

DHS ACTIVATES SURGE CAPACITY FORCE TO SUPPORT RESPONSE TO TROPICAL STORM HARVEY DEVASTATION

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WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) activated the Surge Capacity Force (SCF) to supplement federal personnel supporting states as they respond to the catastrophic impacts from Tropical Storm Harvey. This voluntary program for federal employees within the Department of Homeland Security allows non-FEMA employees an opportunity to support disaster response efforts.

During a declared disaster, with approval from the DHS secretary, FEMA deploys designated personnel from select DHS components, and other federal agencies, to the response. These volunteers leave their regular agency and job to deploy for up to 45 days to a disaster location with austere conditions. No prior emergency management experience is necessary for these DHS component employees; FEMA provides them with the required training.

To expedite SCF training this week, and in light of the urgency of the Harvey disaster response, FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP), in Anniston, Alabama, cancelled its previously planned in-residence training to accommodate SCF training.

Once training is complete, these volunteers will join the more than 8,500 federal staff currently deployed in support of the ongoing response. Today, the first wave of SCF volunteers – more than 200 individuals – began training and received operational briefings, and will be in the field assisting survivors this week. Hundreds of additional SCF volunteers will be trained in the coming days and weeks.



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The program was first authorized by Congress as part of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKMRA) of 2006. It was designed as a way to allow the greater DHS family an opportunity to help communities and survivors following a large-scale disaster. The SCF was only activated once before, in October 2012, when 1,100 non-FEMA DHS employees supported disaster response and recovery in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

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