

**Light USAR Teams**

**For International Response**

Introduction to Light USAR Teams for International Response.

**Introduction**

The INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) meeting took place in Geneva during February 2017. During that meeting the concept paper was provided for the Light Teams Working Group (LTWG) as a result of work completed throughout 2016. The ISG formalised the direction for the LTWG to progress the framework for the development of principles to support the deployment of Light USAR teams in the international deployment environment.

The endorsed recommendations from the ISG in February 2017 detailed:  
 - To endorse the definition, operations and tactical concept for “International Light Teams” and include the concept in the INSARAG Guidelines 2018/20 revision.

* To acknowledge the need for further discussions on the process of recognition (Quality Assurance by INSARAG) and possible linkages with National Accreditation.
* To establish that a working group is tasked to investigate and discuss the Quality Assurance concept at the Team Leader’s meeting in 2017.

The second LTWG meeting took place in Valabre, France from 7-10 April, with the following concept development and recommendations for implementation into the INSARAG Guidelines.

The development of USAR capability throughout the world since the inception of INSARAG has been consistent and extremely productive with forty-nine teams currently holding INSARAG External Classifications (IEC). The development of global capability and capacity has brought with it the development and international deployment of smaller USAR and specialist rescue teams and groups, without the concurrent development of the INSARAG guidelines to support and coordinate this new capability. These smaller teams have notionally been referred to as “International Light USAR Teams”.

Recent global earthquake incidents have resulted in the coordinated response of INSARAG classified teams, along with the uncoordinated response of Light teams, resulting in a reduction in coordination of preparedness and response activities in the affected countries.

The INSARAG Guidelines provide an overview of the Light – Medium – Heavy USAR team concepts, with a detailed description of Medium and Heavy team capability and capacity. The Light Team concept is provided as an overview for National capacity building, and as a stepping stone to teams developing the Medium or Heavy IEC Capability.

It is apparent that several internationally deployable USAR teams have developed the capability and capacity to deploy internationally in the ‘Light’ format, while having the technical skills and abilities to perform search and rescue operations at a level exceeding the National Light Teams standards as listed in the INSARAG Guidelines. The resultant development of the concept for “Light USAR Teams in the International Deployment environment” has identified the significant value that these “International Light USAR Teams” can add to the INSARAG coordinated response to earthquake disasters.

In response to the development of International Light USAR Teams, and the need to coordinate the response to earthquakes for the benefit of the receiving country, amendments to the INSARAG Guidelines have been drafted to better articulate the relationships between USAR teams of all sizes, and the relationships between National and International capacity and capability. Light USAR Teams have previously been identified as a National capacity, generally in the local and first responder model, with the IEC/R model used exclusively for Medium and Heavy USAR Teams.

**The definition, operations and tactical concept for “International Light Teams”**

The concept for recognition of Light teams in international response has been developed to include the following overarching strategy.   
A Light USAR Team for International response would be:

* Able to provide a level of service above that of a National Light USAR Team. Specifically the light team must be able to ‘add value’ to the response, not simply provide another resource at the same level of capacity as the in-country National resources.
* Supported by the National Focal Point as a deployable resource from the donor country
* Supported by appropriate funding arrangements to support on-going operations in the International environment.
* Supported by INSARAG as a productive member of the global USAR fraternity
* Developed from the existing National capacity and capability base, where one exists.
* An extension of the National capacity, in preparation for future Medium team classification if desired.
* Able to provide the five components of USAR within the team (Management, Search, Rescue, Logistics & Medical)
* Able to provide one team member to support either the OSOCC, RDC, or UCC and still continue to function as an operational Light USAR Team for the entire period of the team deployment.
* Limited to between 17 and 20 persons
* Trained, equipped and required to have the capacity to work on a single worksite.
* Equipped to conduct technical search and rescue operations in collapsed structures of wood, masonry, and light reinforced concrete construction.
* Required to have the capability for search dogs and / or technical search.
* Must be adequately staffed and resourced to allow fully self-sustained 12 hour operations on one site (site may change) for up to 5 days, with capability for transport into and out of the country.
* Must be able to medically treat its own team members (including dogs if present) as well as victim encountered if allowed to do so by the government of the affected country.
* Must be capable of conducting USAR operations to ASR3 level and integrating into the standard INSARAG reporting mechanisms.
* Undertake and complete a Classification process as determined for International Light Teams.

**The Process of Recognition (Quality Assurance by INSARAG)**

The concept of ‘Light Teams – Light Classification’ is supported by INSARAG, and will provide a sustainable and auditable classification process for Light International USAR teams.  
The concept of Classification for Light Teams is significantly different to the IEC/R process for Medium and Heavy teams. The proposed incremental approach will allow Light Teams to build capability in the first instance, and partner with a programmed IEC/R to achieve the requirement to participate in an exercise under assessment conditions. This concept builds on the current examples of multiple teams conducting IEC/R exercises to optimise the financial implications of running a large exercise.

**Light USAR Teams for International Response – Capability statement**

Light USAR Teams that wish to be considered for International Deployment are required to have a capability above that of a National Light Team. Specifically there is a requirement for the team to be able to conduct the following technical capabilities.  
  
1. Conduct to ASR3 level search and rescue operations  
2. Technical Search or Canine search (or both)  
3. HazMat detection - Radiation, Air Monitoring (Oxygen, CO, H2S, Flammability), Ph / Alkaline  
4. Structural assessment of damaged buildings prior to entry   
5. Breach non-structural mesh reinforced concrete up to 100mm thick  
6. Cut non-structural timber up to 300mm thick  
7. Cut light steel plate up to 4mm thick  
8. Shore a window or door  
9. Apply cribbing to stabilise a slab  
10. Lift 1 Tonne (levers etc)  
11. Crane operations to 5 Tonne (Slings)  
12. Work safe at heights, and rope rescue a patient from 10 metres above or below the work site  
13. Provide worksite lighting  
14. Two separate Light teams may be required to work on one work site in alternating shifts if necessary.  
15. Muster at the departure point within 8 hours of activation.  
16. Light Teams should comprise between 17 and 20 persons only, depending on possible level of integration of functions on bases of (legal) opportunities of a country/team. This is including the capacity to provide one team member to the UCC or RDC or OSOCC for the duration of the deployment as needed.

All tasks and capacity are designed in reflection to the existing Medium and Heavy standard and are possible to perform with hand tools and small mechanical tools.