



FEMA

US&R PROGRAM DIRECTIVE – 2021-013

October 15, 2021

FOR: National Urban Search & Rescue Response System
Task Force Representatives and Program Managers

FROM: Fred Endrikat, Chief
Urban Search and Rescue Branch

SUBJECT: US&R Program Directive 2021-013 – COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements

Implementation Date: October 15, 2021

Expiration Date: September 30, 2024

The purpose of this Program Directive (PD) is to distribute specific guidance to the National Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Response System (the System) with respect to Executive Order 14043 - Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for federal employees. On September 9, 2021, President Biden announced that the health and safety of the federal workforce, and the health and safety of members of the public with whom they interact, are foundational to the efficiency of the civil service. To promote the health and safety of the federal workforce and the efficiency of the civil service, it is necessary to require COVID-19 vaccination for all federal employees, subject to such exceptions as required by law.

Executive Order 14043 applies to all System personnel, based on their appointments to the System, and their status as temporary excepted federal volunteers under 44 CFR § 208.11. This means that System members, just like other FEMA employees, are required to be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021, subject only to legally required exceptions for accommodations for disability under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as well as for valid religious accommodations. This mandatory vaccination requirement applies to all System personnel for them to participate in all System proceedings.

The US&R Branch is currently coordinating with the FEMA Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) attorneys regarding the processes for accommodation requests, as well as regarding a potential requirement related to the reporting status of vaccinations for System members. More information will be forthcoming on this issue as policy is developed and finalized.

REQUIRED ACTIONS

The issue is approved for FEMA National US&R Response System implementation.

All System members are mandated to be COVID-19 vaccinated for participation in the following FEMA National US&R Response System proceedings:

- any federal US&R deployment
- all training subsidized by FEMA US&R Readiness Cooperative Agreement funding
- all meetings subsidized by FEMA US&R Readiness Cooperative Agreement funding



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Those that have not fulfilled the vaccination requirement by November 22, 2021 are subject to progressive discipline as a condition of their continued participation in the System. Additional vaccination information is available here → [Vaccinations | Safer Federal Workforce](#)

System task forces are to take the steps necessary to assure that all personnel participating in any of the specific proceedings listed above are fully COVID-19 vaccinated.

cc:

US&R Strategic Group

US&R Advisory Group

US&R Branch Staff

FEMA Regional/Federal/International ESF #9 Representatives