

National Incident Support Teams

Description: The U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) National Incident Support Teams (NIST) provides resources and assistance to State, Tribal and local health authorities throughout the United States, usually as the Commissioned Corps component of an Incident Response Coordination Team (IRCT). They were created in 2009 as part of the National Response Framework's ESF-8 public health and medical asset provisions. Like all Commissioned Corps response teams, they may be deployed in response to an ESF-8 or non-ESF-8 public health emergency.

Accessing the Capability: The HHS Secretary and Assistant Secretary for Health have the authority to activate a NIST and do so in response to requests made through the Surgeon General.

Average Time to Respond: 12 hours

Past Customers or Events when capability was deployed: 2014-2015 Ebola, 2014 African Leaders Summit, 2014 Independence Day Celebration, 2014 Unaccompanied Children Support

Contact Agency or Subject Matter Expert:

Readiness and Deployment Operations Group
Commissioned Corps Headquarters
1101 Wootton Pkwy
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General Questions for RedDOG: RedDOG@hhs.gov

Additional Information:

The NIST consists of 72 USPHS trained Commissioned Corps officer responders. Each NIST is scalable, and can provide only those resources needed. The NIST is also responsive; as a Tier 1 team the NIST can deploy within 12 hours of activation. Each NIST is on call one out of every 5 months and typically deploys only during the on-call month. Deployments typically do not exceed 2 weeks.

Each NIST member is expected to participate in up to 2 weeks of response team training per year. Each NIST is capable of responding to the many immediate and midterm public health emergencies or urgent health needs arising from a major disaster or other event. The NIST can be divided into "blue" and "gold" teams, such that one team will be primary and the other secondary for their on-call month. As constituted, the NIST can be divided for smaller responses, or for separate mission assignments in the same theater of operations. If the response needs exceed the capacity of the on-call NIST, the team can be augmented with appropriate officers from Tier 3. The NIST utilize communications and other equipment necessary to operate effectively in disaster-affected locations and surrounding areas.

The primary areas of NIST activities and reporting include:

Continual event needs assessment;

Support and direction for incoming response assets;

Coordination of deployed field assets;

Liaison with State, Tribal and local officials;

On-site incident management;

Response asset health and safety, and;

Demobilization support.

If a State, Tribal or local health infrastructure suffers damage from a natural disaster or other event, a NIST team can assist State, Tribal and local officials in response and/or recovery efforts. The NIST can provide Subject Matter Experts to assist and/or advise public health decision-makers.

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