



DISASTER OPERATIONS STRATEGY

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Disaster Operations Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1 Situation & Purpose

Team Rubicon’s (TR) Disaster Operations Strategy (DOS) provides a strategic framework for mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters and crises across the United States and around the world, with a focus on serving the most vulnerable communities. It outlines TR’s operational philosophy, structure, and coordination model, integrating functional and geographic units to deliver scalable, effective disaster response. Supported by annexes and manuals, the DOS establishes core policies, systems, and procedures that guide TR’s operations.

Aligned with national standards such as the National Response Framework (NRF), Incident Command System (ICS), and National Incident Management System (NIMS), as well as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Humanitarian Principles, the DOS enables seamless collaboration with communities, government agencies, private sector partners, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). It emphasizes sustainable, community-led outcomes by identifying key hazards, target populations, and partner entities, by applying TR’s mission and Concept of Operations to disaster and humanitarian crisis scenarios.

Detailed procedures are further supported by the following documents:

- [Disaster Operations Planning Manual](#) (2024) — Scheduled for revision 2026
- [Operations Management Manual](#) (2026)
- [Mobilization Manual](#) (2020)
- [Logistics Manual](#) (2025)
- [Emergency Operations Center Field Guide](#) (2025)

1.2 Hazards

Team Rubicon (TR) responds to disasters affecting vulnerable and underserved communities, regardless of public attention. While high-profile disasters occur less frequently, most disasters are under-resourced. TR utilizes an all-hazards approach, primarily addressing disasters such as hurricanes/tropical storms, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, severe storms and humanitarian crises. While international and/or medical operations may also occur in response to the hazards, these types of operations are not always tied to an acute event but may also address longer-term crises created by complex geopolitical or socioeconomic challenges such as mass migration or disease outbreaks.

1.3 Communities

Team Rubicon (TR) prioritizes under-resourced communities with high social vulnerability, using the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) to guide outreach and planning for domestic operations. In contrast, for international operations, it utilizes data sources such as the United Nations (UN) World Risk Index, the World Bank, the US Department of State, or the ACAPS Global Crisis Severity Index (GCSI). TR assesses need holistically by evaluating disaster impact—particularly on housing—resource limitations, community support networks, and local response capacity. By viewing disaster survivors and local communities as primary stakeholders and building strong partnerships in high-risk areas, TR ensures its response is inclusive, effective, and aligned with the needs of the whole community.

1.4 Government & Organization Relations

Team Rubicon (TR) advances a unified emergency management strategy by integrating efforts across governmental, non-governmental (NGO), nonprofit, and private sector entities. Through the deployment of highly trained volunteer teams and scalable resources, TR enhances operational reach and agility at all levels of jurisdiction.

Guided by the National Response Framework (NRF) and National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), TR ensures its actions are legally grounded and strategically aligned with national disaster protocols. Globally, by aligning its operations with the IFRC Humanitarian Principles in coordination with host nations, local communities, and NGOs such as the World Health Organization and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), TR ensures its operations fulfill unmet needs and enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations with dignity and respect.

TR's engagement spans the entire disaster lifecycle—mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery—through structured collaboration with:

- **Local Governments:** Aligns with municipal and county emergency managers to synchronize community-level operations.
- **State Agencies:** Partners with state emergency management and EOCs to integrate regional response efforts.
- **Tribal Nations:** Builds culturally respectful relationships with sovereign tribal governments, recognizing distinct needs and governance structures.
- **Federal Agencies:** Coordinates with FEMA and other federal bodies to support national-level disaster response when required.
- **VOADs (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster):** Strengthens collective impact through partnerships with nonprofit coalitions focused on relief and recovery.
- **Private Sector:** Engages businesses to leverage critical infrastructure, logistics, and financial support for community resilience.
- **Nongovernmental Organizations:** Entities vary widely in scope and activities but generally serve to facilitate coordination among responding organizations to maximize response efficiency and effectiveness.

These strategic alliances enable TR to access essential resources, streamline decision-making, and deliver high-impact, community-centered disaster operations.

1.5 Assumptions and Limitations

Team Rubicon (TR) operates under the assumption that it can proactively identify and support vulnerable communities, even without formal requests, leveraging strong cross-sector partnerships and a resilient volunteer and staff network. Disaster response is guided by NIMS and humanitarian principles and relies on collaboration across government, private, and nonprofit sectors. However, TR will not deploy if risks to life, liability, relationships, or public trust are unacceptable; if operational costs outweigh the value of services; or if personnel are insufficient to meet safety and functional standards.

2. Mission & Execution Overview

Team Rubicon (TR) exists to serve communities in crisis—especially those most vulnerable—by helping them mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. Guided by a whole community approach, TR strives to protect lives, restore essential services, rebuild damaged infrastructure, ease suffering, stabilize chaos, and empower long-term recovery.

TR executes disaster and humanitarian operations through rapid planning and coordinated response, maintaining safety, accountability, and cost-effectiveness. Relationships with local, tribal, state, and federal partners ideally should be established pre-disaster and leveraged during operations to identify unmet needs and ensure timely support. TR leaders coordinate with jurisdictional counterparts to maintain situational awareness and align efforts. Upon mission completion, TR transitions responsibilities to partner organizations and demobilizes personnel and resources while maintaining full accountability.

2.1 Capabilities

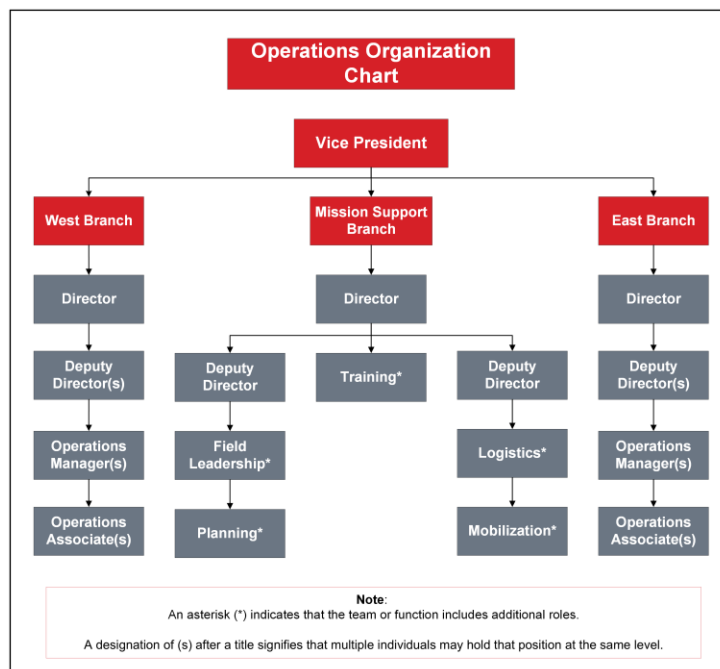
TR’s greatest strength is its adaptability. Any use of capabilities beyond those outlined in the Capabilities catalogue require coordination with Program Development, Field Leadership, and approval from the VP of Operations. For detailed guidance, refer to the Capabilities Catalog and supporting manuals.

2.2 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Geographic Information Systems are a critical tool supporting Team Rubicon’s operations. GIS enables spatial analysis and visualization of hazard exposure, vulnerable populations, infrastructure, and operational assets. During preparation, GIS informs risk assessments, resource staging, and mission planning by integrating historical data and predictive models. In response operations, GIS provides real-time situational awareness through dynamic mapping of incident locations, team deployments, and logistical movements. These tools support decision-making, strategic alignment, and coordination across field and command elements. In recovery, GIS supports damage assessments and impact analysis by comparing pre- and post-event data, helping quantify mission outcomes and inform future planning. As a cross-cutting capability, GIS strengthens Team Rubicon’s ability to deliver timely, targeted, and effective disaster response across all hazard types.

2.3 Operations Organization

Team Rubicon's (TR) Operations Department contains Geographic East and West Branches, which cover the United States, as well as the Mission Support Branch. Each branch is responsible for planning, mobilization, logistics, and execution of disaster operations. Roles and responsibilities are defined in the Disaster Operations Planning Manual (DOPM) and supporting annexes.



3. Concept of Operations

3.1 Preparedness Phase

Preparedness requires the same level of planning, coordination, and resources as disaster response. These activities are designed to strengthen TR’s operational skills and capacity directly. TR ensures preparedness efforts are impactful, measurable, and aligned with readiness needs—without diverting focus from core disaster operations. Refer to the TR Resilient Communities Strategy for further guidance.

3.2 Response Phase

Team Rubicon (TR) prioritizes disaster response by deploying the closest available resources, supplemented by national capacity when needed. This tiered approach improves decision-making and accelerates support to communities in crisis. Geographic Branches lead all phases of Type III, IV, and V responses. In contrast, large-scale or complex events (Type I/II) trigger the activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), where Branch and Mission Support staff collaborate to manage anticipation and response efforts. Refer to the EOC Field Guide for further guidance.

TR’s Mission Planning Process guides the evaluation of disasters, coordination of resource deployment, and establishment of operational priorities. This process is governed by the DOPM, which outlines the standards and procedures for effective planning across all phases of disaster response.

3.3 Recovery Phase

Recovery operations are a vital transition from immediate disaster response to long-term rebuilding, focusing on communities with persistent unmet needs often overlooked after initial relief efforts. These hazard-specific missions are guided by the DOPM and executed in accordance with the Operations Management Manual (OMM). Team Rubicon (TR) collaborates closely with VOADs and long-term recovery groups to identify survivors and deliver targeted support. The Mission Planning Team (MPT) maintains oversight until the operational launch and updates plans via FRAGO. All completed work is reported to partners, with follow-up plans developed to ensure continuity and sustained impact.

Strategically, TR aims to pre-identify and engage vulnerable, under-resourced communities that may have been underserved during the response phase. Outreach prioritizes those most at risk, ensuring resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact. Recovery operations are designed to be adaptive, inclusive, and aligned with TR’s core capabilities and cultural principles, reinforcing equity and sustainability while strengthening long-term community resilience.

3.4 Long Term Recovery

Team Rubicon partners with Long Term Recovery groups to identify and assist the most vulnerable survivors—particularly those underserved by other VOAD organizations. By prioritizing unmet needs, Team Rubicon delivers targeted, high-impact assistance to the areas of greatest vulnerability, thereby mitigating disproportionate housing challenges and fostering a more resilient and equitable recovery.

Long Term Recovery operations go beyond initial stabilization, helping communities rebuild homes from a “contractor-ready” state to pre-disaster conditions—or better. These operations are planned and executed in alignment with TR’s core capabilities, Cultural Principles, and the Long Term Recovery Capability Manual.

3.5 Mitigation Phase

Team Rubicon supports under-resourced communities in executing portions of their hazard mitigation plans that are otherwise inaccessible, focusing on reducing risks to vital assets while excluding entities capable of self-funding. Planning efforts include identifying vulnerable communities using whole community data, targeting areas with the greatest need, aligning TR capabilities with unmet mitigation goals, and conducting

cost-effective operations in accordance with local and state plans. Refer to the latest Mitigation Manuals for scope and limitations.

4. Training (Proficiency/Credentialing)

Team Rubicon (TR) provides standardized guidance for all training formats—online self-paced, virtual instructor-led, and in-person—to ensure high-quality delivery and access to impactful learning resources. Training includes FEMA ICS courses, TR position-specific instruction, and specialized training for international deployments. Annual tracking of training efforts helps assess TR’s operational readiness. Course scheduling is managed by the Mission Support Branch Training Associate or National Training Section to ensure sufficient personnel capacity across Geographic Branches.

To maintain disaster readiness, TR participates in workshops, tabletops, drills, and full-scale exercises. Each Geographic Branch is required to exercise its portion of the DOS at least once annually, involving all relevant staff and volunteers to reinforce awareness and operational knowledge of the plan.

5. Plan Development & Maintenance

The DOS is authorized by TR’s Chief Executive Officer and VP of Operations, with input from operations leadership across the West, East, and Mission Support Branches. The Program Design & Evaluation team is responsible for maintaining and updating the DOS, which undergoes a formal review every three years. This process is informed by a working group of subject matter experts and key stakeholders.

Proposed updates may be submitted to PD&E at any time for consideration during the scheduled review cycle. All approved updates will be documented in the DOS Change Log, located in [Annex C](#). Critical updates may be made sooner when necessary.

Annex A: Mission Support Branch Roles & Responsibilities

The Mission Support Branch provides functional guidance, systems, and processes for all Team Rubicon (TR) activities and operations. The Mission Support Branch will support all Geographic Branches with timely information reporting threats, hazards, resources, capacity, usage, and serve as the central clearinghouse for requests when a Geographic Branch lacks resources.

Mission Support Branch Director

The Director of Mission Support supervises Deputy Directors and oversees the operations of the National Emergency Operations Center (EOC) while supporting Geographic Branch activities. This role ensures a clear and consistent understanding of operations across the organization. The Director sets strategic goals and priorities to guide the work of Geographic Branches and collaborates with government and nonprofit partners to maintain strong coordination. Responsibilities include recommending when to initiate or conclude operational plans for large-scale responses, managing the Mission Support Branch budget, and leading close-out activities and After-Action Reviews to evaluate performance and improve future responses.

Mission Support Branch Deputy Director

Leads activities and manages operations at the National Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Guides Agency Executives, Branch Directors, and Mission Support Managers, while working closely with the Deputy Directors. Maintains a shared understanding of operations across the organization. Responsible for activating the National EOC and setting goals that guide operational planning. Develops strong partnerships with government and nonprofit organizations to ensure coordinated efforts. Provides decision-making support throughout missions and manages the closure of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Leads final reviews and After-Action processes for large-scale and multi-branch operations.

Mission Support Branch – Planning

Planning maintains situational awareness and oversees the Planning Function for TR throughout the disaster cycle, ensuring operational alignment with doctrine and standards. Planning provides guidance and support for the mission planning process (MPP) to all levels of the organization, ensuring standardization regardless of location, including establishing, updating, and disseminating essential elements of information (EEI) to be addressed when planning and executing operations. Planning oversees after-action reviews (AAR) and quality control (QC) of operational data and disseminates findings to apply lessons learned.

Mission Support Branch – Logistics

The Logistics function ensures operational readiness and continuity by strategically positioning and managing response assets in alignment with threat assessments and mission requirements. It oversees the lifecycle of equipment and supplies—from acquisition to demobilization, supporting multi-branch operations with scalable, interoperable systems. Logistics leads to the development of transparent resource tracking frameworks that enable real-time decision-making and accountability. It coordinates service contracts and cross-functional logistics support to ensure seamless execution across Mission Support and Geographic Branch teams. Additionally, Logistics provides strategic guidance to field personnel and drives continuous improvement through structured performance evaluations and post-operation reviews.

Mission Support Branch – Field Leadership

Field Leadership is responsible for overseeing and deploying personnel for local and multi-branch operations, ensuring operational excellence across all phases, while maintaining systems to identify qualified Command and General (C&G) staff personnel. This role selects and mentors qualified C&G staff,

ensures support from Branch Teams, supports Field Leadership Team Leased Employees (FLT) deployments, and fills leadership gaps to maintain continuity. Field Leadership ensures standardized operations that uphold safety, accountability, and quality, while fostering a consistent and positive Greyshirt experience. They coordinate closely with Planning to guide Recon and ADVON Teams while collecting critical information that is used during the operation. Field Leadership also manages incident reporting, and maintains communication with Incident Commanders, Agency Executives, and Mission Support Branch teams from activation through demobilization.

Mission Support Branch – Mobilization

Mobilization leads the strategic coordination of personnel readiness across all operational phases—Anticipation, Response, Operations, and Stabilization, ensuring timely activation and demobilization aligned with mission objectives. It provides leadership and guidance to Volunteer Mobilization teams during incidents, maintaining situational awareness and facilitating seamless coordination with Incident Command, Field Leadership, and Agency Executives. Mobilization ensures consistent and effective communication through official alert systems, in alignment with BrandComms and Digital Engagement strategies. It oversees the development and refinement of mobilization tools and systems and contributes to operational learning through structured participation in close-out and post-operation reviews for both Mission Support and Geographic Branches.

Mission Support Branch – Training

Works in coordination with the Operations team to identify skills gaps and create a yearly training plan that aligns with local, state, branch, and organizational goals. Manages official training credentials and assists with developing new capabilities to meet operational needs. Manages the instructor cadres for all the different disciplines and a specialized team of part-time and volunteer program leaders. Strategically plans training pathways to ensure a ready base of trained Greyshirts that meet the operational resource needs. Supports operations with Just-In-Time training when the availability of skilled Greyshirts does not meet operational needs. Manages multiple different programs and skill pathways that Greyshirts can engage in.

For more information, visit the Training SharePoint Site:

<https://teamrubicon.sharepoint.com/sites/training.leaders/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Annex B: Geographic Branch Roles & Responsibilities

Team Rubicon (TR) will engage Greyshirt workforces consisting of both volunteer and staff positions. The following staff roles are required to execute operations, and their assigned responsibilities are listed below.

Branch Director

The Branch Director serves as the senior operational authority within a geographic branch, ensuring alignment with agency directives and operational standards. This role provides strategic oversight and support to subordinate leaders, guiding the branch through the Shape and Anticipate phases of disaster response. The Branch Director also plays a key role in mission evaluation and continuous improvement through participation in planning close-out and post-operation reviews.

Deputy Branch Director

The Deputy Branch Director reinforces operational governance within the geographic branch by authorizing missions in alignment with agency standards and executive designations. This role ensures strategic continuity by supporting key operational leaders, guiding the branch through the Shape and Anticipate phases, and contributing to institutional learning through mission close-out and review processes.

Operations Manager

The Operations Manager provides regional operational leadership by ensuring mission alignment with agency standards and executive authorizations. This role strategically oversees all geographic areas within its scope, including assuming leadership in unstaffed regions to maintain continuity. By supporting Operations Associates across all phases and directly engaging in unstaffed functional roles, when necessary, the Manager ensures operational resilience. Their involvement in mission planning and post-operation reviews reinforces a culture of continuous improvement and strategic readiness.

Operations Associate

The Operations Associate serves as Team Rubicon's leader within an assigned geographic area, acting as the primary liaison between TR and local volunteer leadership. This role is pivotal in aligning regional engagement with organizational objectives by coordinating blue-sky service initiatives and ensuring consistent operational readiness. The Associate drives the Shape phase by leading localized planning efforts, assessing incident credibility, and guiding strategic decision-making. They establish operational goals, cultivate partnerships with governmental and non-governmental entities, and oversee the deactivation of mission support during the Transition phase. Their contributions extend through mission close-out and after-action reviews, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with TR's broader operational framework.

Volunteer Leadership – Geographic Branches

Volunteer Leaders are integral to Team Rubicon's operations, serving as decentralized force multipliers who bridge national intent with local execution. Their roles are designed to ensure agility, resilience, and continuity across all phases of disaster response. By embedding leadership capacity within communities, TR enhances its ability to rapidly assess, mobilize, and sustain operations aligned with strategic objectives. Each leadership function—ranging from Planning and Mobilization to Logistics, Communications, and Technology—contributes to a holistic operational ecosystem. These leaders maintain situational awareness, guide mission planning, and ensure readiness and resource alignment. Their strategic value lies in their ability to anticipate needs, coordinate across organizational layers, and drive mission success through informed decision-making and adaptive execution.

Annex C: Change Log

Change Log				
No.	Name	Date	Description	Comment