



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

**Public Affairs Office
Honolulu District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858-5440**

**Contact: Lacey Justinger
808-438-9862
or Joel Hendrix
808-551-0616**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2009

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deploys response teams to American Samoa

By Lacey Justinger, Honolulu District Public Affairs

(FORT SHAFTER, HI NR 24-09) The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), under the leadership of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is deploying teams to American Samoa in response to the September 29 8.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami, and in support of President Barack Obama's major-disaster declaration there.

Nationwide USACE Planning and Response Teams (PRT) and subject-matter-experts are on-ground or en-route to American Samoa to provide assistance, while others are rapidly preparing for the emergency situation.

The Corps' Honolulu District, in coordination with FEMA, already has deployed subject-matter-experts in debris, emergency power support and water systems to American Samoa. They are currently providing engineering expertise to assess and evaluate the extent and quantity of the damage, while working with the local American Samoa government to assist with repair plans.

The management cell of Honolulu District's Emergency Power PRT is joining 15 Soldiers from the 249th Prime Power Engineer Battalion, Company B in American Samoa. This team will oversee the installation of FEMA generators at critical prioritized life-saving and life-sustaining public facilities like shelters, sewer and water treatment plants or emergency management and response facilities (police and fire stations, medical facilities).

PRTs are essential support for the Emergency Support Function (ESF)-3 national strategy. Each of the 43 Corps districts has at least one PRT dedicated to one of the seven ESF-3 response tasks: ice, water, emergency power, debris removal, temporary housing, temporary roofing and structural safety assessment.

-MORE-

PRTs 2-2-2

Honolulu District has also established a Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration center (RSOI) at Fort Shafter, Hawaii that is coordinating transportation, lodging, training and integration of all Corps responders nationwide deploying to Samoa, Guam, the Philippines and Indonesia.

Honolulu District engineers and project managers are also currently using satellite imagery and contacting project sponsors in American Samoa to gather initial damage assessments for Samoan shore protection projects, small boat harbors and flood control projects. If these projects are damaged, Honolulu District employees will conduct an engineering evaluation of the damage for possible government rehabilitation.

With several other potential weather or nature-related events possible in the near future, additional Corps PRTs have been alerted and are on standby for deployments in the Pacific region.

FEMA is the lead agency for coordinating government response to natural disasters.

###

Cutline:

Photo by: Joseph Bonfiglio

Kevin Nishimura, Gary Chalifoux and Roberto Tan, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District personnel and members of a Corps Planning and Response Team, set up a Containerized Tactical Operations Center (CTOC) that establishes emergency field communications during the FEMA and State of Hawaii-sponsored 2009 Makani Pahili Hurricane Preparedness exercise held June 2-4. The Honolulu District CTOC team is on alert and may deploy to American Samoa for tsunami relief.