



What is an Emergency Medical Team (EMT)?

- EMTs are groups of health professionals (doctors, nurses, paramedics etc.) that treat patients affected by an emergency or disaster. This team establishes a 'field hospital' made up of tents and 'pop up' medical facilities, with power, water, toilets, accommodation and all the supplies required to establish a clinic in field, community hall, remote area or anywhere else they may be needed. EMTs provide life-saving medical care in the critical first days and weeks after a disaster.
- EMT staff come from governments, charities (NGOs) and international organizations. They work to meet minimum standards set by WHO and its partners, and come trained and self-sufficient to avoid burdening the countries, communities and health services they are assisting.
- Emergency medical teams have a long history of responding to disasters across the Pacific, including Tropical Cyclone Winston in Fiji, Tropical Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu, and Tropical Cyclone Yutu in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- EMTs historically have had a trauma and surgical focus, but outbreaks in Africa (Ebola) and Asia (diphtheria) shown us their value in outbreak response and other forms of emergency that exceed the capacity of the local health system.
- EMTs are designed to respond quickly - deploying to an impacted area with days or hours to treat immediate needs following a disaster or emergency.

How many EMTs are there?

- There are currently 25 internationally verified EMTs globally, with a mixture of response capabilities. Fiji is the 26th EMT to receive formal verification as an international EMT, and the first in the Pacific islands. Both Australia and New Zealand have internationally verified EMTs, that regularly deploy in the Pacific, and play a vital role in Pacific disaster response.

What is the Fijian Emergency Medical Team's (FEMAT) capability? What does 'Type 1 Fixed EMT' mean?

- As a 'Type 1 Fixed Emergency Medical Team', Fiji's EMT is able to provide a broad range of medical and emergency services for up to 100 patients per day, operating from a fixed structure (commonly referred to as a field hospital), providing up to 12 hours of care per day, 7 days a week.
- Type 1 Fixed EMTs have the ability to provide initial emergency care of injuries and other immediate health needs, via clinical services including triage, first aid, patient stabilisation and referral of severe injuries and other medical emergencies.
- EMTs are classified as one of five grades: Type 1 Mobile, Type 1 Fixed, as well as increasingly scaled or specialized operations such as Type 2, Type 3 (equivalent to a national referral hospital) or Specialized Teams.
- The FEMAT team will be comprised of 20 members: 4 doctors, 11 nurses, 1 pharmacist, 1 environmental health officer and 3 logisticians.

What is WHO's role?

- The WHO global Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) Initiative assists organizations and Member States by coordinating the deployment of verified medical teams in emergencies. When a disaster strikes or an outbreak flares, the more rapid the response, the better the outcome. That is why the EMT Initiative places a strong focus on helping every country develop its own teams, which can arrive where they are needed in the shortest time.
- WHO's EMT Initiative includes a full range of support to countries, including training and development, mentoring and supporting teams, establishing and sharing global standards, and supporting coordination/deployment of teams in emergencies.

What is the verification process, and what is involved?

- The WHO verification process is a peer review of an EMT's capability to ensure they the team can provide globally-accepted minimum standards of safe and ethical medical care in emergencies. This involves members of other internationally verified EMTs and WHO staff reviewing an EMT's processes and policies, as well as full reviews and assessment of their abilities and equipment.
- Any doctor, nurse or paramedic team coming from another country to practice healthcare in an emergency needs to come as a member of a team. That team must be properly trained, and have its own equipment and supplies so it can help effectively.
- The first step for any team is to submit an expression of interest to join the WHO Global EMT list. The EMT Secretariat at WHO then selects and assigns a suitable mentor who will support the national EMT through the peer-review process. Following the mentoring process, it will receive a verification site visit by a team, and if successful, will be considered Quality Assured and classified according to its capacity. The entire process can take a significant period of time.

What is the Global EMT Registry?

- WHO has developed a global verification system where EMTs can be classified and ready for deployment to health emergencies.
- It serves as a coordination mechanism for all partners, aiming to provide clinical care in emergencies, allowing a country affected by a disaster or other emergency to call on teams that have been verified.
- WHO's view is that international teams need be deployed only in the case of an emergency of overwhelming proportions, and only at the request of the receiving country. This is the reason why WHO and partners to the EMT initiative are supporting the establishment, training and resourcing of national EMTs.

What does the Global EMT initiative enable countries to do?

- It enables countries to improve their own national capacity, which they are then able to use to assist other countries in emergencies. It also enables affected countries to accept and use international EMTs in a timely, coordinated manner.
- Host governments and affected populations can depend on EMTs from the list to arrive trained, equipped and capable of providing the interventions promised. Patients and their families can expect the clinical teams treating them to provide safe and effective health care.