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Singapore builds Emergency Medical Team to enhance role in disaster relief efforts

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To provide timely and effective medical support to save lives and strengthen recovery efforts



Ministry of Health (MoH) in Singapore has strengthened its humanitarian assistance and disaster response capabilities with the inauguration of the Singapore Emergency Medical Team (SGEMT). The SGEMT will enable Singapore to provide rapid and effective medical support during emergencies, both locally and internationally, enhancing Singapore's role in global and regional disaster relief efforts.

The SGEMT is aligned with the World Health Organization's (WHO) classification framework for Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs). This means that it has met the specific standards and criteria set by the WHO on aspects such as training, resourcing and operational procedures, as well as demonstrated its ability to operate effectively in emergency settings. There are 40 other WHO-classified EMTs around the world.

Akin to a field hospital, the SGEMT can provide comprehensive medical care, including emergency services, primary care, and maternal and child health outpatient care to more than 100 patients a day for up to two weeks. It can be deployed to crisis-affected regions within 72 hours, providing timely medical assistance in the critical early stages of a disaster, where prompt intervention can significantly impact survival rates and the effectiveness of recovery efforts. The SGEMT can operate independently and collaborate seamlessly with other WHO-classified EMTs.

Fully equipped to handle its operational needs even in challenging environments, the SGEMT can generate its own electricity, produce clean water, manage waste disposal, and house approximately 30 medical, technical and administrative personnel. This self-sufficiency ensures that the SGEMT can deliver uninterrupted, high quality medical care without placing additional strain on the affected area's already limited resources.

The SGEMT can also be deployed locally in Singapore to support the MoH's Disaster Site Medical Command, enhancing its healthcare system's response to large-scale emergencies or mass casualty events where immediate medical intervention and sustained medical support are required.