



A Pre-Deployment Resource for Supervisors

For Managers

It is often difficult to determine which employees are best suited for disaster deployment. If deployments are expected to extend for more than a few weeks or to take place under extreme circumstances, mental health considerations should be part of your decision making process. The following list of mental health considerations may assist you, and the employee, in making this important decision.

- When interviewing employees being considered for deployment, managers should inform the employees that disaster deployments might be associated with exacerbations of existing mental health issues. A history of previous trauma has been associated with an increased risk of posttraumatic stress disorder. Employees who express concern about these issues should be given an opportunity to consult with a health care provider before deployment or consideration for deployment.
- A disaster deployment requires good team skills. An individual who has difficulty working within a team or who has a tendency to blame others for poor results, may not be a good choice for disaster deployment.

- Individuals who are considering deployment may benefit from a predeployment briefing on the operational realities of deployment by experienced postdeployment workers. If candidates are made aware of what to expect in terms of living conditions, psychological stress, and job demands, they will be in a better position to judge how they are likely to perform in a disaster environment.
- Workers who have physical limitations may still wish to deploy. With these workers, consider deployments that may accommodate persons with physical limitations, such as to the Joint Field Office. Managers might also offer alternative roles for people who are not good candidates for deployment—this may help to legitimize staying at their job, while still supporting the effort.
- It is important to acknowledge that disaster response is a total team effort. Managers should express appreciation to the nondeployed workers who will often assume additional duties when fellow workers are deployed.

The accompanying materials include documents that offer practical advice directed to managers of workers who will deploy, or have deployed, to a disaster area.

NMH06-0231

