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## ON THE ISSUE OF LEGAL REGULATION AND METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF JOINT MEDICAL TEAMS OF FMBA OF RUSSIA

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**Introduction.** Modern challenges to the national security of Russia necessitate improvements in the medical and sanitary support system, including the medical personnel and resources of the Federal Medical and Biological Agency (FMBA) of Russia during emergency situations, terrorist attacks, and armed conflicts. Special emphasis is placed on enhancing the promptness, effectiveness, and organization of providing specialized medical assistance and carrying out medical evacuations for victims, injured persons, and patients. This need is underscored by the existing experience of Joint Medical Teams (JMTs) of the FMBA of Russia participating in the elimination of large-scale emergency consequences and ongoing Special Military Operation (SMO).

**Objective.** Development of proposals for improving the regulatory framework and methodological support for the creation, preparation, use, and operation of FMBA JMTs.

**Materials and methods.** The study utilized normative and methodological documents of the Agency, reports from district medical centers (DMCs), and data from a survey questionnaire involving 192 medical specialists engaged in the activities of JMTs over the period from February 2022 to June 2025, including their involvement in the SMO. The following methods were employed in conducting this research: formal legal analysis, content analysis, expert evaluation, statistical processing of data, as well as logical and information modeling techniques. The study encompassed legal, organizational, and methodological aspects related to the functioning of JMTs in various types of emergency situations. The analysis took into account extensive experience in mitigating health-related consequences of emergencies and the role of such teams in facilitating medical evacuation, delivering medical aid to affected individuals, wounded soldiers, and ill servicemen.

**Results.** Gaps in the normative and methodological support for the activities of FMBA JMTs were established, despite their relatively high response efficiency and functional effectiveness, confirmed by their participation in providing medical support during the SMO. The expert assessments among 192 medical professionals, most of whom (60.4%) had practical experience of working within JMTs, showed dissatisfaction with the current normative and methodological basis. According to the experts, the current framework does not provide for sufficient clarity or regulation for establishing, preparing, utilizing, maintaining, and implementing medical evacuation processes by JMTs. The collected data indicate a pressing need for a comprehensive improvement of the legal and methodological basis for JMT activities. These improvements include drafting and adopting a single Standardized Regulation for JMTs, supplementing FMBA Order No. 126 dated 25.04.2022, taking into account specific tasks related to medical evacuation, entrusting DMCs with responsibilities for forming, training, and managing JMTs, and elaborating detailed methodological recommendations aimed at standardizing the organizational structure, equipping standards, and preparedness criteria for JMTs. The results obtained form a basis for resolving numerous problematic issues impeding effective functioning of JMTs.

**Conclusions.** The results obtained indicate gaps in the normative and methodological framework regulating the activities of FMBA JMTs, which hinder the development of clear mechanisms for their formation, application, and functioning when organizing and providing medical assistance to victims of emergencies, terrorist acts, and military conflicts. Implementation of the proposed measures will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of JMTs within the healthcare system, contributing significantly to national security interests.

**Keywords:** joint medical team; FMBA of Russia; normative and methodological support; emergency situation; special military operation; medical evacuation; regional medical center; national security

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## К ВОПРОСУ О НОРМАТИВНОМ РЕГУЛИРОВАНИИ И МЕТОДИЧЕСКОМ СОПРОВОЖДЕНИИ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ СВОДНОГО МЕДИЦИНСКОГО ОТРЯДА ФМБА РОССИИ

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**Введение.** Современные вызовы национальной безопасности требуют совершенствования системы медико-санитарного обеспечения, в том числе медицинских сил и средств Федерального медико-биологического агентства (далее — ФМБА России, Агентство) в условиях чрезвычайных ситуаций (ЧС), террористических актов и вооруженных конфликтов. Особую значимость приобретает

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повышение оперативности, эффективности и организованности оказания специализированной медицинской помощи и проведения медицинской эвакуации пострадавших, раненых и больных, что подтверждается имеющимся опытом участия сводных медицинских отрядов (СМО) ФМБА России в ликвидации последствий крупных ЧС и проводимой специальной военной операции (СВО).

**Цель.** Разработка предложений по совершенствованию нормативно-правовой базы и методического обеспечения создания, подготовки, применения и функционирования СМО ФМБА России.

**Материалы и методы.** В исследовании использованы нормативные и методические документы Агентства, отчетные материалы окружных медицинских центров (ОМЦ) и данные анкетного опроса 192 медицинских специалистов, вовлеченных в деятельность сводных медицинских отрядов в период 02.2022–06.2025, включая опыт участия в специальной военной операции. При выполнении исследования применялись следующие методы: формально-юридический и контент-анализ, экспертная оценка, статистическая обработка данных, а также методы логического и информационного моделирования. Исследование охватывало правовые, организационные и методические аспекты функционирования СМО в условиях чрезвычайных ситуаций различного характера. Анализ проводился с учетом обширного опыта ликвидации медико-санитарных последствий ЧС и участия СМО в осуществлении медицинской эвакуации, оказании медицинской помощи пострадавшим, раненым и больным военнослужащим.

**Результаты.** Выявлены пробелы в нормативно-методическом обеспечении деятельности СМО ФМБА России, несмотря на их достаточно высокую оперативность реагирования и эффективность функционирования по предназначению, подтвержденные опытом участия в медицинском обеспечении специальной военной операции. Экспертная оценка 192 медицинских специалистов, большая часть которых (60,4%) имела реальный практический опыт работы в составе СМО, показала низкий уровень удовлетворенности действующей нормативно-методической базой, не обеспечивающей в полной мере четкого регулирования порядка создания, подготовки, применения, функционирования и выполнения медицинской эвакуации СМО. На основании полученных данных обоснована необходимость комплексного совершенствования правовых и методических основ деятельности СМО, заключающаяся в разработке и утверждении единого Типового положения о сводном медицинском отряде, внесении дополнений в приказ ФМБА России от 25.04.2022 № 126 с учетом задач по медицинской эвакуации, закреплению за ОМЦ функции по формированию, подготовке и управлению СМО, а также разработке детализированных методических рекомендаций, стандартизирующих организационную структуру, оснащение и критерии готовности СМО. Реализация результатов исследования обеспечит создание условий для разрешения многих проблемных вопросов, имеющих высокую практическую значимость для СМО.

**Выводы.** Полученные результаты исследования свидетельствуют о наличии недочетов в нормативно-методической базе, определяющей порядок деятельности СМО, которые препятствуют созданию четких механизмов регулирования формирования, применения и функционирования СМО при организации и оказания медицинской помощи пострадавшим в результате чрезвычайных ситуаций, террористических актов и военных конфликтов. Реализация предложенных мер позволит повысить оперативность и эффективность применения СМО в системе медико-санитарного обеспечения в интересах национальной безопасности.

**Ключевые слова:** сводный медицинский отряд; ФМБА России; нормативно-методическое обеспечение; чрезвычайная ситуация; специальная военная операция; медицинская эвакуация; окружной медицинский центр; национальная безопасность

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**Финансирование:** работа выполнена без спонсорской поддержки.

**Соответствие принципам этики:** авторы заявляют, что одобрение комитетом по этике не требовалось, поскольку были проанализированы обезличенные данные анкет социологического обследования проблемных организационных вопросов здравоохранения.

**Потенциальный конфликт интересов:** авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

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## INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation involves the development, adjustment, and implementation of a set of diverse state programs aimed at ensuring safety and sustainable development of the country.<sup>1</sup> This applies in full measure to the development and improvement of medical personnel and resources of the Federal Medical and Biological Agency (FMBA)<sup>2</sup> of Russia, enhancing the quality of medical and sanitary services provided to workers in industries with particularly hazardous working conditions, as well as residents living in service areas. Special attention is given to preserving and strengthening public

health, extending professional activity and overall life expectancy. In this context, enhancing the level of timely response, as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of preventive measures, localization, and mitigation of medical and sanitary consequences resulting from incidents, accidents, disasters, natural calamities, and other emergencies of different nature becomes particularly important<sup>3</sup>.

Current challenges demand continuous enhancement of the capabilities of medical units of the FMBA in the context of ensuring national security [1–4]. Key priorities remain improving the quality of medical care provided and ensuring readiness for efficient responses to terrorist attacks, armed conflicts, and major

<sup>1</sup> Presidential Decree No. 400 “On the Strategy of National Security of the Russian Federation” dated 02.07.2021.

<sup>2</sup> Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 568 “Issues Concerning the Federal Medical and Biological Agency” dated 02.07.2024

<sup>3</sup> Order of FMBA of Russia No. 144 “On Approval of the Regulation on Functional Subsystem of Medical-Sanitary Assistance to Victims in Emergencies in Organizations (Facilities) Under the Jurisdiction of FMBA of Russia, as Well as in Organizations and Territories Served by FMBA of Russia” dated 20.05.2022.

emergencies.<sup>4,5,6,7</sup> The likelihood of terrorist attacks and armed conflicts accompanied by a significant number of casualties remains high. Victims belong to various population categories and require timely specialized medical care and organized medical evacuation, which should be carried out to specialized stationary treatment facilities using different modes of transport [5–10].

Mobile medical formations, specifically joint medical teams (JMTs), play a crucial role in addressing the medical and sanitary consequences of large-scale emergencies and armed conflicts.<sup>8</sup> Such units primarily provide urgent medical care and conduct medical evacuation of victims, wounded, and patients while adhering to routing principles [5–11]. Practice has confirmed the effectiveness of JMTs but also highlighted the need for their improved normative and methodological support. Optimizing the management system of subordinate organizations of the FMBA of Russia and establishing effective interaction with government authorities requires refinement of the legal framework regulating the activities of JMTs. Therefore, studying the current state of normative regulation and methodological support for their activities becomes particularly relevant. Additionally, an analysis of existing approaches can contribute to the development and modernization of the medical assistance management system in emergency situations as a whole [12–16].

In this study, our aim was to develop proposals for improving the legal framework and methodological support for the creation, preparation, deployment, and operation of FMBA JMTs.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

We used normative and methodological documents of the FMBA regulating the activities of JMTs, including FMBA orders No. 60 dated 28.02.2022, No. 35 dated 29.02.2024, and No. 1263 dated 25.04.2022, as well as the draft Regulations on the Organization and Coordination of Activities of JMTs of FMBA of Russia (2023), developed by the Center for Strategic Planning and Management of Medical and Biological Health Risks. Additionally, reports from district medical centers (DMCs) of FMBA were analyzed, covering the formation, deployment, and operation of JMTs (February 2022–April 2025) during the Special Military Operation (SMO). The study also included data from surveys in the form of questionnaires assessing the condition of formation and functioning of JMTs. The questionnaires were filled out by medical experts directly involved in the work of these teams, including those who participated in responding

to medical and sanitary consequences of emergencies, terrorist attacks, and military conflicts.

The formulated objectives were achieved by a set of methods, including a formal and legal analysis of normative documents, a content analysis of texts identifying gaps and contradictions, expert evaluations involving 192 medical professionals. The latter were divided into two groups: Group 1 ( $n = 116$ ) comprised individuals with practical experience working in JMTs, while Group 2 ( $n = 76$ ) comprised specialists involved in forming the teams but not participating in actual emergency situations. Statistical data were processed using the SPSS Statistics 23.0 software package and Microsoft Excel 2010. Statistical data processing allowed identification of patterns in assessments of the normative regulation and methodological support for JMTs. When developing proposals for improvement, methods of logical and informational modeling, as well as analytical methods ensuring systematic generalization of the obtained results, were employed. The study covers both legal aspects of regulating the activities of JMTs, as well as organizational and methodological issues related to the preparation, functioning, and management of JMTs in various types of emergency situations.

## RESULTS

At the initial stage of the study, we assessed the level of satisfaction of medical professionals regarding the current state of normative regulations and methodological support for the activity of JMTs. The results of expert evaluations indicate that, according to contemporary requirements for safety and operational conditions of JMTs, the current normative and methodological framework regulating the order of creation, preparation, deployment, and functioning of JMTs is less than optimal (Table).

Only 24.0% of the experts assessed the current normative and methodological framework as fully supporting the activities JMTs. More than 66.6% of the respondents (31.2% from Group 1 and 35.4% from Group 2) indicated limited or partial compliance of documents with the current requirements. Notably, 79.3% experts from Group 1, who have had the practical experience of working in JMTs, believe that existing norms and methodologies do not adequately meet the needs of such teams. At the same time, 47.3% of experts from Group 2 evaluated the normative and methodological support positively, confirming the influence of practical experience on objectivity.

<sup>4</sup> Order of FMBA of Russia No. 144 "On Approval of the Regulation on Functional Subsystem of Medical-Sanitary Assistance to Victims in Emergencies in Organizations (Facilities) Under the Jurisdiction of FMBA of Russia, as Well as in Organizations and Territories Serviced by FMBA of Russia" dated 20.05.2022.

<sup>5</sup> Order of FMBA of Russia No. 60 "On Formation of Joint Medical Teams of FMBA of Russia and Improving Readiness of Medical Institutions of FMBA of Russia for Work in Emergency Situations" dated 28.02.2022.

<sup>6</sup> Order of FMBA of Russia No. 35 "6. Amendment to the Order of FMBA of Russia No. 60 dated 28.02.2022 'On Forming Joint Medical Teams of FMBA of Russia for Operations in Emergency Situations'" dated 29.02.2024.

<sup>7</sup> Regulation on Organization and Coordination of Joint Medical Teams of the Federal Medical and Biological Agency (Draft). Moscow, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Order of FMBA of Russia No. 126 dated 25.04.2022 "On Approval of Cases and Procedure for Organizing Provision of Medical and Sanitary Care and Specialized, Including High-Tech, Medical Aid by Medical Staff of Medical Institutions Subordinate to FMBA of Russia Beyond Such Medical Institutions".

**Table.** Distribution of expert opinions regarding the state of normative regulation and methodological support for the activity of FMBA JMTs

Assessment of normative and methodological support	Share of experts who selected the variant from the total number of experts, % (n = 192)	Including the assessment of this particular group of experts, %	
		first (n = 116)	second (n = 76)
Provide the entire scope of activities	24.0	13.8	39.5
Provide on a limited basis	31.2	34.5	26.3
Provide partially	35.4	44.8	21.0
Difficult to answer	9.4	6.9	13.2
Total:	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table compiled by authors based on their own data

**Note:** n — number of experts.

Difficulties in assessment noted by 6.9–13.2% of the respondents can be explained by insufficient practical experience before the SMO. Then, JMTs were occasionally deployed for small-scale emergency response efforts, preventing most specialists from gaining adequate and objective experience in such conditions.

Completely different conditions emerged during the SMO course for testing the quality of normative and methodological documents. Large-scale, prolonged, and multifaceted employment of JMTs in combat zones enabled a substantial number of medical personnel to gain substantive experience, including practical verification of provisions outlined in regulatory documents. It was precisely this hands-on experience that became a reliable criterion for evaluating the comprehensiveness, clarity, and applicability of these documents.

The experience gained by JMTs during the SMO revealed gaps in the existing documentation. Only 15 (12.8%) experts involved in forming squadrons for the SMO reported complete and clear normative provisions regarding structure, goals, establishment process, and functionality. Meanwhile, 59 (51.3%) experts pointed to a partial coverage, 24 (20.5%) mentioned the lack of essential documents, and 18 (15.4%) found it difficult to respond. A significant proportion of the experts expressed the need for comprehensive regulation: 164 (85.4%) supported the idea of developing and validating an all-inclusive policy document. On the contrary, only 13 (6.8%) saw no need for such changes, while 15 (7.8%) remained undecided. Similarly, 143 (74.5%) experts backed amendments to FMBA Order No. 126<sup>9</sup> dated 25.04.2022, concerning

the creation, usage, and function of JMTs in handling the aftermath of emergencies, terrorist attacks, and armed conflicts, including integration into general therapeutic-evacuation systems for injured and ill military personnel. Among those who opposed and abstained were 29 (15.1%) and 20 (10.4%) experts, respectively.

## DISCUSSION

The data obtained allow us to conclude that FMBA JMTs are becoming increasingly important in the system of medical and sanitary provision for dealing with the consequences of emergencies, terrorist acts, and armed conflicts.

According to the information presented by V.I. Skvortsova, Head of the FMBA of Russia, throughout its participation in the SMO (02.2022–04.2025), medical teams assisted 143,000 injured military personnel, with 12,000 undergoing surgeries.<sup>10</sup> These figures highlight not only the scale of engagement of FMBA medical units but also indicate a qualitative change in the type of medical care provided. As emphasized by V.I. Skvortsova, “the structure of medical assistance has changed, with surgical interventions now being the primary focus.”<sup>11</sup>

In 2024, the volume of medical care provided by FMBA medical professionals increased by 65%, and the number of surgeries more than tripled compared to previous years.<sup>12</sup> This trend reflects both the rising load on the FMBA medical staff and resources and the enhanced operational readiness and functional

<sup>9</sup> Order of FMBA of Russia No. 126 “On Approval of Cases and Procedures for Providing Medical and Sanitary Care, Specialized, Including High-Tech Medical Care, by Healthcare Professionals of Medical Facilities Subordinated to FMBA of Russia Outside These Facilities” dated 25.04.2022.

<sup>10</sup> FMBA medical teams provided medical assistance to 143,000 servicemen in the SMO zone. Kommersant; 2024. URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/7693365> (request date: 08.08.2025).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

sustainability of these teams. Notably, medical “special forces” of FMBA, according to V.I. Skvortsova, participated in nearly all major emergency incidents in Russia in 2024, highlighting the expansion of JMT functions and their integration into the national emergency response system.<sup>13</sup>

Extensive and sustained deployment of JMTs during the SMO uncovered deficiencies in their normative and methodological support. Most experts with practical experience in JMTs rated the normative framework as requiring further development and improvement. Serious concerns arise due to the absence of clear provisions in the current regulations defining the procedure for creating, preparing, functioning, equipping, and managing JMTs.

FMBA DMCs have demonstrated particular importance. It is on their basis that JMTs are formed. However, Order No. 208 of the FMBA of Russia dated 30.07.2020, which defines their functions, does not officially assign DMCs a role in the formation, training, and management of JMTs.<sup>14</sup> This creates organizational and legal uncertainties and reduces accountability for the readiness of such teams. It is noteworthy that 80.7% of the experts supported assigning DMCs functions such as organizing the creation and training of JMTs, providing methodological support for their activities, monitoring readiness, and ensuring their deployment in emergency situations.

Another significant gap is the legal regulation of medical evacuation. Agency Order No. 126 dated 25.04.2022<sup>15</sup> provides for the formation of mobile medical teams to deliver medical care outside assigned territories; however, it does not regulate the procedure for medical evacuation. According to S.V. Markov, by early 2025, specialists from the Burnazian Federal Medical Biophysical Center alone had evacuated over 32,000 patients, including more than 7000 by air transport [6].

On the basis of the data obtained from the application of JMTs in the SMO and emergency situations, several practical steps may be recommended:

- establishment of typical organizational structures for JMTs tailored to the profile of emergency (chemical, radiation, biological, terrorism, warfare);
- determination of composition and equipment standards for medical brigades;
- development of protocols for functioning, including organization of medical care and evacuation along routing principles;

- codification of technologies for training and professional coordination;
- clarification of regulations for creation, replenishment, and storage of reserve medical supplies and other property;
- integration of information technology and telemedicine into JMT operations;
- formalization of accounting, reporting, and notification systems.

## CONCLUSION

The conducted research confirms the significance of FMBA JMTs as one of the key components of the overall medical support system in emergency situations, terrorist acts, and armed conflicts. Their practical application, especially during the SMO, demonstrated not only their ability to promptly respond and effectively provide medical care and perform medical evacuation for victims, the wounded, and sick individuals, but also the need for systemic improvement of normative regulation and methodological support for their activities.

The analysis of the normative and methodological framework of JMTs revealed certain discrepancies between its current state and modern requirements. Specifically, there is a lack of clear regulation regarding the creation, preparation, application, and functioning of medical teams; ambiguity in task distribution and DMC functions concerning JMTs; and virtually no normative support for medical evacuation — a key element of JMT operations. Based on the data obtained, the necessity for a comprehensive improvement of the legal and methodological foundation of JMT activities has been substantiated. This entails the development and approval of a uniform Model Regulation for consolidated medical teams, amendments to FMBA Order No. 126 dated 25.04.2022, incorporating tasks related to medical evacuation, assigning DMCs responsibility for forming, preparing, and managing JMTs, and developing detailed methodological recommendations standardizing organizational structure, equipment, and readiness criteria for JMTs.

Implementation of these proposals can enhance the timeliness, efficiency, and resilience of the medical support system for victims, the wounded, and sick individuals. It will create conditions for more adaptive and effective operations of JMTs within a unified modern system countering threats to the security of the Russian Federation.

<sup>13</sup> FMBA medical teams provided medical assistance to 143,000 servicemen in the SMO zone. Kommersant; 2024. URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/7693365> (request date: 08.08.2025).

<sup>14</sup> Order of FMBA of Russia No. 208 “On Establishment of Network of Regional Medical Centers of FMBA of Russia” dated 30.07.2020.

<sup>15</sup> Order of FMBA of Russia No. 126 “On Approval of Cases and Procedures for Providing Medical and Sanitary Care, Specialized, Including High-Tech Medical Care, by Healthcare Professionals of Medical Facilities Subordinated to FMBA of Russia Outside These Facilities” dated 25.04.2022.

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