

April 24, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: Nancy Ward

Acting Administrator

FROM: G. Kemble Bennett

Chairman

National Advisory Council

SUBJECT: Recommendations on Urban Search and Rescue

At its April 15-16, 2009 meeting in Washington, DC, the National Advisory Council (NAC) discussed, deliberated, and voted to submit the following recommendations to the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regarding Urban Search and Rescue.

The purpose of this memo is to convey the NAC's recommendations regarding coordination and partnership between the National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Chiefs and FEMA. As a result of the work of the NAC's US&R Working Group over the past eight months, the NAC developed the following five recommendations. The NAC recommends to FEMA that the following actions be incorporated into an enhanced partnership between the National US&R team leadership and FEMA US&R Program Office.

## Recommendations:

These recommendations were drafted and approved with the end objective being to provide more direct contact between US&R and FEMA and continuing the strong partnership between US&R and sponsoring agencies.

- 1. Create an Urban Search and Rescue Strategic Group to become part of the FEMA Program Office decision making process.
  - a. Membership on the Strategic Group shall include:
    - i. FEMA Program Office representative
    - ii. 3 Sponsoring Agency Chiefs
    - iii. National Task Force Leader representative
    - iv. 3 Task Force Leaders
    - v. US&R Operations Work Group Chair
  - b. The recommended Strategic Group integration into the FEMA Program Office decision making process is set out on the **flow chart** below.
- 2. Establish regular meetings between the Strategic Group, Emergency Support Function ESF 9 Search and Rescue partners, and the Department of Defense.
- 3. Continue to send US&R representatives to State US&R Alliance conferences.
- 4. US&R Chiefs are encouraged to independently continue legislative efforts.
- 5. NAC US&R Working Group will provide oversight of the formation and initial operations of the Strategic Group.

## FEMA US&R Decision Process

The Strategic Group will provide direction to the Operations Group regarding policies, strategic goals, budgets and issues impacting costs. Routine issues will enter the system from any source and will be forwarded straight to the Operations Group.

The Operations Group Chair will assign the issue(s) to the appropriate Work Group for analysis and development.

The appropriate Work Group conducts staff work and presents a recommendation to Program Managers and Task Force Leaders for a 21 day review.

The Work Group compiles the input of the Program Managers and Task Force Leaders then completes the recommendation and presents it to the Operations Group for review and approval.

Upon approval by the Operations Group recommendations are divided into two categories. 1) <u>Higher level</u> recommendations (concerning policies, strategic goals, budgets and cost impacts) are forwarded to the Strategic Group. 2) <u>Routine</u> recommendations will be forwarded directly to the US&R Branch Chief.

The Strategic Group will only review Higher level recommendations. The Strategic Group will either return them to the Operations Group or approve them and forward to the US&R Branch Chief.

All final recommendations will be forwarded to the US&R Branch Chief. The Branch Chief will ensure that the recommendation is procedurally, financially, and legally sound for the System. The Branch Chief will either develop a "US&R Program Directive" and distribute it for implementation or return the recommendation for the appropriate modification.