and replace a Level-1 team utilizing and supplementing their equipment which is left on site. Level-3 DMATs consist of teams in various stages of development.
- DMATs are usually **Locally sponsored** and community based. Many are local or state assets prior to being a Federal asset. They maintain a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Public Health Service so they can be called upon for federal service when necessary. Team members are enrolled in a federal system and thus can be "Federalized" upon activation of the team. This is accomplished through the Special Needs Authority and the Accepted Volunteer Service Authority. This federalization is important because it provides the team members with Licensure and certification anywhere in the federal domain, as well solves liability and workers compensation issues.
- Some of the **DMAT Functions** include triage of victims at the disaster site. Providing sophisticated medical care in austere conditions and maintaining casualty clearing or staging locations just outside the site of the disaster. DMATs can also provide care at a reception area when the patient evacuation part of NDMS is activated. They can receive victims of the disaster in areas across the country that were unaffected and thus can handle the large quantity of injured.
- In order to be ready to respond to a disaster, DMATs undergo specialized training both at the team level and during local and national level exercises. Along with this training and exercise, DMAT members provide medical care at special events and attend annual training conferences. Each team develops and maintains plans for deployment to various disasters. Supplies and equipment are provided through DOD excess property sources, federal budget requests, local donations and funding and other sources.
- When deployed, the DMAT functions under a **Management Support Unit (MSU)**. This unit responds rapidly to the disaster area. It provides management support to deployed DMATs. By utilizing the **Incident Command System** areas of logistics, communications, operations, finance / procurement and planning are orchestrated by the MSU. The MSU interfaces, rather than takes over from the local disaster management system or Emergency Medical Services.
- **DMAT Special Teams include** pediatric, burn, Disaster Mortuary Service Teams (DMORTs), Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and Mental Health Teams.