

Emergency Response Unit

ERU

ERU: Who are we?

An Emergency Response Unit (ERU) is one of the tools used by the Red Cross Movement in response to global crises. An ERU is a team of trained technical specialists, ready to be deployed at short notice, which uses pre-packed sets of standardized equipment. ERUs are designed to be self-sufficient for one month and can operate for up to four months. ERUs are a vital part of the Red Cross' disaster and emergency response system, and are used when the local capacity is overwhelmed.

The Canadian Red Cross is one of seven Red Cross National Societies maintaining a Health ERU capacity globally, and only one of three ERUs that has surgical capacity. The Red Cross Field Hospital is built on a modular concept; therefore its response is specific to the needs of populations affected by natural disasters, conflicts and other crises. The hospital is designed to be self-sufficient in remote and low-resource environments, and can deliver the following services:

[Primary health care for adults, mothers and children](#)

[Emergency surgical care](#)

[Basic emergency obstetrical care](#)

[Community-based public health interventions](#)

[Psychological first aid and referral to social services](#)

[Mobile clinics](#)

The ERU can be deployed to communities where local infrastructure is damaged, temporarily out of use, has become inaccessible to the population, or is insufficient to cope with increased needs.

Whenever ERUs are sent in, it is at the request of the local Red Cross when their capacity has been overwhelmed by the magnitude of the emergency. ERUs never disembark into a vacuum. They always arrive to assist and work together with local Red Cross Red Crescent personnel. At the end of a mission, the equipment of an ERU remains in the impacted country, in turn allowing local actors improved capacity to respond to the next emergency.



With funding provided by the Government of Canada, the first Canadian Red Cross Health ERU was developed and deployed to Haiti in 2010, in response to a cholera outbreak. Since the first deployment, numerous lessons have been integrated resulting in a full revision of its original kits and modules to increase the tool's flexibility and adaptability.

Inside an Emergency Field Hospital: Expert Medical Care and Services.

PHARMACY



Medical logisticians ensure a supply chain of medications to cover up to 200 outpatient treatments per day and 300 major surgeries in a month.

BASE CAMP



Accommodation for 25 to 50 field hospital staff, including beds and meals.

GENERAL WARD



Patients with serious injuries or conditions are admitted to the general ward (100 inpatient beds).



X-RAY & LAB

Technicians perform x-rays and test blood samples from injured and sick patients.



TRIAGE & ADMISSION

People arriving at the field hospital are rapidly assessed and admitted.



OPERATION THEATRE

Surgeons perform lifesaving operations and emergency caesarean sections.



MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH UNIT

Doctors and nurses provide specialized care to mothers and newborns before and after delivery.

ERU team members are highly qualified and experienced professionals within their field of expertise. Most common profiles that are requested for an ERU are:

- Doctors (general practitioner, emergency room, paediatrician, OBGYN)
- Surgeons
- Anaesthesiologists
- Midwives
- Nurses (emergency room, med/surgical, paediatric, operating room)
- X-ray and laboratory technicians
- Logisticians and pharmacists
- Psychosocial support professionals
- Public health professionals
- Communications professionals
- Administrators (finance, human resources)
- Technicians (electrical, water and sanitation, shelter, general trades)

The strength of the Red Cross Movement is its presence in communities all around the world. When emergencies occur, local Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers are always the first to respond. ERUs were created **to respond to needs that are beyond the local, national and regional capacities.**

Knowledge, experience and standards are key elements of the ERU system. The ERU system was born out of the 150 years of first-hand disaster response experience of the Red Cross Movement.

Applicants should be:

- Fluent in English and preferably additional languages: French, Spanish, and/or Arabic
- Certified in Canada or the USA for their medical field of practice
- Able to leave for four to six weeks on short notice
- Able to live and work in hardship and/or low-resource environments
- Capable of decision making in conditions of uncertainty
- Professional and able to build cooperative relations with key stakeholders
- Able to work in multicultural teams
- Able to complete and maintain a thorough medical screening and receive medical clearance prior to departure in the field
- Capable of managing stress and coping in situations of crises and insecurity

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