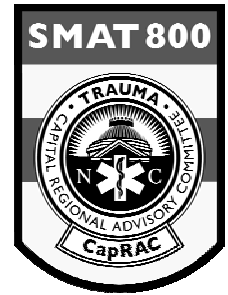




Capital Regional Advisory Committee (CapRAC)
State Medical Assistance Team (SMAT 800)



Frequently Asked Questions

▪ **What is an SMAT team?**

An SMAT (State Medical Assistance Team) is designed to respond to natural and man-made disasters where local resources are overwhelmed. These teams were established in 2002 when the NC Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS), the NC Division of Public Health, the NC Division of Emergency Management and the Special Operations Response Team (SORT) recognized the need for state, regional and local teams to augment federal assets and provide specialized decontamination and medical care in the event of a disaster. These agencies represent the core systems responsible for coordinating a disaster response, ensuring that treatment and prevention strategies are in place, and ensuring the appropriate levels of disease surveillance and medical preparedness.

▪ **Are there different types of SMAT teams?**

There are several types of teams established in North Carolina, ranging from a local response team (SMAT Type 3) to a regional and state response team (SMAT Type 2) to a federal response team (SMAT Type 1).

An SMAT 3 typically specializes in decontamination and emergent patient care. This small team provides a quick-response capability to a localized event, or the team may respond to a regional event. There are 29 county-based SMAT 3s positioned throughout North Carolina.

An SMAT 2 provides all types of medical care to an area, and typically responds to a regional or state event, but could be requested to respond to a national event. This team is much larger, with its size scaled to the type of services that it will need to provide. There are eight SMAT 2s located throughout North Carolina, housed in the lead hospital for each trauma Regional Advisory Committee (RAC).

An SMAT 1 is the equivalent of a federal Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT). There is one team housed in North Carolina at SORT in Winston-Salem, NC.

▪ **How is an SMAT mobilized?**

In the event of a disaster, local and state Emergency Management officials will assess the need for medical resources. If there is a need to activate an SMAT 3, the activation may be issued locally. If there is a need to activate multiple SMAT 3s, an SMAT 2 or the SMAT 1, the NC OEMS will notify an SMAT to respond to the event.

▪ **Does the Capital RAC have an SMAT team?**

Yes, an SMAT 2 (SMAT 800) is housed within the CapRAC. There is also one SMAT 3 located in the CapRAC with Harnett County Emergency Services.

▪ **Do I need a medical background to join the CapRAC SMAT 2?**

No. When called to respond to a disaster, the CapRAC SMAT 2 will need members with all sorts of skills and talents. Just like a hospital needs many different people to run efficiently, so does the CapRAC SMAT 2. Regardless of their particular skills, CapRAC SMAT 2 members should be prepared to function in an area that has been significantly impacted by some sort of event.

- **How do I join the CapRAC SMAT 2?**

First, complete an application and send it to the CapRAC Regional Emergency Response & Recovery Specialist. The application includes a health assessment.

Second, attend an initial SMAT training program, which provides an overview of SMAT operations (such as personal preparedness, deployment, incident command structure and decontamination) and gives you the opportunity to practice health care delivery in an austere environment.

Third, register with servNC, the North Carolina database for medical and non-medical volunteers who are willing to deploy for disaster response. For more information about servNC, visit www.servNC.org.

- **What training & education is available for SMAT members?**

The initial SMAT training course includes both classroom and web-based instruction. Team members complete the web-based portion of the class before attending the classroom portion, which runs about 16 contact hours scheduled on two consecutive days.

Once you complete the initial training program, you must attend two classes each year to keep your membership status active. Some example topics include hazardous materials awareness & operations, incident command structure and federal asset deployment. These classes usually run about eight contact hours each, but may run longer depending upon the complexity of the class.

SMAT members also receive mission-specific training before deployment. This just-in-time training could run up to eight hours, depending upon the nature of the mission.

- **Am I paid to attend SMAT training?**

Payment for training time depends upon your individual agency policies. In general, most SMAT members are not paid to attend training, but check with your agency to determine your eligibility for pay.

- **What happens if I don't attend SMAT training?**

SMAT members that do not attend the required training are not eligible to deploy.

- **How will I be notified of a mission?**

SMAT members will be notified of a mission through the servNC program. The program will contact you with information regarding the deployment.

- **Am I required to respond to a deployment request?**

No. SMAT members have the option of declining a request to deploy.

- **What happens if I decide to deploy?**

Once you accept the mission request, you will get more mission-specific information from the SMAT 800 leadership team. You may need to have a quick health screening or training session, depending upon the nature of the mission.

You will also need to prepare yourself and your family for your deployment. The deployment readiness checklist is a great resource for SMAT members.

- **Is there an SMAT uniform?**

Yes. SMAT members are issued team tee shirts. Members are responsible for purchasing boots and khaki-colored work pants.

- **Am I paid while I am deployed?**

Payment for deployment time depends upon your individual agency policies. In general, most SMAT members are paid for the hours that they work on-site in a disaster location. Please check with your agency to determine your eligibility for pay.

- **What will I do while I am deployed?**

The nature of the mission will determine what role you may fill during a deployment. In general, members will be activated according to the mission request, and members will be assigned to specific roles based upon their skills & background. However, any team member may be asked to carry out non-medical tasks to help the team complete its mission. Members must be able to perform physically-demanding work, particularly when the SMAT equipment is being loaded, unloaded and set up.

SMAT 800 members must abide by a code of conduct and follow team policies at all times during training sessions and deployment. The initial SMAT training program provides more information about these policies.

- **Will I be able to talk to my family and friends during deployment?**

Depending upon the nature of the mission and scope of the disaster, communication systems may not be readily available. Establishing communications is a priority for the team, and once established, team members may be able to have limited contact with family and/or friends.

Your family and friends will be given a contact number that they can use to get information about the deployment or to send an emergency message to you.

- **Will I be safe during deployment?**

Team safety is paramount during deployment. There is a dedicated safety officer assigned to each team, as well as a security group.

- **What happens if I am injured during deployment?**

Injured team members will be evaluated by the physician serving as the medical director for the deployed team. If satisfactory treatment cannot be rendered by the SMAT team, the injured member will be transferred as soon as possible to more definitive care.

- **How long will I be deployed?**

The length of deployment depends upon the nature of the mission. A typical deployment rotation may run from three to seven days, plus a travel day at the beginning and end of the rotation.

- **What happens when I return from deployment?**

When you return from deployment, you will have a debriefing session. Depending upon the environment and conditions you experienced during the deployment, you may need to have a quick health screening. Within a few days after you return, you will be asked for your feedback regarding the deployment.

- **Where can I get more information?**

You can find more information about SMAT 800, and the CapRAC, at www.caprac.org. The site also lists contact information, in case you have specific questions.