

VIRTUAL OSOCC FOR FOREIGN MEDICAL TEAMS

Virtual OSOCC is a real-time online coordination tool for disaster response professionals from USAR and foreign medical teams, national authorities, regional and international organizations. The activation of Virtual OSOCC in case of an earthquake is usually triggered by a red [GDACS alert](#).

What does the Virtual OSOCC offer to foreign medical teams?

1. Immediately after a Major disaster, the demand for information is great, but its supply is often unpredictable and patchy. Virtual OSOCC pulls together information from OCHA, national authorities and other organizations for a better **situational awareness**: the scale and scope of the disaster, if the affected country has requested or accepted international assistance, as well as the immediate response priorities.
2. For foreign medical teams which are about to deploy to the affected areas, the Virtual OSOCC provides a one-stop-shop for information about the **operational environment** in the field: basic country information, operational priorities, the rules and regulations for equipment entry and visas, security situation, logistical constraints, available and working communications systems, the location and contacts of the OSOCC, RDC and other relief teams, etc.
3. During operations in the field, FMTs use the Virtual OSOCC for **information exchange and coordination**. Foreign medical teams have access to information and announcements from the UNDAC team, the OSOCC and LEMA. A special subtitle (*Medical teams coordination*) can be created by the OSOCC if needed, where the teams can share situation reports and other related information.

What are foreign medical teams expected to post, when and where?

1. Foreign medical teams are expected to **register** prior to their deployment, indicating their status in the response (monitoring, stand-by, mobilizing, deployed or stand-down). This information will be used by the OSOCC and national authorities to prepare for and coordinate the response. If the medical team is ready to deploy (i.e. changes its status to mobilizing) it needs to fill out the fact sheet, providing contact details, capacity and arrival times. Teams need to change their team status when the situation requires doing so. *[Illustration: 1]*
2. All relief teams are expected to **keep abreast of the latest information** from the ground and of any instructions from LEMA or OCHA provided on the Virtual OSOCC. In case of questions or a need for clarification, teams should post a question in the comments section of the relevant discussion title. *[Illustration: 2]*
3. During the operations phase, information about the **field coordination** (discussion between medical teams, exchange of situation reports and information sharing) should be exchanged under the *Medical teams coordination* subtitle. *[Illustration: 3]* All information should be posted under the appropriate subtitle. *[Illustration: 4]*



COMMENT RESPONSIBLY

The amount of information entered on the Virtual OSOCC during large-scale emergencies can quickly become overwhelming. Before posting a comment, always consider carefully if the information is necessary. For example, if the team status has been updated in the team fact sheet, there is no need to provide the same information as a comment. If you do decide to post a comment or a file, choose the title it corresponds to. Alternatively, generic situation updates about the disaster should be posted under subtitle "Situation overview". This will help other users to find relevant information faster and more efficiently.

What if I want to learn more?

You can find a full Virtual OSOCC Handbook on our homepage (<http://vosocc.unocha.org>). There are many other ways in which foreign medical teams can follow new developments and provide feedback:

- Subscribe to the [Virtual OSOCC](#) YouTube channel;
- Follow [@VirtualOSOCC](#) and [@GDACS](#) on Twitter;
- Attend events related to GDACS, INSARAG, UNDAC and the OSOCC concept where Virtual OSOCC is always presented;
- Contact the Virtual OSOCC team at OCHA if your organization would like a tailored training session on the platform through Webex. Subject to availability of funds, the team can also offer in-person training.



Should you have any questions or would like to request a training, do not hesitate to contact us at virtual-osocc@un.org. Our focal point for the Americas is Lorena Abalos (abalos@un.org).