

For Immediate Release

#66-18

**NEW YORK TASK FORCE ONE URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAMS
RECOGNIZED FOR RESPONSE EFFORTS IN NORTH CAROLINA**

*Teams rescued 128 people and 61 animals during their deployments in support of
Hurricane Florence*

October 3, 2018 — The New York City Emergency Management Department, FDNY, and NYPD today thanked Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) New York Task Force 1 (NY-TF1) team members for their heroic work during their deployment to North Carolina in support of Hurricane Florence. NY-TF1 members rescued 128 people and 61 animals while providing aid for close to two weeks. The New York City Emergency Management Department sponsors the US&R NY-TF1 team, which is made up of specially trained personnel from FDNY and NYPD.

“I commend the members of New York Task Force 1 for their courageous response efforts,” said **FEMA Region 2 Regional Administrator Thomas Von Essen**. “We are thankful for their safe return and proud of their commitment to helping the people of North Carolina during this challenging time.”

“I want to thank the brave men and women of New York Task Force 1 who put themselves in harm’s way to help the people of North Carolina,” said **New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “We are grateful for their safe return and a job well done.”

“Whenever called to help – whether here in the five boroughs, or thousands of miles beyond our city’s limits – FDNY members will always be there, with the best training possible, to rescue those in harm’s way,” said **Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro**. “I am incredibly proud of the FDNY and NYPD members for their outstanding efforts to save those placed in danger by Hurricane Florence.”

“New York City has many of the finest, highly-trained first responders anywhere in the world, and we will not hesitate to respond whenever, and wherever, our skills are needed. New Yorkers know it is always our duty to help others in dire need, regardless of circumstances or locale,” said **NYPD Commissioner James O’Neill**. “I am proud of our police, fire and other emergency professionals, and I know the people we serve here in New York City are, too.”

New York City deployed two teams of 101 specialized NY-TF1 members to assist in the response efforts. The teams conducted rescues in various locations throughout North Carolina, including Bayboro, River Bend, Pollocksville, Goose Creek Island, and Fayetteville. The City’s first team, NY-TF1 Alpha — which deployed September 11 through September 20, and consisted of 83 personnel and six canines — rescued 69 people, 46 animals, and conducted 299 welfare checks to people who sheltered in place. The City’s second team, NY-TF1 Bravo, which

consisted of 18 members, deployed September 13 through September 26. NY-TF1 Bravo members rescued 59 people and 15 animals, and conducted 71 welfare checks to people who sheltered in place. NY-TF1 members also assisted in removing trees and debris blocking access to homes. The teams deployed with various equipment and tools to support their operations, including 14 water rescue boats, motors, and other items to support rescues from collapsed structures and confined spaces, as well as a collection of hazardous materials response equipment.

The FEMA US&R program originated as a response system for natural disasters. Since the program's inception, the task forces have broadened the scope of US&R's work. Two early activations of the US&R system occurred in response to Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and the 1994 Northridge Earthquake in California. FEMA US&R teams also activated in response to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. NY-TF1 deployments include Hurricanes Ike and Gustav in 2008, the Haiti Earthquake and Hurricane Earl in 2010, Hurricane Matthew in 2016, and Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, in 2017.

-30-

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