



Cal OES

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

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California Sends 18 Urban Search and Rescue Personnel to Assist with Deadly Washington State Mudslide

SACRAMENTO – In the wake of the devastating mudslide that struck northwest Washington on Saturday, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. today directed the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to deploy specialists from California's Urban Search & Rescue teams to assist in response and recovery efforts.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the communities impacted by Saturday's debris slide and we are activating these highly-skilled responders into the area for emergency assistance," said Cal OES Director Mark Ghilarducci.

At the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 18 specialists from five California-based National Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces are on their way to help coordinate and support operations near Arlington, Wash.

"Incidents like these are exactly what we train for and we know the call can come any time," said Riverside City Fire Division Chief LaWayne Hearn.

The 18 specialists from California include four representatives from the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (CA-TF 8), eight from Riverside City Fire Department (CA-TF 6), two from Los Angeles City Fire Department (CA-TF 1), one from Orange County Fire Department (CA-TF 5), and three from Sacramento City Fire Department (CA-TF 7).

"Our Urban Search and Rescue responders train under unique conditions year-round to be ready to respond to all hazards," said San Diego Fire Chief Javier Mainar.

Rescue operations are already underway near Arlington, Wash. The debris slide was brought on after a heavy rain saturated the ground, and it now covers about a square-mile area, including a state highway.

"A massive slide like this requires an all-hands on deck approach," said Sacramento City Fire Chief Dan Haverty. "We are getting our California personnel and gear to the impacted area as fast as possible."

There are eight of these Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces teams based in California—each composed of 70 or more personnel—that participate in the National Urban Search and Rescue System

managed by FEMA and provide California with approximately 640 personnel specializing in disciplines such as search and rescue, first aid, heavy equipment operations, canine search and rescue, hazardous materials, logistics and communications.

For more information about FEMA's Urban Search & Rescue program, click [here](#).