

### 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

### Support Agencies:

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

## INTRODUCTION

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### Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Search and Rescue (SAR) rapidly deploys Federal SAR resources to provide lifesaving assistance to State, tribal, and local authorities, to include local SAR Coordinators and Mission Coordinators, when there is an actual or anticipated request for Federal SAR assistance.

### Scope

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During incidents or potential incidents requiring a unified SAR response, Federal SAR responsibilities reside with ESF #9 primary agencies that provide timely and specialized SAR capabilities. Support agencies provide specific capabilities or resources that support ESF #9. Federal SAR response operational environments are classified as:

- Structural Collapse (Urban) Search and Rescue (US&R)
- Maritime/Coastal/Waterborne Search and Rescue
- Land Search and Rescue

SAR services include distress monitoring, incident communications, locating distressed personnel, coordination, and execution of rescue operations including extrication and/or evacuation, along with providing 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: US&R includes operations for natural and manmade disasters and catastrophic incidents, as well as other structural 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. The Federal US&R response integrates DHS/FEMA task forces in support of unified SAR operations conducted following the U.S. National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP). (The NSP is the policy guidance of the signatory Federal departments and agencies for coordinating SAR services to meet domestic needs and international commitments.)

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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 within available appropriations, and reimburses, as appropriate, task force costs incurred as a result of ESF #9 deployment.

The National US&R Response System is prepared to deploy and initiate operations immediately in support of ESF #9. The task forces are staffed primarily by emergency services personnel who are trained and experienced in collapsed structure SAR operations and possess specialized expertise and equipment. Upon activation under the *National Response Framework (NRF)*, DHS/FEMA US&R task forces are considered Federal assets under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and other applicable authorities.

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.

DHS/FEMA reimburses the parent Sponsoring Agencies for US&R task forces for authorized US&R deployments. DHS/FEMA is authorized to reimburse such activities when there is a Stafford Act declaration or in anticipation of a declaration. For non-Stafford Act US&R deployments, the Federal department or agency requesting US&R assistance reimburses DHS/FEMA following provisions contained in the Financial Management Support Annex. DHS/FEMA uses the funding provided by the requesting Federal department or agency to reimburse the Sponsoring Agency for the task forces.

### **Maritime/Coastal/Waterborne Search and Rescue**

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

Operational Overview: Maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR includes operations for natural and manmade disasters that primarily require DHS/USCG air, cutter, boat, and response team operations. The Federal maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR response integrates DHS/USCG resources in support of unified SAR operations conducted per the NSP.

DHS/USCG personnel are trained and experienced in maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR operations and possess specialized expertise, facilities, and equipment for conducting an effective response to distress situations. DHS/USCG develops, maintains, and operates rescue facilities for SAR in waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction and is designated the primary agency for maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR under ESF #9. In addition, DHS/USCG staffing at Area, District, and local Sector Command Centers promotes interagency coordination with State, tribal, and local emergency managers during incidents requiring a unified SAR response in which maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR resources allocation are required.

### **Land Search and Rescue**

#### **Primary Agency: Department of the Interior (DOI)/National Park Service (NPS); Department of Defense (DOD)**

Operational Overview: Land SAR includes operations that require aviation and ground forces to meet mission objectives, other than maritime/coastal/waterborne and structural collapse SAR operations as described above. Land SAR primary agencies integrate their efforts to provide an array of diverse capabilities under ESF #9.

DOI/NPS possesses SAR resources that are specially trained to operate in various roles including ground search, small boat operations, swiftwater rescue, helo-aquatic rescue, and

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other technical rescue disciplines. DOI/NPS maintains preconfigured teams that include personnel and equipment from DOI/NPS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other DOI components in planning for ESF #9

When requested, DOD, through U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and/or U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), coordinates facilities, resources, and special capabilities that conduct and support air, land, and maritime SAR operations according to applicable directives, plans, guidelines, and agreements. Per the NSP, the U.S. Air Force and USPACOM provide resources for the organization and coordination of civil SAR services and operations within their assigned SAR regions and, when requested, to assist Federal, State, tribal, and local authorities.

DOD's role as a primary agency is based on SAR Coordinator responsibilities stipulated in the NSP and is generally limited to a coordination function.

DOD designation as a primary agency in ESF #9 is not clearly defined in current statutes, authorities, or DOD policies. Under the *NRF*, DOD assists civil authorities by conducting SAR missions on a reimbursable basis pursuant to the Stafford Act or Economy Act, as appropriate.

If DOD SAR capabilities deploy at the direction of the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center in support of the NSP, and subsequently if the Stafford Act is invoked, those capabilities are administered by the *NRF* and ESF #9. As soon as practical, a DHS/FEMA or other department/agency mission assignment are submitted to and approved by DOD for those capabilities' continued support.

### Policies

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Federal SAR responders assist and support State, tribal, and local SAR capabilities in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response. No provision of this annex is to be construed as an obstruction to prompt and effective action by any agency to assist persons in distress.

ESF #9 SAR operations are conducted following the *NRF* and NSP, and the U.S. National SAR Supplement (NSS), Catastrophic Incident SAR (CISAR) Addendum, and other addenda that define SAR responsibilities and provide guidance to the Federal departments and agencies with civil SAR mandates.

If an affected State, tribal, or local government publishes guidance or a plan for conducting unified SAR operations, that guidance or plan takes precedence.

State-to-State SAR assistance is requested by the affected State through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Other local SAR resources are requested by the affected locality through mutual aid and assistance agreements. Non-Federal SAR resources are, as appropriate, incorporated into any coordinated SAR operations.

State, tribal, and local authorities are responsible for SAR within their respective jurisdictions and typically designate a SAR Coordinator to provide integration and coordination of all SAR services.

The following provides primary agency statutory authorities and policy guidance:

- Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as amended); 6 U.S.C. 722: This section codified US&R as a system within FEMA, "There is in the Agency a system known as the Urban Search and Rescue Response System."
- Stafford Act; 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207: This act authorizes the President (assisted by DHS/FEMA) to declare major disasters and emergencies in the United States and provide assistance to State and local governments. The President may use the services of State and

local governments for the purposes of the act, which includes addressing immediate threats to life and property (e.g., SAR operations).

- 14 U.S.C. 2: This section requires the U.S. Coast Guard to develop, establish, maintain, and operate rescue facilities for the promotion of safety on, under, and over the high seas and waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.
- 16 U.S.C. 1b(1): This section gives DOI/NPS authority to provide emergency rescue, firefighting, and cooperative assistance to public safety agencies for related purposes outside of the National Park System.
- Economy Act; 31 U.S.C. 1535-1536 (2007): This act authorizes Federal departments and agencies to provide goods or services, on a reimbursable basis, to other Federal departments and agencies.
- 32 U.S.C.: This title authorizes the National Guard to perform DOD-funded activities while remaining under the control of the Governor.
- Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act; P.L. 109-295 (2006): This act expands the scope of ESF #9 from only urban SAR to include all types of SAR activities. Follow on congressional guidance establishes the organizational structure. It codified US&R as a system within FEMA in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as amended). It also mandated FEMA to develop a Federal response capability to rapidly and effectively deliver assistance essential to saving lives or protecting property or public health and safety and to carry out the mission of FEMA by conducting emergency operations to save lives and property.
- National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP): The NSP is the policy guidance of the signatory Federal departments and agencies for coordinating SAR services to meet domestic needs and international commitments.
- National SAR Supplement (NSS): This document provides implementation guidance on the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual and the NSP.
- Catastrophic Incident SAR (CISAR) Addendum to the NSS: This document provides a description of the unified SAR response to catastrophic incidents, guides Federal authorities involved in the response, and informs State, tribal, and local authorities on what to expect of/from Federal SAR responders.
- DOD Support to Civil Search and Rescue (DODD 3003.01): This directive states that DOD shall support domestic civil authorities by providing civil SAR service to the fullest extent practicable on a noninterference basis with primary military duties.
- Military Support to Civil Authorities (DODD 3025.1): This directive identifies the policy and responsibilities by which DOD responds to major disasters or emergencies per the Stafford Act and other authorities.
- Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (DODD 3025.15): This directive states that DOD shall cooperate with and provide military assistance to civil authorities, as directed by and consistent with applicable law, Presidential directives, and Executive orders.

**CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

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**General**

DHS/FEMA activates ESF #9 when an incident is anticipated or occurs that may result in a request for a unified SAR response to an affected area. The ESF #9 response is scalable to meet the specific needs of each incident, based upon the nature and magnitude of the event, the suddenness of onset, and the capability of local SAR resources. Response resources are drawn from ESF #9 primary and support agencies.

As required, the primary agencies are represented at the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC), Joint Field Office (JFO), and State, tribal, and local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs).

For each incident requiring Federal SAR support, DHS/FEMA designates the overall primary agency for that particular ESF #9 SAR response. Designation is dependent upon incident circumstances and the type of response required.

The designated overall primary agency coordinates integration of Federal SAR resources, including support agency resources, in support of the requesting Federal, State, tribal, or local SAR authority.

All ESF #9 agencies provide support to the designated overall primary agency, as required.

**ORGANIZATION**

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For incidents where DHS/FEMA is the overall primary agency, ESF #9 SAR operations are conducted following the National US&R Response System manuals, directives, NSP, NSS, and CISAR Addendum.

For incidents where DHS/USCG is the overall primary agency, ESF #9 SAR operations are conducted following the SAR response structure as outlined in the NSP, NSS, CISAR Addendum, USCG SAR Addendum, and other USCG directives.

For incidents where DOI/NPS and/or DOD are the overall primary agency, ESF #9 SAR operations are conducted following the SAR response structure as outlined in the NSP, NSS, CISAR Addendum, and other relevant DOI/NPS and DOD SAR procedures, directives, and manuals.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

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**ESF #9 Coordinator: DHS/FEMA**

As ESF #9 coordinator, DHS/FEMA:

- Designates the overall primary agency responsible for the coordination of Federal SAR operations.
- Coordinates with all other ESFs, as required.

**Primary Agencies**

For every incident, DHS/FEMA assesses the specific SAR requirements and assigns one of the four primary agencies as the overall primary agency for SAR for that particular incident.

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When in the overall primary agency role for a particular incident, that organization conducts the following actions:

- Coordinates planning and operations between primary and support agencies.
- Coordinates resolution of conflicting operational demands for SAR response resources.

### **Primary Agency: DHS/FEMA**

DHS/FEMA serves as the overall primary agency to accomplish the ESF #9 mission during structural collapse SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

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

- Manages US&R task force and IST deployments in the affected area.
- Coordinates logistical support for US&R assets during field operations.
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.
- Coordinates with Federal, State, tribal, and local designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and State, tribal, and local EOCs.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.

### **Primary Agency: DHS/USCG**

DHS/USCG serves as the overall primary agency to accomplish the ESF #9 mission during maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

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

- Manages USCG SAR resources in the affected area.
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.
- Coordinates with Federal, State, tribal, and local designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and State, tribal, and local EOCs.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports, as required.

### **Primary Agency: DOI/NPS**

DOI/NPS and DOD share responsibility as the overall primary agency for a particular incident to accomplish the ESF #9 mission during land SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

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

- Manages DOI/NPS land SAR resources in the affected area.

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- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.
- Coordinates with Federal, State, tribal, and local designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.
- Coordinates logistical support for DOI/NPS resources during field operations.
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and State, tribal, and local EOCs.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.

### Primary Agency: DOD

DOD and DOI/NPS share responsibility as the overall primary agency for accomplishing the ESF #9 mission during land SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

For incidents in which it is designated the overall primary agency, DOD, through USNORTHCOM and USPACOM:

- Manages DOD SAR resources in the affected area.
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.
- Coordinates with Federal, State, tribal, and local designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and State, tribal, and local EOCs.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.

### SUPPORT AGENCIES

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

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Agency	Functions
<b>Department of Defense</b>	<p><b>National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates and manages the timely tasking, acquisition, analysis, and delivery of satellite imagery or imagery-derived products as directed by the primary agency.</li> <li>• Provides expert analysis of imagery to determine damage levels and other elements of essential information, as needed.</li> <li>• Provides technical expertise/analysis from other imagery sources, if such expertise resides within DOD/NGA.</li> <li>• Provides mobile geospatial intelligence including technical experts (imagery analysts and geospatial analysts) and robust communications to support SAR field teams or other DHS/FEMA field teams, as requested by the primary agency.</li> <li>• Provides imagery-derived and geospatial intelligence analysis in preparation for potential disasters or emergencies.</li> <li>• Coordinates the release and dissemination of DOD/NGA products and/or data following applicable security classifications, licensing, copyright agreements, and limited distribution restrictions.</li> </ul> <p><b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the <i>NRF</i>, supports the ESF #9 SAR mission by developing, training, and equipping USACE personnel to operate as support to the DHS/FEMA US&amp;R Task Forces.</li> <li>• Through Technical Assistance Structural Engineers (TASEs), supports DHS/FEMA and other agency efforts requiring structural engineering expertise (e.g., evaluate, design, construct, or repair of buildings, bridges, and critical facilities).</li> <li>• Through Structural Safety Assessment Planning and Response Teams (SSA PRTs), provides habitability inspections as required, to support response and recovery efforts for building safety evaluations.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Health and Human Services</b>	<p><b>National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services, provides support to ESF #9 primary agencies, including liaisons; medical supplies, equipment, and pharmaceuticals; supporting personnel; and veterinary support.</li> <li>• Provides NDMS personnel to support medical field operations and evacuation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Indian Health Service:</b> Maintains specialized response teams to support the medical care of American Indian and Alaska Native people.</p>
<b>Department of Homeland Security</b>	<p><b>Customs and Border Protection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue (BORSTAR) teams, which are highly specialized units capable of responding to emergency SAR situations anywhere in the United States.</li> <li>• Maintains air and marine assets to support SAR transportation operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of the Interior</b>	<p><b>U.S. Geological Survey:</b> Provides personnel with appropriate technical disciplines and specialized technology to support geospatial analysis and mapping products in support of ESF #9 primary agencies.</p>
<b>Department of Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates force protection as required.</li> <li>• Provides assistance with the development and maintenance of tort liability claims coverage for US&amp;R task force and IST personnel engaged in mobilization, deployment, and field operations.</li> </ul>

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Agency	Functions
<p><b>Department of Labor</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mine Safety and Health Administration provides mine rescue teams, mobile command centers, seismic location systems, TV probe systems, gas sampling analysis, and robot explorers.</li> <li>• The Department of Labor Employment Standards Administration, through its Federal Employees' Compensation Program, provides workers compensation guidance, claims resolution, and coverage for US&amp;R task force and IST personnel while they are engaged in mobilization, deployment, and field operations.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Department of Transportation</b></p>	<p><b>Federal Aviation Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is delegated sole authority to manage the National Airspace System (NAS), which includes operating a safe, secure, and efficient air traffic system; oversight and certification of aircraft and airmen; regulation of airspace; promotion of air commerce; and the support of America's national defense (49 U.S.C.).</li> <li>• Supports activities to protect and recover NAS operations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Aeronautics and Space Administration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides personnel in appropriate technical disciplines (e.g., its Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team).</li> <li>• Provides temporary use of facilities for mobilization centers and staging areas for SAR assets.</li> </ul>
<p><b>U.S. Agency for International Development</b></p>	<p>Manages the support of international SAR teams to a domestic U.S. disaster following a Stafford Act Declaration, under the International Assistance System Concept of Operations (IAS CONOPS), and in support of the NRF's International Coordination Support Annex (ICSA.)</p>
<p><b>Department of State</b></p>	<p>If FEMA does not activate the IAS and proactive offers of assistance from foreign countries or international/multilateral organizations are received, the State Department may still designate the State Task Force (STF) (or, if the STF has not been established, designate a lead bureau or the Operations Center's Crisis Management Support [CMS] office) as the sole entity within DOS responsible for coordinating formal offers of international assistance, and request all offers be forwarded to the STF (or, as appropriate, the lead bureau or CMS office) for dispensation.</p>

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