

Emergency Support Function #9 – Search and Rescue Annex

ESF Coordinator:

Department of Homeland Security/Federal
Emergency Management Agency

Primary Agencies:

Department of Homeland Security/Federal
Emergency Management Agency
Department of Homeland Security/U.S.
Coast Guard
Department of the Interior/National Park
Service
Department of Defense/U.S. Air Force

Support Agencies:

Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Homeland Security
Department of Justice
Department of Labor
National Aeronautics and Space
Administration
U.S. Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Search and Rescue (SAR) rapidly deploys components of the Federal SAR Response System to provide specialized lifesaving assistance to State, tribal, and local authorities when activated for incidents or potential incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

Scope

The Federal SAR Response System is composed of the primary agencies that provide specialized SAR operations during incidents or potential incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response. This includes:

- Structural Collapse (Urban) Search and Rescue (US&R)
- Waterborne Search and Rescue
- Inland/Wilderness Search and Rescue
- Aeronautical Search and Rescue

SAR services include the performance of distress monitoring, communications, location of distressed personnel, coordination, and execution of rescue operations including extrication or evacuation along with the provisioning of medical assistance and civilian services through the use of public and private resources to assist persons and property in potential or actual distress.

Structural Collapse (Urban) Search and Rescue (US&R)

Primary Agency: Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Operational Overview: Includes building/structural collapse SAR operations for natural disasters as well as other building collapse operations that primarily require DHS/FEMA US&R task force operations. The National US&R Response System integrates DHS/FEMA US&R task forces, Incident Support Teams (ISTs), and technical specialists.

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The System is built around a core of task forces prepared to deploy immediately and initiate operations in support of ESF #9. These task forces are staffed primarily by local fire department and emergency services personnel who are highly trained and experienced in collapsed structure SAR operations and possess specialized expertise and equipment.

ISTs provide coordination and logistical support to US&R task forces during emergency operations. They also conduct needs assessments and provide technical advice and assistance to State, tribal, and local government emergency managers. The ISTs are staffed by personnel from US&R task forces; Federal, State, tribal, and local government emergency response organizations; and private-sector organizations.

Technical specialists provide expertise in various US&R disciplines and are mobilized as needed.

Waterborne Search and Rescue

Primary Agency: DHS/U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

Operational Overview: Includes waterborne SAR operations for hurricane, dam/levee failure, and other disasters that primarily require DHS/USCG air, ship, and boat force operations. The Federal waterborne SAR response integrates DHS/USCG assets in support of overall SAR operations conducted in accordance with the U.S. National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP).

DHS/USCG develops, maintains, and operates rescue facilities for the promotion of safety on, under, and over waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction and has been designated as the lead agency for waterborne (i.e., maritime) SAR under the NSP. DHS/USCG personnel are highly trained and experienced in waterborne SAR operations and possess specialized expertise, facilities, and equipment for carrying out responses to maritime distress situations. Additionally, DHS/USCG staffing at Area/District/Sector Command Centers promotes effective localized interaction, coordination, and communications with State, tribal, and local emergency managers during incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response in which waterborne SAR resource allocation is required.

Inland/Wilderness Search and Rescue

Primary Agency: Department of the Interior (DOI)/National Park Service (NPS)

Operational Overview: Includes SAR operations conducted in backcountry, remote, or undeveloped or rural or roadless areas that primarily require operations necessitating the use of specialized equipment to access these areas and may require responders traveling over land by alternate methods or by aircraft.

DOI/NPS has a congressional mandate to perform SAR and a cadre of highly trained SAR providers that are specially trained to operate in their respective areas of responsibility. NPS integrates the SAR capabilities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and other DOI components in planning for ESF #9.

Aeronautical Search and Rescue

Primary Agency: Department of Defense (DOD)/U.S. Air Force (USAF)/Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC)

Operational Overview: Includes SAR operations conducted in aviation-related incidents and aeronautical search and rescue corresponding to the continental United States, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, and other U.S. territories and possession other than Alaska and U.S. territories in the Pacific Ocean. This may require specialized SAR operations in both open and

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wilderness areas and in the vicinity of airports requiring the coordinated deployment of personnel and equipment. DOD/USAF maintains a Rescue Coordination Center that coordinates a cooperative network to respond to aviation-related incidents. This network is made up of DOD components, facilities, and other resources that are used in civil SAR operations to the fullest extent practicable on a noninterference basis with their primary military duties in accordance with national directives, plans, guidelines, and agreements.

Policies

Immediate SAR operations are conducted in accordance with the NSP and the U.S. National Search and Rescue Supplement (NSS) to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual, which defines SAR responsibilities and provides guidance to the Federal agencies with civil SAR mandates.

Federal SAR response assists and augments State and local SAR capabilities in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response or in accordance with the NSP, which defines the responsibilities and provides guidance to Federal agencies with civil SAR mandates.

In incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response and upon activation by DHS under the *National Response Framework (NRF)*, DHS/FEMA US&R task forces are considered Federal assets under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and other applicable authorities.

Other State-to-State SAR resources would be requested by the affected State through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.

Other local SAR resources would be requested by the affected locality through mutual aid and assistance agreements.

Immediate SAR operations should be conducted in accordance with the NSP and the NSS.

The National S&R Response System integrates DOD assets, DHS/USCG Rescue Coordination Centers (RCCs), and Rescue Sub-Centers (RSCs), supporting SAR operations conducted in accordance with the NSP.

Animal search and rescue services provided by animal control agencies and humane organizations will be integrated with human search and rescue operations as required.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

General

Activation is dependent upon the nature and magnitude of the event, the suddenness of onset, and the existence of SAR resources in the area. If those resources (including Federal, State, tribal, and/or local resources) are or may become overwhelmed and there is a need for a coordinated Federal response, these actions will occur:

- DHS/FEMA will initiate the National US&R Response System for incidents likely to result in collapsed structures.
- DHS/USCG will initiate Federal waterborne SAR response activities for incidents likely to result in waterborne or maritime distress.

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- DOI/NPS will initiate Federal SAR response activities for incidents likely to result in a distress situation in inland/wilderness areas.
- DOD/USAF/AFRCC will initiate Federal SAR response activities for incidents that result in aeronautical distress.

ORGANIZATION

For incidents where DHS/FEMA is the primary agency, ESF #9 will follow the National US&R Response System, which consists of US&R task forces, ISTs, and technical specialists as defined in the Urban Search and Rescue Operations System Description.

For incidents where DHS/USCG is the primary agency, ESF #9 will follow the SAR response structure as outlined in the NSP, NSS, and the U.S. Coast Guard Addendum to the NSS. Additionally, DHS/USCG shall coordinate ESF #9 response from an agency-designated command center (Area/District/Sector) or the nearest RCC, RSC, or Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) to the affected area.

For incidents where DOI/NPS is the primary agency, ESF #9 will follow the SAR response structure as outlined in the NSP and NSS and other relevant DOI/NPS SAR procedures and SAR manuals. DOI/NPS shall coordinate ESF #9 response from one of its regional offices.

For incidents where DOD/USAF/AFRCC is the primary agency, ESF #9 will follow the SAR response structure as outlined in the NSP, NSS, and the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center Operations Instructions. DOD/USAF/AFRCC shall coordinate initial ESF #9 actions from its Rescue Coordination Center. If significant DOD resources are required and/or a Joint Task Force (JTF) is activated, the AFRCC will coordinate DOD response with the JTF.

RESPONSIBILITIES

ESF Coordinator: DHS/FEMA

Primary Agency: DHS/FEMA

DHS/FEMA serves as the primary agency for ESF #9 during structural collapse SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response. DHS/FEMA develops national US&R policy, provides planning guidance and coordination assistance, standardizes task force procedures, evaluates task force operational readiness, funds special equipment and training requirements within available appropriations, and reimburses as appropriate task force costs incurred as a result of deployment under the *NRF*. DHS/FEMA reimburses for authorized deployments to Stafford Act declaration sites. DHS/FEMA does not have the authority or funding to reimburse such activities absent a Stafford declaration. Non-Stafford deployments are reimbursed by the Federal department or agency requesting US&R assistance in accordance with provisions contained in the Financial Management Support Annex.

For incidents in which it is the primary agency, DHS/FEMA:

- Serves as headquarters-level ESF #9 coordinator during structural collapse SAR operations.
- Establishes, maintains, and manages the National US&R Response System in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response involving structural collapse. This includes preparedness activities such as training, equipment purchase, and evaluation of operational readiness.

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- Dispatches one or more ISTs to the affected area(s).
- Manages US&R task force deployment to, employment in, and redeployment from the affected area.
- Coordinates logistical support for US&R assets during field operations.
- Develops policies and procedures for the effective use and coordination of US&R assets.
- Provides status reports on US&R operations throughout the affected area.

Primary Agency: DHS/USCG

DHS/USCG serves as the primary agency for ESF #9 during waterborne or maritime SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response. DHS/USCG is the recognized SAR Coordinator for the U.S. maritime SAR region.

For incidents in which it is the primary agency, DHS/USCG:

- Serves as headquarters-level ESF #9 coordinator during waterborne or maritime SAR operations.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports.
- Facilitates resolution of any conflicting demands for waterborne or maritime distress response resources and ensures coordination between DHS/USCG and other Federal, State, tribal, and local emergency response activities, as appropriate.
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets if required in response to waterborne or maritime incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

Primary Agency: DOI/NPS

DOI/NPS serves as the primary agency for ESF #9 during inland, backcountry, remote area SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

For incidents in which it is the primary agency, DOI/NPS:

- Serves as headquarters-level ESF #9 coordinator during inland, backcountry, remote area SAR operations when State, tribal, and local SAR resources have been exhausted.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports.
- Facilitates resolution of any conflicting demands for land SAR response resources and ensures coordination between Federal, State, tribal, and local emergency response activities, as appropriate.

Primary Agency: DOD/USAF/AFRCC

DOD/USAF/AFRCC serves as the primary agency for ESF #9 during SAR operations for aviation-related incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response both in open and wilderness areas and in the vicinity of airports and urban areas requiring the coordinated deployment of rescue personnel and equipment. U.S. SAR coordinators are as follows:

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- DOD/USAF/AFRCC is the SAR coordinator for the U.S. aeronautical Search and Rescue Region (SRR) corresponding to the continental United States other than Alaska.
- DOD/U.S. Pacific Command is the SAR coordinator for the U.S. aeronautical SRR corresponding to Alaska, Hawaii, and the U.S. possessions and territories in the Pacific.

DOD maintains active, National Guard, and reserve components, facilities, and other resources that are used to support their own operations across the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii.

For incidents in which it is the primary agency, DOD/USAF/AFRCC:

- Serves as headquarters-level ESF #9 coordinator during aeronautical SAR operations.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports.
- Provides SAR Command and Control experts to augment a JTF Joint Personnel Recovery Center in support of incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.
- Facilitates resolution of any conflicting demands for aeronautical distress response resources and ensures coordination between DHS/USCG and other Federal, State, tribal, and local emergency response activities, as appropriate.

SUPPORT AGENCIES

Agency	Functions
Department of Agriculture	Forest Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develops standby agreements with US&R task forces to provide equipment and supplies from the National Interagency Cache System at the time of deployment.• Develops contingency plans for use of National Interagency Fire Center contract aircraft during incidents.• If available, provides equipment and supplies from the Interagency Cache System and use of Interagency Fire Center contract aircraft.
Department of Commerce	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquires and disseminates weather data, forecasts, and emergency information.• Provides weather information essential for efficient SAR.• Predicts pollutant movement and dispersion over time (marine and atmospheric).• Assesses areas of greatest hazard following a marine or atmospheric release.• Provides satellite services for detecting and locating persons in potential or actual distress in the wilderness, maritime, and aeronautical environments.

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Agency	Functions
<p>Department of Defense</p>	<p>National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates and manages the timely tasking, acquisition, analysis, and delivery of satellite imagery or imagery-derived products as directed by the primary agency. These activities and sources may involve non-DOD/NGA facilities or resources. • Provides expert analysis of imagery to determine damage levels and other elements of essential information as needed. Additionally, DOD/NGA as requested will provide technical expertise/analysis from other imagery sources if such expertise resides within DOD/NGA. • Provides mobile geospatial intelligence to support SAR field teams or other DHS/FEMA field teams as directed by the primary agency. This support includes technical experts (specifically, imagery analysts and geospatial analysts), and robust communications that can assist in more focused/directed searches and eliminate duplicate search efforts. • Provides imagery-derived and geospatial intelligence analysis in preparation for potential disasters or emergencies. • Coordinates for the release and dissemination of DOD/NGA products and/or data in accordance with applicable security classifications, licensing, copyright agreements, and limited distribution restrictions. <p>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides preincident training for DHS/FEMA task force/IST Structures Specialists, as well as for DOD/USACE Structures Specialists. • At the request of DHS, deploys trained Structures Specialists and Technical Search Specialist teams to supplement the US&R task forces and ISTs. • Assists the IST Engineering Cell and task forces with US&R efforts. • Provides structural engineering analysis, recommends hazard mitigation, recommends shoring, ascertains structural integrity and assesses whether buildings are safe to enter, and provides building stability monitoring.
<p>Department of Health and Human Services</p>	<p>National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides operational support to US&R task force medical teams and IST from ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services, as requested by DHS, to provide liaisons; medical supplies, equipment, and pharmaceuticals; supporting personnel; and veterinary support. • Provides NDMS patient evacuation and continuing care after entrapped victims are removed from collapsed structures by US&R task force personnel, when State and local emergency medical services resources are overwhelmed.
<p>Department of Homeland Security</p>	<p>Customs and Border Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue teams, which are highly specialized units capable of responding to emergency SAR situations anywhere in the United States. • Maintains air and marine assets to support SAR transportation operations.
<p>Department of Justice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides assistance with the development and maintenance of tort liability claims coverage for US&R task force and IST personnel engaged in training, mobilization, deployment, and field operations. • Provides Federal Tort Claims Act guidance and claims resolution services in support of SAR training activities and field deployments.

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Agency	Functions
Department of Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Department of Labor Employment Standards Administration, through its Federal Employees' Compensation Program, provides workers compensation guidance, claims resolution, and coverage for US&R task force and IST personnel while they are engaged in training, mobilization, deployment, and field operations.• The Occupational Safety and Health Administration implements procedures contained in the Worker Safety and Health Support Annex to provide onsite technical assistance, including the evaluation of SAR team exposure to hazardous substances and the dangers of structural collapse.• The Mine Safety and Health Administration assists with SAR and can provide mine rescue teams, mobile command centers, seismic location systems, TV probe systems, gas sampling analysis, and robot explorers.
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides personnel in appropriate technical disciplines, such as its Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team, to support US&R task forces and ISTs.• Provides and maintains training sites for use of US&R task forces and IST members.• Assists DHS with identification as well as research and development of new technologies for first responders.• Provides test-bed facilities for proof-of-concept and beta testing of new SAR technologies.• Provides temporary use of facilities for mobilization centers and staging areas for SAR assets.
U.S. Agency for International Development	Provides assistance with the identification of available international SAR teams and their integration into National US&R Response System operations as requested.