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NEW YORK TASK FORCE 1 URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM ARRIVES IN COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA AHEAD OF HURRICANE IDALIA, FDNY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM DEPLOYS TO LOUISIANA TO RESPOND TO WILDFIRES AND EXTREME HEAT

August 29, 2023 — New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM) announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has activated and pre-positioned the Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) New York Task Force 1 (NY-TF1) team to Columbia, South Carolina, in anticipation of Hurricane Idalia. NYCEM also announced that the FDNY Incident Management Team has been activated through an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request from the State of Louisiana to support the state’s response to wildfires and extreme heat.

The 46-member New York Task Force 1 team, comprised of specially trained responders from the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) (22 members) and the New York City Police Department (NYPD) (23 members), and one from NYCEM, along with two trained canines, departed at 1:00 A.M. this morning from the NYCEM Emergency Support Center in Bushwick. See photos [here](#). They arrived in Columbia, SC at 5:00 P.M. today.

New York City is also extending its support to Louisiana as it grapples with extreme heat and wildfires. The FDNY Incident Management Team has been activated through an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request, coordinated by NYC Emergency Management through the approval of New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, bringing their expertise and resources to assist our fellow Americans in Louisiana during this time of urgent need. The IMT is a Type III All Hazard IMT, which means it is trained and equipped to respond to a wide range of disasters. The team is made up of 10 members with expertise in incident command, finance, logistics, operations, and planning.

“When the federal government sounds the call for assistance, New York City is there to answer,” said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. “Our NY-Task Force 1 team is on standby in Columbia, South Carolina as Hurricane Idalia intensifies. The FDNY Incident Management Team is also deploying to Louisiana to bolster the state’s response to wildfires and extreme heat. While Hurricane Idalia isn’t a threat to New York City, the urgency isn’t lost on us; we are fully prepared to lend our expertise and specialized skills to assist those in the storm’s path. This is what it looks like when American communities stand together in times of adversity — a commitment that New York City upholds not just in words, but in action.”

NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Zach Iscol added, “In response to President Biden’s State of Emergency Declaration for Florida, NYCEM is coordinating the deployment of 46 members and two canines of our NY-TF1 team. Our team is strategically positioned in Columbia, SC, ready to act as Hurricane Idalia makes landfall. New Yorkers understand the gravity of hurricanes, we are prepared to lend our skills and compassion where they’re needed

most. NYCEM is also coordinating the deployment of a specially-trained FDNY Incident Management Team to Louisiana, strengthening the Pelican State’s response to wildfires and extreme heat. This is America at its finest: In the face of crisis, New York City collaborates seamlessly with federal and state agencies, joining forces to unite in the singular mission of safeguarding our fellow Americans and their communities.”

“As we’ve seen many times this year already, the work of the USAR is invaluable in handling natural disasters and large-scale emergencies of all types. The FDNY is proud to join NYPD and Emergency Management members to offer assistance in these dangerous times. The skill and expertise of this team is unmatched, and stands at the ready to provide whatever help is needed as hurricanes, wildfires and extreme heat threaten the South,” said **Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh**.

“Our NYPD members on the New York-Task Force 1 team stand ready at any time, to go anywhere, to help play a vital role in the public safety and security of people in harm’s way,” said **NYPD Police Commissioner Edward A. Caban**. “These public servants represent a vital part of our city’s readiness and response apparatus – because we know that through their actions our city can help make a difference when lives are at risk. I join all my colleagues in the New York City emergency management community, and a grateful public, in thanking all of our team members for their courageous work and selfless contributions at this critical time.”

The 46-member NY-TF1 team is deploying specialized rescue equipment with an eighteen-vehicle convoy. The equipment includes six boats: four zodiacs for water rescue and two flat-bottom boats for navigating through flooded neighborhoods. They are also equipped for rescues from collapsed structures and confined spaces and have a compilation of hazardous materials response equipment.

New York Task Force 1 specializes in urban search and rescue, disaster recovery, and emergency triage and medicine. With a history of effective deployments that include Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in 2017, Hurricane Florence in 2018, and Hurricane Ian in 2022, NY-TF1 stands as a testament to New York City's commitment to helping American communities in times of crisis. There are 28 FEMA US&R teams strategically located throughout the United States that can be deployed within hours of activation.

Earlier this week, a NYC Emergency Management Citywide Interagency Coordinator who is also an NYPD Detective was activated to be Deputy Logistics Chief for FEMA’s Incident Support Team for Hurricane Idalia.

The FDNY Incident Management Team is enroute to Louisiana. Upon arrival, they will work with local officials from the Louisiana Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to assess the situation and develop a response plan. The team is expected to remain in Louisiana for several weeks to provide support with fire suppression, evacuations, and other disaster response activities.



NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

NYC.gov/emergencymanagement

press@oem.nyc.gov

According to the latest advisory from the NWS National Hurricane Center, Hurricane Idalia is currently a Category 2 storm, expected to rapidly intensify into an extremely dangerous major hurricane before landfall in western Florida tomorrow morning. Idalia is anticipated to produce catastrophic impacts from storm surges, destructive waves, life-threatening winds, and significant flash flooding.

NYCEM will continue to closely monitor Hurricane Idalia and provide updates as necessary. The safety and well-being of those potentially affected by the hurricane is our primary concerns.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Press Office (718) 422-4888

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