



# The Urban Search and Rescue Program

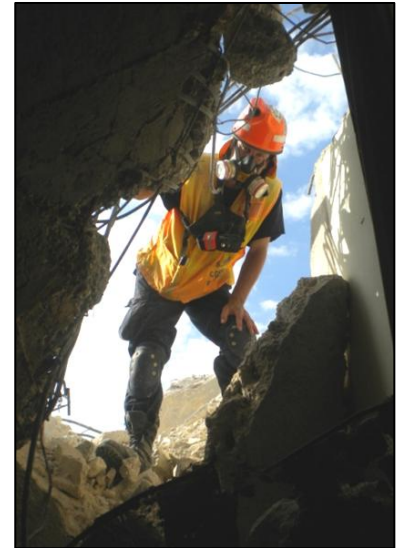


U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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## Mission:

- The US Army Corps of Engineers Urban Search & Rescue Program (US&R Program) deploys specially-trained and equipped structural engineers (Structures Specialist Cadre) to augment FEMA Urban Search & Rescue Task Forces, incident support teams, military technical rescue organizations, and general purpose troops during structural collapse incidents and other disaster response missions.
- This rescue engineering capability provides technical support and advice to task force leaders and commanders to assess damage, mitigate hazards, enable safe entry, and assure mobility throughout a disaster site to enable rescue and life saving operations.
- The US&R Program develops doctrine, training programs, and national standards for structural collapse response operations, conducts initial training courses, advanced coursework, exercises and continuing education for all FEMA Urban Search & Rescue Structures Specialists and others, under Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 of the National Response Framework.
- On order, the program deploys its Cadre to conduct heavy structural assessments, in support of USACE ESF #3 responsibilities and other military and civil contingency requirements.



## Additional Mission Capabilities:

- Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions regarding rescue efforts.
- Provide other agency technical support (e.g., FBI, DEA, ATF, NIST, etc.).

**Background:** The National US&R Response System was established in response to the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989. USACE was formally tasked by US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) in 1991 to develop a cadre of specially trained structural engineers for worldwide response. Past major deployments include Oklahoma City (1995), the World Trade Center (2001), and the Haiti earthquake response (2010). The pilot training course was conducted in 1992, and the formation of the Structures Specialist Cadre was initiated.



**Facts:** Urban Search and Rescue is a dangerous undertaking conducted in buildings that are fully or partially collapsed. Typically, these structures are multi-storied and contain heavy debris with a high potential for additional collapse. Engineers trained as Structures Specialists evaluate damaged buildings or hazards in order to reduce the risks to rescue personnel and victims.

The Structures Specialists are trained in rescue techniques. They also receive instruction in structural collapse patterns, hazard identification and building monitoring, rapid assessment of buildings, building triage and marking systems, advance shoring and shoring calculations. Mission durations are short, usually 6 to 10 days. StS deploy within 6 hours of notification with an equipment cache and are able to self-sustain for 72 hours to a limited degree.

The Corps Structures Specialist Cadre is an essential component of the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces and the IST with the ability for fast deployment in a life saving mission. The Structures Specialist brings engineering expertise to the US&R Task Force. Responsible for evaluating the immediate structural conditions at the incident and recommending the appropriate hazard mitigation, the Structures Specialist serves a vital function to the Task Force or the Rescue/Recovery Team.

The Cadre maintains three prepositioned equipment caches in the eastern, central and western regions of the country to enable rapid deployment to support life saving operations.

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## Points Of Contact:

Tom Niedernhofer, P.E. (415) 503-6616 Cell: (415) 286-6086 [Thomas.R.Niedernhofer@usace.army.mil](mailto:Thomas.R.Niedernhofer@usace.army.mil) (Primary)  
Kelley Aasen, P.E. (415) 503-6610 Cell: (415) 286-6084 [Kelley.J.Aasen@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kelley.J.Aasen@usace.army.mil) (Alternate)

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