



HAITI EARTHQUAKE



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FLORIDA'S TWO URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAMS DEPLOYED TO HAITI RETURN TO SOUTH FLORIDA

TALLAHASSEE- Members of two Florida urban search and rescue teams were welcomed home by loved ones and friends after they landed at Miami International Airport this afternoon.

The two 72-member teams and four other U.S. urban search and rescue teams that were deployed to help with the biggest natural disaster in Haiti's history, pulled 43 survivors from collapsed buildings in Port-au-Prince including a Pembroke Pines woman, who spent five days trapped in debris.

"We are proud to welcome the South Florida Task Force Team 1 and South Florida Task Force Team 2 back to Florida," said Interim Director David Halstead. "These teams serve as a great example of resiliency in the wake of disaster. Their no quit attitudes and desire to save others while putting their lives on the line are attributes that should make all Floridians proud."

Upon their arrival, personnel with special training used equipment and 12 search canines to assess damaged structures, remove rubble and debris, and search for victims who were reported trapped and or missing.

"The City of Miami Department of Fire-Rescue was proud to have South Florida Task Force 2 take part in the City's efforts to assist our neighbors in Haiti," said Miami Fire Chief Maurice Kemp.

Under the sponsorship of the City of Miami Fire Department, the South Florida Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) regional team is composed of 28 different fire and police agencies from Dade and Broward counties with 210 individuals on call to respond to natural and or man-made disasters anywhere in the U.S.

"We are very proud of our state assets and all the teams that make up the Urban and Search and Rescue groups that responded to the people of Haiti in their time of need," said Herminio Lorenzo Fire Chief of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue. "We appreciate their personal and professional dedication and for trying to rescue as many people as they possibly could."

The mission of the urban search and rescue teams is to respond to natural and man-made disasters; to provide search and rescue, medical support, communications and damage assessment.

For more information on the Florida Division of Emergency Management and to GET A PLAN!, please visit: www.FloridaDisaster.org. All students, teachers and parents can find educational information and free downloadable materials at: www.KidsGetAPlan.com and for the latest situation and flash reports go to: www.YouTube.com/FloridaSERT.

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