

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM

A Component of the National Response Framework
Emergency Support Function # 9



TECHNICAL SEARCH SPECIALIST POSITION DESCRIPTION

FEMA National US&R Response System

Task Force Position Description

Technical Search Specialist

Position Specific Requirements:

The Technical Search Specialist is responsible for performing the technical search function of the task force incident operation. The Technical Search Specialist reports directly to the Search Team Manager.

Description of Duties:

The Technical Search Specialist is responsible for:

- Searching structures in US&R environments or other locations indicated in the mission assignment, utilizing appropriate technical search equipment and techniques
- Documenting and marking locations of victims, potential victims and hazards
- Making assessments through the use of technical search equipment
- Land navigation and site mapping
- Cooperating with and assisting other search and rescue resources
- Providing accountability, maintenance, and minor repairs of all issued equipment
- Performing additional tasks or duties as assigned

Position Requirements and Criteria:

Individuals who meet the following requirements and criteria will be eligible to become Technical Search Specialists in the DHS/FEMA National US&R Response System. The intent of these requirements is to select competent personnel, fully capable of providing state-of-the-art search techniques and tactics required, in the urban disaster environment.

Required Training:

The Technical Search Specialist shall:

1. Meet all General Training requirements
2. Complete the DHS/FEMA National US&R Response System Technical Search Specialist course
3. Complete all Technical Rescue Skill Sets as identified in Appendix A

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Recommended Training:

The Technical Search Specialist should:

1. Complete a DHS/FEMA National US&R Response System Structural Collapse Technician course
2. Complete a DHS/FEMA National US&R Response System Canine Search Specialist course
3. Meet all requirements of NFPA 1670 (2004 Edition) Chapter 9 Section 9.3.5. Operations levels for the specific disciplines defined in Sections 9.3.6 – 9.3.9 are excluded from this requirement.
4. Meet all requirements of Structural Collapse Technician as per NFPA 1670 (2004 edition)
5. Complete the DHS/FEMA National US&R Response System Search Planning & Management course (currently being developed)

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Appendix A

Technical Rescue Skill Sets:

Minimum skill set recommendations for Task Force Personnel who enter the hazard zone, i.e. forward deployment:

- General Requirements of NFPA 1670
- Rope Rescue awareness per NFPA 1670*
- Trench Rescue awareness per NFPA 1670
- Duties of the Entrant per 29 CFR 1910.146

* Additional Required Rope Rescue skills:

- Safety considerations during rope rescue operations
- Characteristics of life safety rope and webbing
- Application of rope rescue hardware specific to a lowering operation
- Application of rope rescue hardware and software specific to a belay line
- Assemble and apply a Class III harness
- Assemble and apply a "Hasty Harness"
- Tie a Simple Figure eight knot
- Tie a Figure Eight follow-through knot
- Tie an overhand follow-through with webbing
- Attach a prusik loop to a rope
- Be familiar with anchor systems
- Be familiar with raising and lowering systems
- Proficiency at attaching oneself to, and participating in a raising or lowering system
- Proficiency at descending and ascending a fixed line, low angle