

Glossary of Abbreviations and Terms



CART. SART. . . .EARS?

The emergency management and disaster readiness fields use an astonishing number of abbreviations to identify organizations, jobs, roles, tasks, events, objects, places, and, of course, paperwork. In addition, some everyday words have specific technical meaning in the context of disaster readiness and response.

This glossary provides definitions for the abbreviations and other terms you are most likely to encounter.

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Many definitions in this glossary are from the [FEMA ICS Resource Center](#), which includes a more detailed glossary and a wealth of other information about disaster readiness.

A — D

AJ	Agency having Jurisdiction. In the Incident Command System (ICS), an agency is a division of government with a specific function, or a nongovernmental organization that offers a particular kind of assistance. Agencies are defined as jurisdictional (having statutory responsibility for incident mitigation) or assisting and/or cooperating (providing resources and/or assistance).
AP	Assembly Point
ARC	American Red Cross
CART	Community / County Animal Response Team
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
Decon	Decontamination Area
DEM	Department of Emergency Management (will sometimes have the state initials in front of it). The state entity that is responsible for disaster planning and response. Each state's DEM is typically the state's liaison with federal and local agencies on emergencies of all kinds.
Demobilization	The process of concluding the response to a disaster event, including the orderly withdrawal of resources.
Dept. of Ag	Department of Agriculture

DFO	Disaster Field Office. Temporary, local headquarters for FEMA staff and operations during a disaster.
DHS	Department of Homeland Security. Established in 2002, DHS is the unifying core for the national network of organizations and institutions involved in the response to threats and hazards in the United States.
DoD	Department of Defense
DRC	Disaster Recovery Center. A facility or mobile office where applicants may go for information about FEMA or other disaster assistance programs.
DRS	Disaster Reduction System. Elements that together minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impacts of hazards.

E — H

EARS	Emergency Animal Response Services. Emergency sheltering and disaster relief services for animals coordinated and managed by United Animal Nations (UAN)
EHS	Environmental Health & Safety OR extremely hazardous substance
EICC	Emergency Information & Coordination Center. The location where Public Information Officers from each organization with a role in an incident response coordinate the messages that are distributed to the public about the incident.
EMI	Emergency Management Institute. Organization within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that offers courses designed for people who have emergency management responsibilities. Courses include those that meet the requirements specified in the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
EMS	Emergency Management System. First response services such as fire, law enforcement, paramedics, etc.
EOC	Emergency Operations Center. The physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incident management activities takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility or may be located in a more central or permanently established facility.
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan. The plan that each jurisdiction has and maintains for responding to appropriate hazards.
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPCRA	Emergency Planning & Community Right to Know Act of 1986. EPCRA establishes requirements for federal, state and local governments, Indian tribes, and industry regarding emergency planning and community right-to-know reporting on hazardous and toxic chemicals.
ERT	Emergency Response Team

ESF	Emergency Support Function (part of the National Response Framework and/or community plans). The five major emergency-support functions in ICS are command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance/administration.
ESRI	Environmental Systems Research Institute. ESRI designs and develops geographic information system (GIS) technology.
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FCO	Federal Coordinating Officer. An FCO is the senior official who manages and coordinates federal resource support activities related to disasters and emergencies.
FECC	Federal Emergency Communications Coordinator. The position that coordinates with federal officials during an incident response.
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency. The US government agency whose primary mission is to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards. In 2003, FEMA became a division of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
FERC	Federal Emergency Response Capability. FERC defines what federal resources are capable of delivering and when.
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HAZOP	Hazard & Operability Study. This report lets responders know what the hazards are for a particular response.
HAZMAT	Hazardous Material
HMAC	Hazardous Materials Advisory Council. Also known as the Dangerous Goods Advisory Council (DGAC), HMAC is an international, nonprofit, educational organization that promotes safety in domestic and international transportation of dangerous goods.
I – O	
IAP	Incident Action Plan. A written plan that defines the response to a specific incident, including objectives, strategy, and resources.
IC	Incident Commander. The individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and the release of resources. The IC has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site.

ICS / IMS	Incident Command System / Incident Management System. A standardized on-scene emergency management organization — the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure — designed to aid in the management of resources during incidents. It is used for all kinds of emergencies and is applicable to small as well as large and complex incidents. ICS is used by various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private, to organize field-level incident management operations.
IDLH	Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health
Incident	An occurrence or event, natural or human-caused, that requires an emergency response to protect life or property.
JIC	Joint Information Center. A facility established to coordinate all incident-related public information activities. It is the central point of contact for all news media at the scene of the incident.
Jurisdiction	A range or sphere of authority. Jurisdictional authority at an incident can be political or geographical (e.g., city, county, tribal, state, or federal boundary lines) or functional (e.g., law enforcement, public health).
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
LOC	Level of Concern
MAA	Mutual Aid Agreement. A agreement between organizations that generally defines the roles the organizations will play during a disaster.
MACS	Multi-Agency Coordination System. MACS provide the architecture to support coordination for incident prioritization, critical resource allocation, communications systems integration, and information coordination.
Mitigation	The activities designed to reduce or eliminate risks to persons or property or to lessen the actual or potential effects or consequences of an incident. Mitigation measures may be implemented before, during, or after an incident.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding. A disaster-related MOU is an agreement between organizations that very specifically defines the roles the organizations may play during a disaster.
MSDS	Material Safety Data Sheet. A form that provides workers and emergency personnel with procedures for handling or working with a particular substance in a safe manner.
NEIS	National Earthquake Information Service
NEMA	National Emergency Management Association. NEMA is the professional association for state emergency management directors.
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association. The NFPA mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by developing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education.

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIMS	National Incident Management System, the federally-mandated management structure used for disasters
NOAA	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
NPL	National Priority List. The NPL is the list of national priorities among the known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants throughout the United States and its territories.
NRC	National Response Center. The NRC is the sole federal point of contact for reporting oil and chemical spills.
NRP / NRF	National Response Plan / National Response Framework. The NRP establishes a comprehensive all-hazards approach to manage domestic incidents. The plan incorporates best practices and procedures from incident management disciplines and integrates them into a unified structure. It forms the basis of how the federal government coordinates with state, local, and tribal governments and the private sector during disasters and other emergencies.
NRT	National Response Team
NWS	National Weather Service
OEM	Office of Emergency Management. The local or state department that is responsible for the response plan for a locality or state.
OSHA	Occupational Safety & Health Administration

P — Z

PETS Act	Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006. Read more [page_DR_pets_act.doc] about the provisions in this legislation.
PIO	Public Information Officer. A member of the Incident Command staff responsible for communicating with the public and media or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements.
POA	Point of Arrival
POD	Point of Departure OR Probability of Detection
Resources	<p>Personnel, major items of equipment, supplies, and facilities available for assignment to incident operations and for which status is maintained. Resources are described by kind and type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kind: Describes what the resource is (e.g., medic, firefighter, Planning Section Chief, helicopters, ambulances, combustible gas indicators, bulldozers) • Type: Organizes resources by capability. Type 1 is generally considered to be more capable than Types 2, 3, or 4, respectively, because of size, power, capacity, or, in the case of incident management teams, experience and qualifications

ROC	Regional Operations Center. When a disaster crosses jurisdictional lines, a regional command center is set up to help response efforts across jurisdictional lines be as efficient and effective as possible.
SAR/ S&R	Search and Rescue
SART	State Animal Response Team
SITREP	Situation Report. A report summarizing the status of the incident and its response.
SITSTAT	Situation Status Report. Same as a Situation Report.
Unified Command	A team of individual representatives of multiple organizations who together have authority and responsibility for incident operations and management. In the ICS, an incident response may be led by a single Incident Commander or by a Unified Command of multiple people.
USGS	United States Geological Service
VMAT	Veterinary Medical Assistance Team; VMATs assist the local veterinary community with the care of animals and provide veterinary oversight and advice on animal related issues and public health during a disaster. The VMATs were established by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and are sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF).
Voluntary Agency	Any chartered or otherwise duly recognized tax-exempt local, state, or national organization or group providing services for coping with an emergency or a major disaster.
Zoonotic diseases	Infectious diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans or that may infect both humans and animals; anthrax, equine encephalitis, and rabies are examples of zoonotic diseases.