

---

**Joint Statement issued by the Medical Working Group of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) and the Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), and welcome by the INSARAG Steering Group Meeting (ISG) on 4 May 2021.**

Members of the INSARAG Medical Working Group and WHO Emergency Medical Team initiative collaborated in May 2021 to develop this statement regarding field response teams considering deployment internationally while there is a threat of COVID-19.

International response teams, whether Emergency Medical Teams or Urban Search and Rescue Teams, have as their priorities to rescue, care for, and support impacted populations in disaster-stricken countries. In order to remain effective, response teams must emphasize internal activities that support their continuity of mission (resilience) and safety of team members and populations they serve. Therefore, it is the joint consensus of the two groups that:

- At the time of mobilization, teams should research and ensure adherence to the entry requirements of disaster impacted countries they are deploying to assist.
- All field response personnel considered for potential international response are encouraged to obtain COVID-19 vaccination as soon as it becomes available to them through the prioritization schemes in their host country and/or sponsoring organization. As per standard procedures, all vaccination records should be available for presentation when requested.
- Teams must ensure that protocols to manage possible exposure are in place and all team members have trained on these prior to deployment.

Even if disease prevalence is low in the country of the team's origin, the potential to deploy to areas where there are higher rates of disease always exist. Adherence to these measures can protect the team as well as the disaster impacted country.