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This circular is	<b>For information</b>		
This circular is	<b>Relevant to the National Framework</b>		
Status	<b>To confirm USAR mobilising and deployment arrangements agreed between Communities and Local Government and USAR host Fire and Rescue Services</b>		

# Guidance Regarding the Mobilisation and Deployment of USAR Resources

## Issued by:

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## Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Chief Executive of the County Council  
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority  
The Chief Fire Officer**

## Please forward to:

**USAR Team Managers  
Fire and Rescue Service National Coordination Centre  
Fire and Rescue Service Mobilising Control Managers**

## Summary

This circular gives guidance to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and the Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre (FRSNCC) on the mobilisation and deployment of urban search and rescue (USAR) resources supplied to the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) by the New Dimension Programme. It also details the composition of deployments and provides information to assist their integration into the Incident Command System.

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## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The New Dimension Programme is a key part of the Government's investment to enhance the country's resilience and ability to respond to disruptive challenges. Over £200 million has been invested in the delivery of vehicles, equipment, training, procedures and support mechanisms that will enable the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to provide an efficient, effective and sustained response to major incidents in England.
- 1.2 The New Dimension Programme works in partnership with the FRS and vital to its success is the engagement of key stakeholders including the Local Government Association (LGA), the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), representative bodies and the Fire Service College. All are involved in the development of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Capability.
- 1.3 The provision of USAR resources will help ensure that the FRS has the capability to respond to and manage incidents as described in article 3 of the Emergencies Order [the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007] and will assist in promoting the integration of USAR as core business within the modernised FRS.

## 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This Fire Service Circular provides further information and guidance concerning the response arrangements to a variety of incidents involving structural collapse or where the use of USAR resources could assist in the successful conclusion of an incident.
- 2.2 This circular should be read in conjunction with:
  - FSC 29/2006 'Mutual Assistance Arrangements under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004'
  - FSC 30/2006 'Fire and Rescue Services National Coordination Centre Guidance Document'
  - FSC 42/2006 'National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents'
  - FSC 72/2006 'FRAs Participating in the National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents'
  - FSC 13/2007 'The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies)(England) Order 2007 – (the Emergencies Order)'
- 2.3 **This circular also replaces previous guidance issued as:**
  - "Collapsed Structures – Interim Guidance" – Item G, DCOL 2/2002
  - "Guidance for Brigades concerning Interim Urban Search and Rescue Arrangements within England, Wales and Northern Ireland" – ODPM, October 2005
  - Written advice from HM Fire Service Inspectorate offered to brigades in October 2001 and January 2002 concerning calls for the assistance of the United Kingdom Fire Service Search and Rescue Team (UKFSSART)

**All previous guidance issued by the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG - formerly ODPM, and previously DETR, DTLR) that promoted the use of the UKFSSART and temporary vehicles as the primary support to the FRS attending structural collapse incidents in England, prior to the provision of full capability USAR, no longer applies. All guidance referred to in section 2.3 should be destroyed.**

- 2.4 Any FRS now requesting urban search and rescue assistance should seek to mobilise USAR resources, developed by the New Dimension Programme, either via their own mobilising controls through existing local mutual aid arrangements or via the Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre (FRSNCC). Further details are contained within Sections 6 and 7 of this document.

### 3.0 Regulatory Basis for Sharing USAR Resources

- 3.1 The Emergencies Order came into force on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2007. It gives FRAs statutory functions in connection with CBRN and USAR Emergencies.
- 3.2 Article 3 of the Emergencies Order requires FRAs to make provision for rescuing people and protecting them from serious harm in the event of:
- a) An emergency involving the collapse of a building or other structure, (not including a tunnel or mine) and
  - b) An emergency involving a train, tram or aircraft which is likely to require a FRA to use its resources beyond the scope of its day to day operations (e.g. a serious transport incident).
- 3.3 Article 4 of the Emergencies Order describes what an FRA needs to do to meet the statutory functions in connection with USAR emergencies. This includes securing trained personnel, services and training, along with making arrangements for obtaining information and dealing with calls for assistance and limiting property damage caused by FRS action. The Emergencies Order does not require FRAs to secure specialist equipment: this has been provided through the New Dimension Programme.
- 3.4 The level of training required for personnel in non USAR FRSs will not be the same as that required for USAR FRSs. Non USAR FRS personnel should be able to
- operate safely at a USAR incident
  - call for assistance from specialist USAR Units
  - integrate with and assist the specialist USAR Units
- 3.5 Article 5 of the Emergencies Order gives each FRA hosting specialist USAR resources (equipment and/or personnel) a duty to deploy them outside their area to an extent reasonable for dealing with the emergency following a request from an affected authority. In practice, FRAs participating in the national mutual aid protocol for serious incidents (FRS Circular 42/2006) will receive the request via FRS mobilising controls, through existing local mutual aid arrangements or via FRSNCC.
- 3.6 Information contained within this circular details the USAR resources available through the national mutual aid protocol and will assist each of the 46 FRS in England participating in that protocol. Information contained within this circular will also be of interest to FRS in Wales who may make arrangements to receive or provide mutual aid with English FRS and who participate in the mobilising arrangements using the FRSNCC.

### 4.0 Provision for USAR Emergencies

- 4.1 'USAR emergencies' or incidents requiring the deployment of USAR resources can be defined as 'emergencies requiring the freeing of people from collapsed structures or non-road transport wreckage'.
- 4.2 The provision for response to USAR emergencies, developed by the New Dimension Programme, is a network of 20 strategically located USAR capabilities (plus one strategic reserve) hosted by 17 FRAs in England and one in Wales.
- 4.3 The USAR capabilities are supported by an infrastructure that includes:
- national and local training facilities
  - maintenance and servicing facilities
  - a funding structure including funding for crewing
  - a capability management/maintenance/development structure
  - a training and development programme
  - common procedures and working arrangements
  - common equipment standards

- CFOA led USAR management and technical advisory teams

Work on a number of these elements is still being progressed.

## 5.0 Composition of USAR Capabilities

### 5.1 Each USAR capability comprises :

- A minimum of three prime movers based on a MAN 4-wheel drive, three-axle vehicle fitted with a hook lift loading system. The prime movers have a full 'blue light' capability and are fitted with communications equipment
- Five USAR modules (demountable units) each containing specialised search and rescue equipment. Further details are provided in Figure 1
- Approximately 30 USAR Technicians (though each FRA has made individual arrangements to secure the crewing levels necessary to deliver the response detailed in appendices A to D) including a canine search team (dog and handler).

Table 1: Details of USAR Modules

Module	Module Design	Equipment
<b>Module 1</b>	An enclosed unit based on a 20' ISO container with rear and side opening doors. The module provides <b>USAR support</b> in the <b>early</b> stages of an incident. Both sides are accessed via cantilever doors. The interior of the module is fitted with racks and shelves in which the equipment is stowed. The interior of the module is heated and ventilated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene assessment and safety</li> <li>• Technical search</li> <li>• Temporary shoring – metal</li> <li>• Power generation and lighting</li> <li>• Drills and concrete breakers</li> <li>• Safe working at height</li> <li>• Timber and timber cutting</li> <li>• Hand tools</li> <li>• Bolts and anchors</li> </ul>
<b>Module 2</b>	An enclosed unit based on a 20' ISO container with rear and side opening doors. The module provides <b>heavy rescue equipment</b> that is also suitable for major transport incidents. Both sides are accessed via cantilever doors. The interior of the module is fitted with racks and shelves in which the equipment is stowed. The interior of the module is heated and ventilated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot cutting</li> <li>• Heavy hydraulic equipment</li> <li>• Confined space working</li> <li>• Rope access</li> <li>• Timber chain saws</li> <li>• Lifting and moving equipment</li> <li>• Power generation and lighting</li> <li>• Mechanics tools</li> <li>• Bolts and anchors</li> </ul>
<b>Module 3</b>	An enclosed unit based on a 20' ISO container with rear and side opening doors. The module provides <b>heavy rescue support</b> in the <b>developing</b> stages of an incident. Both sides are accessed via cantilever doors. The interior of the module is fitted with racks and shelves in which the equipment is stowed. The interior of the module is heated and ventilated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timber shoring equipment</li> <li>• Nailing equipment</li> <li>• Bolts and anchors</li> <li>• Power generation and lighting</li> <li>• Large capacity air lift systems</li> <li>• Fast cut saws</li> <li>• Access and working platforms</li> <li>• Concrete breaking and breaching</li> </ul>
<b>Module 4</b>	An open unit based on a 20' ISO container with fixed sides to a height of 1.2m. The module is used to carry equipment, including a MPV and can also act as a tipper unit for the movement of debris. The rear of the module is a hinged gate allowing full width access to the module and the gate also incorporates a hinged flap for use when the module is operating as a tipper unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-Purpose Vehicle (MPV)</li> <li>• MPV equipment</li> <li>• Power generation and lighting</li> <li>• Portable shelter</li> </ul>
<b>Multi-</b>	Carried on Module 4, a four wheel drive and four wheel steering vehicle. The vehicle has an	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hydraulic lifting arm</li> </ul>

<p><b>Purpose Vehicle (MPV)</b></p>	<p>enclosed cab and a rear load bed with a tipping facility. At the front, a hydraulic arm with a variety of different attachments provides a lifting capability. Able to manoeuvre across debris and most terrains both on and off road, the MPV provides mobility to the USAR equipment carried on all the modules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fork attachment for moving equipment</li> <li>• Bucket attachment for moving debris</li> <li>• Rear load bed for transporting equipment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 5</b></p>	<p>A flat-bed unit based on a 20' ISO container. The module is used to carry timber and equipment and incorporates a tilt-cover and a load securing mechanism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timber stock including cribbing, wedges and bulk timber</li> </ul>

**5.2** The location of the USAR capabilities was based on a national risk assessment process that examined potential risks and geographical locations in respect of the size and nature of population centres across England and Wales.

Each region of England currently hosts either one or two USAR capabilities with the exception of the South East which hosts three, plus a strategic reserve and London who host 4. A further USAR capability is located in Wales. Other USAR provision exists in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The USAR capability host FRAs are:

1. Avon
2. Buckinghamshire
3. Devon and Somerset
4. Essex
5. Hampshire
6. Hereford and Worcestershire
7. Kent
8. Lancashire
9. Leicestershire
10. Lincolnshire
11. London x 4
12. Merseyside
13. Norfolk
14. Tyne and Wear
15. West Midlands
16. West Yorkshire
17. South Wales
18. West Sussex – strategic reserve

## 6.0 Mobilisation of USAR Resources to Major Incidents

- 6.1 For any incident which cannot be managed by FRS mobilising controls within existing local mutual aid arrangements the affected FRS mobilising control should request USAR support through the FRSNCC, which will then deal with the mobilisation of further resources from assisting FRSs. When USAR resources are mobilised without the assistance of the FRSNCC, either directly by the FRS mobilising control or through local mutual aid arrangements, the mobilising control must notify the FRSNCC of the mobilisation so that the FRSNCC is aware that these resources are committed to an incident.
- 6.2 USAR host FRSs should refrain from mobilising assisting USAR resources unless specifically requested by the FRSNCC (or by the affected FRS mobilising control in the early stages of a major incident).
- 6.3 It is accepted that some elements of USAR capabilities may already be in attendance (mobilised by FRS mobilising controls in the early stages of a major incident) and the FRSNCC will take this into account when coordinating the mobilisation of further resources.
- 6.4 The USAR capability is able to provide flexible responses to major incidents. Where there are simultaneous major incidents the USAR response will be adapted accordingly to ensure appropriate responses to each incident and the sustainability of each response over the expected incident duration of up to 30 days. Examples of single and simultaneous incident response models are detailed in appendices A to D.
- 6.5 USAR mobilisation to major incidents will be based on requests from FRSNCC to USAR host FRS for specific “USAR Units”. A single USAR Unit consists of
- 3 USAR Modules and 3 Prime Movers
  - 10 USAR Technicians (which may include 1 Canine Team dependant on a national availability rota)
- 6.6 FRSNCC will take into account the location of the incident/s, the location and availability of USAR capabilities and module types and any advice received from the Police and other government agencies when determining the appropriate USAR FRS to mobilise to which incident. The FRSNCC will also liaise with the CLG Emergency Room (formerly the Emergency Information Support Group - EISG) on mobilisation issues.
- 6.7 Subject to the direction given by the incident commander USAR Units will be requested by FRSNCC to proceed to nominated rendezvous points, marshalling areas or the Strategic Holding Area (SHA). Incident Commanders will need to consider what resources should be called forward. Incident Commanders must consider the extensive space required by a full USAR deployment.
- 6.8 Once initial mobilisation and deployment has been completed the Incident Commander should request the host FRS mobilising control to commence arrangements with FRSNCC to provide supporting USAR resources which should be in position to relieve the initial USAR Units 12 hours from the initial request for USAR assistance (as detailed in appendices A to D).
- 6.9 Further information relating to major incident mobilising arrangements is detailed in Section 8 of FSC 30/2006 FRSNCC Guidance Document.

## 7.0 Mobilisation and Deployment of USAR Resources to Other Incidents

- 7.1 The role of the FRSNCC in mobilising assets is detailed in Section 7 of FSC 30/2006 “FRSNCC Guidance Document”.
- 7.2 Where it is considered that the equipment carried on the USAR modules and/or the training and skills of the USAR Technicians would assist in the successful resolution of an incident the affected FRS mobilising control may mobilise USAR resources using existing local mutual aid arrangements. In the event of a New Dimension resource being deployed to incidents other than major incidents the USAR host FRS must notify the FRSNCC that the resource is ‘committed to an incident’ and brief incident details passed.

**7.3** To assist affected FRSs in requesting USAR assistance, a choice of pre-determined mobilising options is offered, based on the principle of tiered response. This should assist rapid decision making when only limited information is available, ensuring an appropriate and proportionate response and encouraging early deployment of specialist assistance. These mobilising options have been agreed by the USAR Strategic Management Group (representing each of the USAR Host FRSs and Chaired by the CFOA USAR lead Officer).

**7.4** Mobilising options are detailed in Appendix B along with examples of the type of incident each option would be appropriate for. Response levels will be determined by individual FRAs.

### **8.0 Integration of USAR Resources**

**8.1** All USAR Capabilities hosted by an FRS will be expected to operate in accordance with the National Incident Command System. Dependent upon the situation, Incident Commanders may consider integrating USAR resources into geographical sectors or establishing a functional USAR sector at the incident.

**8.2** Incident Commanders should consider the need to request the attendance of additional personnel from the USAR Capabilities to provide capability advice at the scene.

### **9.0 Actions Prior to Arrival of USAR Resources**

**9.1** Operations to save life, prevent incident escalation or to render humanitarian services should not be delayed awaiting the attendance of USAR resources; provided that mitigating actions are based upon a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks involved.

**9.2** Information that would assist the undertaking of USAR operations can be collected and collated. For example

- Brief incident details; size, nature, scale of the incident, numbers of persons trapped or missing
- Address of rendezvous point, marshalling area or SHA location
- Affected FRS point of contact name/number

**9.3** Space, sufficient for USAR vehicles and equipment, should be secured at the scene of operations, the rendezvous point or nominated marshalling areas or the SHA.

### **10.0 Training, exercising and awareness**

**10.1** Both USAR host and non USAR FRS should ensure that the USAR Awareness CD issued by the New Dimension Programme is studied and regularly reviewed by operational personnel, in order to give a fuller understanding of the hazards and risks associated with large-scale structural collapse incidents. The New Dimension Programme has already provided a USAR Awareness CD to all FRSs, however an updated second version will be issued early in 2008.

**10.2** USAR host FRSs may wish to consider the benefits of

- developing integrated training programmes within USAR capabilities and between USAR capabilities in different locations.
- ensuring that their plans for use of USAR resources are appropriately tested through training and exercising both at local and national training facilities
- developing awareness programmes with neighbouring non-USAR FRSs.

### **11.0 Role of the Strategic Reserve – West Sussex**

**11.1** West Sussex FRS host the USAR strategic reserve. The current role of the strategic reserve is to provide:

- USAR capability advice by telephone as required by the affected FRS IC as detailed in appendix B

- attendance at the scene for provision of USAR capability advice as detailed in appendix B
  - a USAR response for incidents (other than major incidents) with the USAR equipment required or requested by the Incident Commander as detailed in appendix B “limited USAR response” section. This response would be supported by 5 USAR personnel
  - a relief response for incidents (other than major incidents) within 12 hours with 5 personnel if required
  - maintenance of the national USAR module capability as directed by FRSNCC when module availability drops below the agreed minimum number
  - a canine team response when forming part of the “on duty” element of the proposed national rota
- 11.2** It should be noted that further consultations will take place between CLG and West Sussex on the role of West Sussex in relation to USAR incident support.

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**Appendix A - USAR Unit Mobilising Models for a single major incident, two simultaneous major incidents and three simultaneous major incidents.**

Description of Incident	Mobilising Option	USAR Units Mobilised
<p>Major incident as described in article 3 of The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007</p>	<p><b>Single Major Incident USAR Response</b></p> <p><b>4 USAR Units</b></p>	<p>Unit 1 (1<sup>st</sup> FRS mobilised) Providing USAR Modules 1,3,4 10 USAR technicians including a canine team</p> <p>Unit 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> FRS mobilised) Providing USAR Modules 2,4,5 10 USAR technicians including a canine team</p> <p>Unit 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> FRS mobilised) Providing USAR Modules 1,3,4 10 USAR technicians</p> <p>Unit 4 (4<sup>th</sup> FRS mobilised) Providing USAR Modules 2,4,5 10 USAR technicians</p> <p><b>Relief resources</b> mobilised from USAR FRS who did not form part of the initial mobilisation of USAR Units</p> <p>10 USAR technicians including a canine team 10 USAR technicians including a canine team 10 USAR technicians 10 USAR technicians</p>
<p>Major incidents as described in article 3 of The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007</p>	<p><b>Two simultaneous Major Incidents USAR Response</b></p> <p><b>4 USAR Units to each incident</b></p>	<p><b>Incident 1</b> 4 USAR Units mobilised in the same configuration as for a single major incident</p> <p><b>Relief resources</b> mobilised from USAR FRS who did not form part of the initial mobilisation of USAR Units. Mobilised in the same configuration as for a single major incident</p> <p><b>Incident 2</b> 4 USAR Units mobilised in the same configuration as for a single major incident</p> <p><b>Relief resources</b> mobilised from USAR FRS who did not form part of the initial mobilisation of USAR Units. Mobilised in the same configuration as for a single major incident</p>
<p>Major incidents as described in article 3 of The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007</p>	<p><b>Three simultaneous Major Incidents USAR Response</b></p> <p><b>4 USAR Units to one incident</b></p> <p><b>3 USAR Units to each of the remaining 2 incidents</b></p>	<p><b>Incident 1</b> 4 USAR Units mobilised in the same configuration as for a single major incident</p> <p><b>Relief resources</b> mobilised from USAR FRS who did not form part of the initial mobilisation of USAR Units. Mobilised in the same configuration as for a single major incident</p> <p><b>Incident 2</b> Unit 1 (1<sup>st</sup> FRS mobilised to incident 2) Providing USAR Modules 1,3,4 10 USAR technicians including a canine team</p> <p>Unit 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> FRS mobilised to incident 2) Providing USAR Modules 2,4,5 10 USAR technicians including a canine team</p>

		<p>Unit 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> FRS mobilised to incident 2) Providing USAR Modules 1,3,4 10 USAR technicians</p> <p><b>Incident 2 Relief resources</b> mobilised from USAR FRS who did not form part of the initial mobilisation of USAR Units to incidents 1 or 2</p> <p>10 USAR technicians including a canine team 10 USAR technicians including a canine team 10 USAR technicians USAR modules 2,4,5</p> <p><b>Incident 3</b></p> <p>Unit 1 (1<sup>st</sup> FRS mobilised to incident 3) Providing USAR Modules 1,3,4 10 USAR technicians including a canine team</p> <p>Unit 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> FRS mobilised to incident 3) Providing USAR Modules 2,4,5 10 USAR technicians including a canine team</p> <p>Unit 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> FRS mobilised to incident 3) Providing USAR Modules 1,3,4 10 USAR technicians</p> <p><b>Incident 3 Relief resources</b> mobilised from USAR FRS who did not form part of the initial mobilisation of USAR Units to incident 3</p> <p>10 USAR technicians including a canine team 10 USAR technicians including a canine team 10 USAR technicians USAR modules 2,4,5</p>
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**Appendix B - USAR Mobilising Models for incidents other than major incidents**

Description of Incident	Mobilising Option	USAR Resources Required
<p>The IC recognises that generic USAR expertise or knowledge could be helpful for any reason e.g. considering if USAR resources would be appropriate or specific items of equipment might be effectively deployed</p>	<p><b>Remote USAR Advice only</b></p>	<p>Local arrangements - phone call by the Incident Commander to the nearest available USAR FRS for USAR capability advice</p> <p>Contact through existing local mutual aid arrangements or facilitated if necessary by FRSNCC</p>
<p>The IC recognises that specific USAR expertise or knowledge could be helpful for any reason e.g. assessment of collapse hazards or specific advice regarding options for search or rescue operations</p>	<p><b>Attendance of USAR Technical Advisor</b></p>	<p>Attendance at the scene by a representative of the closest USAR FRS for USAR capability advice.</p> <p>Attendance through existing local mutual aid arrangements or facilitated if necessary by FRSNCC</p> <p>FRSNCC must be informed of deployment</p>
<p>A routine incident where specific USAR resources would be of assistance. Examples could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPV to transport equipment over rough ground</li> <li>• USAR search dogs to search a damaged structure</li> <li>• chainsaw or hot-cutting teams</li> </ul> <p>Using the USAR teams in this way will be determined locally</p>	<p><b>Limited USAR Response</b></p>	<p>Mobilisation of specific USAR resources through existing local mutual aid arrangements or facilitated if necessary by FRSNCC, following receipt of USAR capability advice</p> <p>FRSNCC must be informed of deployment of ND resources</p>
<p>An incident that would benefit from USAR resources to support the first responders and provide specialist capability. Examples would be (this is not an exhaustive list)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a partial collapse of a large domestic property</li> <li>• a collapse of a small domestic property</li> <li>• a partial collapse of a small commercial or industrial property</li> <li>• a significant scaffolding collapse</li> <li>• a person trapped in difficult circumstances such as a crane collapse</li> <li>• an accident involving heavy plant or machinery</li> <li>• a passenger transport accident - train derailment etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Initial USAR Response</b></p>	<p>Mobilisation of nearest USAR Unit comprising Modules 1, 3 and 4</p> <p>10 USAR team members including a canine team if required</p> <p>Subsequent mobilisation of Modules 2 and 5 if required</p> <p>Mobilised through existing local mutual aid arrangements or facilitated if necessary by FRSNCC.</p> <p>FRSNCC must be informed of deployment of ND resources</p>





