

Requesting emergency deployments from UNHCR internal deployment mechanism

13 February 2025

Key points

- Country operations under emergency declaration (L1, L2, L3) can request additional staff from UNHCR internal emergency deployment mechanisms. The roster members are trained and on call to be deployed to emergency operations at short notice.
- First responder mechanisms of the Regional Bureaux and corporate missions from HQ divisions and other operations complement the global emergency deployment mechanisms.
- Emergency deployment requests from the internal deployment mechanisms need to include TORs and to be endorsed by the Representative and the Regional Bureau.
- To request an emergency deployment, contact the Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnerships Section (EPDPS) in the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS).

1. Overview

UNHCR is committed to deploying the right people to the right place, at the right time, to effectively respond to emergencies. In line with [UNHCR's Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response](#), at any point during an emergency declaration (L1, L2 or L3), country operation(s) may request deployments from internal and/or standby partners deployment mechanisms to address increased or new humanitarian needs. This entry provides information on internal deployment mechanisms. For detailed information on deployment through partners, see the entry [Requesting deployments from emergency standby partners](#).

If you are a UNHCR staff interested in applying for internal emergency deployment schemes, more information can be found in the [Frequently Asked Questions on Emergency roster membership and deployment](#).

2. Relevance for emergency operations

Emergencies generally require immediate additional workforce to augment UNHCR's existing presence and capacity to respond. This section provides guidance on UNHCR's different internal deployment mechanisms designed to provide short-term surge capacity and is applicable to all situations for which an emergency has been declared by UNHCR.

3. Main guidance

This section first provides information on the types of UNHCR's internal emergency deployment mechanisms, followed by advice to the operations on how to request such emergency deployments.

DESS is responsible for managing UNHCR's internal emergency deployment schemes (DESS Emergency Surge Team, ERT and SCER), and jointly manages Emergency Functional Rosters with relevant HQ divisions.

UNHCR's internal emergency deployment mechanisms enable the organization to maintain 100-150 active roster members at any given time for emergency deployments. First responder mechanisms of the Regional Bureaux and corporate missions from HQ divisions and other operations complement these global emergency deployment schemes.

A) Emergency Surge Team of the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS)

The DESS Emergency Surge Team is a multi-functional team of emergency professionals who can be deployed at short notice as a team or individually to provide emergency response coordination as well as specific technical support in declared emergencies. Deployments can also be sought exceptionally in other situations that are being considered for an emergency declaration or based on corporate priorities, as decided by the DESS Director.

B) Emergency Rosters (managed by DESS)

Roster	Details	Deployment within (hours)	Roster commitment period (months)	Deployment duration (months)

Emergency Response Team (ERT)	Contains all profiles	72	9	3
Senior Corporate Emergency Roster (SCER)	<p>Profiles include emergency coordination, managerial functions</p> <p>Roster members participate in the Senior Emergency Leadership Programme (SELP)</p>	72	9	2 with possibility to extend

C) Emergency Functional Rosters (managed jointly by DESS & the Divisions)

Emergency Functional Roster	Jointly managed by	Related profiles and trainings	Deployed within (hours)	Commitment period (months)	Deployment duration (months)
Information Management	DESS and Global Data Service (GDS)	<p>Information Management</p> <p>Training of Information Management in Emergencies (TIME)</p>	72	12	3

Interagency Coordination	DESS and Partnership and Coordination Service (PCS) and clusters	Protection, CCCM, and Shelter Coordination Interagency Coordination Course (IACC)	72	12	3
Registration	DESS and GDS	Registration, Operational Data Management (ODM) Emergency Registration Learning Programme (ERLP)	72	9	3

Advice to request an emergency deployment from UNHCR internal emergency deployment mechanisms listed above:

- **Contact EPDPS/DESS.** The request must be endorsed by the Representative and the Regional Bureau, and accompanied by the following:
 - **An official request** by email, containing the following information:
 - Mission location
 - Deployment duration
 - Language requirements
 - The budget code for travel and DSA: UNHCR internal Staff (ABOD), or International United Nations Volunteer (OPS)
 - Visa requirements
 - **Terms of Reference (ToRs):**
 - UNHCR colleagues can find the ToRs template and generic ToRs to be adapted to the specific context on the [Emergency Response and Preparedness Portal](#) (accessible to UNHCR staff only).
 - The ToRs should include clear reporting lines (name of supervisor) and concrete deliverables.
 - **An existing welcome package** for new staff or a one pager on useful information on the following:
 - Security level/situation
 - Description of working conditions (availability of communication equipment, vehicles, internet access, etc.)
 - Description of living conditions (accommodation, facilities, electricity, food, water, etc.)

- **The DSA and travel costs of UNHCR internal emergency roster members are covered by the requesting operation.**
- Staff on the ERT, Emergency Functional Rosters or SCER rosters, as well as DESS Surge Team members are **mobilized within 72 hours** after receiving the official travel instructions from DESS, if visa is not required.
- When considering emergency deployments, an operation should ensure availability of administrative support, such as office space, equipment, and accommodation according to applicable standards as well as mandatory personal security equipment (handsets, PPEs, etc.).
- **Plan from the onset** of an emergency for mid/longer term staffing needs.

Post emergency phase

While operations may request deployments from internal or standby partner deployment schemes at any time during which they are covered by an emergency declaration (L1, L2 or L3), emergency operations are required to look at sustainable staffing options from the start, and to think about the medium- and longer-term staffing plans.

4. Policies, Guidelines and Useful Links

[UNHCR/HCP/2023/01 Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)

5. Links

[Accessible to UNHCR staff only: Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal – Em...](#)

6. Main contacts

Contact UNHCR Emergency Service (ES) / Emergency Preparedness, Deployments and Partnership Section / EPDPS at hqdeploy@unhcr.org