

# National Response To Terror

*FEMA Leads Effort; Borders Tightened*

By EDWARD WALSH  
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Federal agencies activated emergency procedures across the country yesterday in response to the deadly attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon.

While most government offices in Washington closed shortly after the attacks, the federal response included dispatching emergency search-and-rescue teams, medical personnel and supplies and law enforcement agents to the scenes of the carnage, as well as implementing the highest level of security measures at key government installations, other important public facilities and points of entry to the country.

Senior congressional leaders were taken to a secure government facility about 75 miles west of Washington in the immediate aftermath of the well-coordinated attacks but were later returned to the nation's capital.

Meanwhile, other top government officials rushed to emergency command centers in Washington and throughout the country to respond to the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks and to prepare for potential incidents amid mounting uncertainty and anxiety.

The officials included Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta, who gathered with senior White House aides in the White House command center to monitor activities after the attacks.

The federal response was largely coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency from its headquarters in Washington. Mary Margaret Walker, a spokeswoman for the agency, said FEMA also activated its 10 regional emergency response centers across the country. She said that about 800 FEMA personnel were one duty at the Washington headquarters and regional centers as of late yesterday.

FEMA also dispatched eight urban search-and-rescue teams to New York and four teams to the Pentagon to assist local rescue efforts, Walker said. She said the teams sent to the Pentagon were from Fairfax and Montgomery counties, Virginia Beach and Tennessee. Search-and-rescue teams from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri and California were sent to New York, Walker said. Walker also said that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had been told to prepare for debris removal at the New York site.

FEMA Director Joe M. Allbaugh was attending a meeting of emergency managers in Montana when the attacks occurred and immediately left for Washington, Walker said.

The Department of Health and Human Services sent four medical disaster-assistance teams to the New York area and three teams to the Washington area. Each team has about 35 physicians, nurses and emergency technicians, the department said in a statement.

HHS also sent four mortuary operational response teams to New York and three to Washington to help identify the dead and prepare them for burial.

A department statement said HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson also authorized an emergency shipment of medical supplies to New York and, for the first time since it was created, activated a national medical emergency system that would make about 7,000 volunteer doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other medical personnel available in the attack areas.

The Navy said the hospital ship Comfort, which is stationed in Baltimore and is able to care for 500 patients at a time, was prepared to sail for New York if requested by local officials.

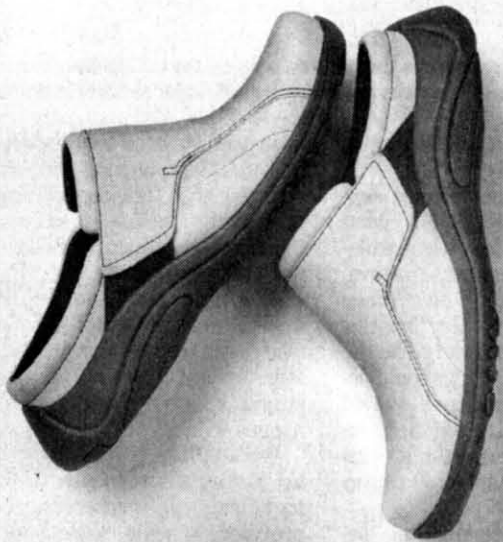
Jim Michie, a spokesman for the U.S. Customs Service, said the agency put its agents on its highest security alert, called a code red, at all land and sea points of entry to the country. He said that the U.S. borders with Canada and Mexico remained open but that at all points of entry, the Customs Service was engaged in "sustained, intensive anti-terrorism operations."

The Coast Guard also put its forces on a heightened state of alert and dispatched ships and aircraft to New York. Cmdr. Jim McPherson, a Coast Guard spokesman, said two helicopters from Cape Cod and two from Atlantic City were sent to New York to assist in medical evacuations. He said a 270-foot Coast Guard cutter, three 110-foot coastal patrol boats and seven smaller boats were also en route to New York harbor to provide security and to assist in transporting emergency rescue and medical personnel by water between New York and New Jersey.

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