



FEMA

JUN 29 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: Marjorie Debrot  
Chief  
Doctrine Production & Publication System Branch  
Incident Management Systems Integration Division  
National Preparedness Directorate

FROM: William L. Carwile, III *William L. Carwile III*  
Assistant Administrator for Disaster Operations

SUBJECT: National Response Framework ESF #9 Annex Revision

The four ESF #9 Primary Agencies (Federal Emergency Management Agency, United States Coast Guard, Department of Interior/National Park Service and Department of Defense), working through the National Search and Rescue Committee (NSARC), have completed an extensive review and revision of the ESF #9 Annex to the National Response Framework (NRF).

The Annex has been revised to reflect improvements made over the last several years by each of the Primary Agencies while developing their specific Search and Rescue policies and interagency guidance.

Attached for integration and inclusion in the NRF, is the approved ESF #9 Annex revision.

If you have any questions, Dean Scott can be reached at: (202) 646-4530 or [dean.scott@dhs.gov](mailto:dean.scott@dhs.gov).

Attachments:  
Revised ESF # 9 Annex  
NSARC Promulgation Letter



# National Search And Rescue Committee

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Department of Homeland Security  
Department of Defense  
Department of Interior  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Transportation  
Federal Communications Commission  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Mr. Robert Powers  
Acting Assistant Administrator, Disaster Operations  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C St SW  
Washington D.C., 20472

APR 30 2009

Dear Mr. Powers:

Enclosed is the National Search and Rescue Committee's (NSARC) proposed revision to the National Response Framework's Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Search and Rescue (SAR) Annex, for your consideration. NSARC's Member Departments and Agencies are the ESF #9 Primary Agencies that will respond to disasters and catastrophic incidents under the Stafford Act.

With the extensive work conducted by FEMA and other NSARC Member Agencies in developing Agency specific SAR policy and interagency guidance over the last several years, NSARC realized that ESF #9 required revision to reflect these improvements.

Of note are the following changes:

- ESF #9's Scope was revised to reflect a change to the types SAR (Structural Collapse; Maritime/Coastal/Waterborne SAR; and Land SAR) to be conducted and identification of the responsible Lead Primary Agency.
- Revised the list of statutory authorities and policy guidance.
- Further defined FEMA's role as ESF #9 Coordinator in designating the ESF #9 Lead Primary Agency for a particular incident.
- Expanded on the responsibilities of the ESF #9 Lead Primary Agency.
- Reviewed and validated the list of Support Agencies and their functions.

These changes reflect the Federal Government's "new normalcy" as we continue to improve guidance and procedures in supporting States, Tribes and Territories when a disaster strikes.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH R. CASTILLO  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard  
Chairman, National Search and Rescue Committee

**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 Interior  
Department of Justice  
Department of Labor  
Department of Transportation  
National Aeronautics and Space  
Administration  
U.S. Agency for International  
Development

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**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, Territorial, and local SAR Coordinator(s), SAR Mission Coordinator(s), and other authorities when a request for assistance is made or anticipated from an authority recognized by the National Response Framework (NRF) for incidents or potential incidents requiring a unified SAR response.

**Scope**

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

During incidents or potential incidents requiring a unified response, Federal SAR responsibilities reside within 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 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: Structural Collapse SAR includes operations for natural and man-made 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 Structural Collapse SAR response integrates DHS/FEMA task forces in support of unified SAR operations conducted in accordance with the U.S. National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP).

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 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.

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, Territorial, and local government emergency managers.

DHS/FEMA reimburses for authorized US&R deployments to Stafford Act declaration sites. DHS/FEMA does not have the authority or funding to reimburse such activities absent a Stafford Act declaration. Non-Stafford Act US&R deployments are reimbursed by the Federal Department or Agency requesting US&R assistance in accordance with provisions contained in the Financial Management Support Annex.

## Maritime/Coastal/Waterborne Search and Rescue

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

Operational Overview: Maritime, Coastal, and Waterborne SAR includes operations for natural and man-made disasters that primarily require DHS/USCG air, ship, boat, and response team operations. The Federal maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR response integrates DHS/USCG resources in support of unified SAR operations conducted in accordance with 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 has been designated as the Primary Agency for maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR under ESF #9. Additionally, DHS/USCG staffing at Area, District, and local Sector Command Centers promotes interagency coordination with State, Tribal, Territorial, and local emergency managers during incidents requiring a unified response in which maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR resources are required.

## Land Search and Rescue

### **Primary Agencies: 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 will integrate their efforts to provide an array of diverse capabilities under ESF #9.

DOI/NPS has SAR resources that are specially trained to operate in various roles including ground search, small boat operations, swiftwater rescue, helo-aquatic rescue, and other technical rescue disciplines. NPS maintains preconfigured teams that include personnel and equipment from the NPS, the 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), will coordinate 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 United States Air Force and USPACOM provide resources for the organization and coordination of civil SAR services and operations within, their assigned Search and Rescue Regions and when requested, to assist Federal, State, Tribal, Territorial, 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 will assist 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 will be administered by the NRF and ESF #9. As soon as practical, a FEMA or other Department/Agency mission assignment will be submitted to and approved by DoD for those capabilities continued support.

## **Policies**

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Federal SAR responders assist and support State, Tribal, Territorial, and local SAR capabilities in incidents requiring an integrated response. No provision of ESF #9 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 in accordance with the NRF, NSP, U.S. National SAR Supplement (NSS), Catastrophic Incident SAR (CISAR) Addendum, and other addenda that define SAR responsibilities and provide guidance to Federal Agencies with civil SAR mandates.

If an affected State, Tribe, or Territory has guidance or a plan for conducting unified SAR operations, that guidance or plan will take precedence.

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

The following provides Primary Agency statutory authorities and policy guidance:

- 14 USC 2: The U.S. Coast Guard is required 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 USC 1b(1): The National Park Service is given authority to provide emergency rescue, fire fighting, and cooperative assistance to public safety agencies for related purposes outside of the National Park System.
- 31 USC 1535-1536 (2007) – Economy Act: This Act authorizes Federal agencies to provide goods or services, on a reimbursable basis, to other Federal Agencies.
- 32 USC – National Guard: 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; Public Law 109-295 (2006): 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.
- National SAR Plan (NSP): The U.S. NSP is the policy guidance of the signatory Federal 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 States, Tribes, Territories, and local authorities on what to expect of 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 non-interference 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 in accordance with 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 will be represented at the NRCC, JFO, and State, Tribal, Territorial, and local Emergency Operations Centers.

DHS/FEMA will designate the Lead Primary Agency for an ESF #9 SAR response. Designation is dependent upon incident circumstances and the type of response required.

The designated Lead Primary Agency will coordinate integration of Federal SAR resources, including Support Agency resources, in support of the requesting Federal, State, Tribal, or Territorial SAR authority.

All ESF #9 Agencies will provide support to the designated Lead Primary Agency as required.

### ORGANIZATION

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For incidents where DHS/FEMA is the Lead Primary Agency, ESF #9 SAR operations will be conducted in accordance with the National US&R Response System manuals, directives, NSP, NSS, and CISAR Addendum.

For incidents where DHS/USCG is the Lead Primary Agency, ESF #9 SAR operations will be conducted in accordance with the SAR response structure as outlined in the NSP, NSS, CISAR Addendum, U.S. Coast Guard Addendum, and other Coast Guard directives.

For incidents where DOI/NPS and/or DoD are the Lead Primary Agencies, ESF #9 SAR operations will be conducted in accordance with 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 Lead Primary Agency responsible for the coordination of Federal SAR operations; and
- Coordinates with all other ESFs as required.

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

DHS/FEMA serves as the Lead 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 Lead Primary Agency, DHS/FEMA:

- Coordinates resolution of conflicting operational demands for SAR response resources;
- 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, Territorial, and local designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources;
- Coordinates planning and operations between Primary and Support Agencies;
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and State, Tribal, Territorial, and local Emergency Operations Centers; and
- Provides incident reports assessments, and situation reports as required.

**Primary Agency: DHS/USCG**

DHS/USCG serves as the Lead 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 Lead Primary Agency, DHS/USCG:

- Coordinates resolution of conflicting operational demands for SAR response resources;
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets;
- Coordinates with Federal, State, Tribal, Territorial, and local designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources;
- Coordinates planning and operations between Primary and Support Agencies;
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and State, Tribal, Territorial, and local Emergency Operations Centers; and
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.

**Primary Agency: DOI/NPS**

DOI/NPS and DoD share responsibility as the Lead Primary Agency 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 Lead Primary Agency, DOI/NPS:

- Coordinates resolution of conflicting operational demands for SAR response resources;
- Manages NPS Land SAR resources in the affected area;
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets;
- Coordinates with Federal, State, Tribal, Territorial, and local designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources;
- Coordinates planning and operations between Primary and Support Agencies;
- Coordinates logistical support for NPS resources during field operations;
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and State, Tribal, Territorial, and local Emergency Operations Centers; and

- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.

**Primary Agency: DoD**

DoD and DOI/NPS share responsibility as the Lead Primary Agency 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 Lead Primary Agency, DoD, through USNORTHCOM and USPACOM:

- Coordinates resolution of conflicting operational demands for SAR response resources;
- Manages DoD SAR resources in the affected area;
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets;
- Coordinates with Federal, State, Tribal, Territorial, and local designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources;
- Coordinates planning and operations between Primary and Support Agencies;
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and State, Tribal, Territorial, and local Emergency Operations Centers; and
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.

**SUPPORT AGENCIES**

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<b>Agency</b>	<b>Functions</b>
<b>Department of Agriculture</b>	<p><b>Forest Service:</b></p> <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>	<p><b>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:</b></p> <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>

Agency	Functions
<p><b>Department of Defense</b></p>	<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 requested by the Lead 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 Lead Primary Agency</li> <li>• Provides imagery-derived and geospatial intelligence analysis in preparation for potential disasters or emergencies</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p><b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the NRF, supports the ESF #9 SAR mission by developing, training, and equipping USACE personnel to operate as support to the FEMA US&amp;R Task Forces.</li> <li>• Technical Assistance Structural Engineers (TASE): support FEMA and other Agency efforts requiring structural engineering expertise (e.g., evaluate, design, construct, or repair buildings, bridges, and critical facilities)</li> <li>• Structural Safety Assessment Planning and Response Teams (SSA PRTs) provide habitability inspections as required, to support response and recovery efforts for building safety evaluations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Department of Health and Human Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) personnel to support medical field operations and evacuation</li> <li>• Indian Health Service maintains specialized response teams to support the medical care of American Indian and Alaska Native people</li> </ul>

Agency	Functions
<b>Department of Homeland Security</b>	<b>Customs and Border Protection</b> <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 operations</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Interior</b>	<b>U.S. Geological Survey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides personnel with appropriate technical disciplines and specialized technology to support geospatial analysis and mapping products in support of ESF#9 Primary Agencies.</li> </ul>
<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>
<b>Department of Labor</b>	<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>
<b>Department of Transportation</b>	<b>Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FAA 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 USC)</li> <li>• FAA also supports activities to protect and recover NAS operations</li> </ul>
<b>National Aeronautics and Space Administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides personnel in appropriate technical disciplines, such as its Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team</li> <li>• Provides temporary use of facilities for mobilization centers and staging areas for SAR assets</li> </ul>

<b>U.S. Agency for International Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides assistance with the identification of available international SAR teams for an ESF #9 response as requested or offered</li></ul>
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