



EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION #9 SEARCH AND RESCUE

LEAD: Sheriff's Office

SUPPORT: Emergency Management
SAR Council
Fire Agencies
Other County Organizations

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

To provide for the effective utilization of search and rescue resources and for the control and coordination of various types of search and rescue operations involving persons in distress, as the result of an emergency/disaster.

B. Scope

This ESF addresses wilderness and suburban search and rescue operations, and includes ground operations, air operations and water operations. This ESF also addresses use of Search and Rescue resources in support of emergency management response and recovery activities.

II. RELATED POLICIES

- A. *Search and Rescue (SAR) means the act of searching for, rescuing or recovering by means of ground, marine, or air activity any person who becomes lost, injured, or is killed while outdoors or as a result of a natural or manmade disaster, including instances involving searches for downed aircraft when ground personnel are used. (RCW 38.52.010[7])*
- B. *The chief law enforcement officers within the County shall be responsible for SAR activities within their jurisdiction. (RCW 38.52.400[1])* The Thurston County Sheriff is responsible for SAR operations in Thurston County. The Sheriff will appoint one or more deputies within the department as SAR Coordinator(s) to work with Division of Emergency Management and the Thurston County SAR Council.

- C. Search and Rescue activities shall be conducted per state and local operation plans adopted by the elected governing body of each local political subdivision. (RCW 38.52.400)

III. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- A. Heavy rescue operations, or water rescue due to flooding, will be a team effort of law enforcement, fire service, Search and Rescue personnel and other agencies as appropriate under the National Incident Management System. .
- B. People will become lost, injured, or die while outdoors, requiring search and rescue activities in Thurston County.
- C. An emergency or disaster can cause buildings to collapse, or leave people stranded due to rising water, threatening lives and requiring prompt search, rescue or medical care.
- D. Large numbers of local residents and volunteers will initiate activities to assist in SAR operations and will require coordination and direction.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. The Thurston County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) may be activated to provide coordination, technical and administrative support to SAR operations. The State Emergency Operations Center may also be activated to support local efforts.
- B. Coordination from the local EOC to the State EOC will be through the normal radio and telephone capabilities, augmented by back-up command and control communications systems.
- C. The Incident Command Post will utilize whatever communications capabilities exist (radios, cell phone, etc) necessary to carry out effective SAR/EM operations and communications with the local EOC.
- D. SAR members must be registered as Emergency Workers. Individual SAR units may establish criteria and training standards that meet or exceed those required in WAC 118-04.

- E. Requests for outside resources must be made through normal emergency management channels.
- F. Search and Rescue Missions
 - 1. The Thurston County Sheriff's Office (SAR Coordinator) or Division of Emergency Management, upon request from the SAR coordinator, will obtain a mission number from State Emergency Management for SAR missions.
 - 2. State Emergency Management, upon receiving requests for assistance from appropriate local authorities, will coordinate the acquisition of all requested resources.
- G. The United States Coast Guard directs all SAR operations on or above navigable waters (waters where the Coast Guard maintains navigational aids and/or where there is commercial shipping and navigation).
- H. The United States Air Force directs search operations for downed or missing military aircraft, aircraft carrying people or things of national significance, or aircraft of international origin.

All other downed or missing aircraft SAR operations will be coordinated by the WA State Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Local

1. Sheriff

- a. Provides direction, control and coordination of SAR operations.
- b. Identifies resources needed in support of SAR operations.
- c. Maintains a current SAR Call-Out Roster.
- d. Informs Emergency Management of SAR activations.

- e. Coordinates search and rescue activities and training with the Thurston County Search and Rescue Council.

2. Search and Rescue Council

- a. Develops and maintains policies and procedures related to SAR and EM activities.
- b. Provides resources for search and rescue activities under the direction and control of the Sheriff's Office.
- c. Develops and implements local SAR programs in coordination with the Sheriff's Office.
- d. Ensures equipment is in proper working order and response personnel attain and retain proper certification to meet state and local requirements.
- e. Provides assistance as requested.
- f. Trains, prepares and maintains records for search and rescue activities.

3. Emergency Management/EOC

- a. Secures SAR mission numbers from State Emergency Management upon request from the SAR Coordinator.
- b. Registers volunteers involved in Search and Rescue.
- c. Maintains SAR mission records, and forwards appropriate records, reimbursement requests and claims to State Emergency Management.
- d. Requests state and federal assistance when required.

4. Fire Agencies

The fire agencies conduct rescue operations commensurate with the availability of equipment and the degree of specialized training.

5. Other County Organizations

Assist and support SAR operations when requested and as feasible.

B. State

1. State Emergency Management

- a. Coordinate state and regional SAR resources.
- b. Request federal urban SAR assistance when requested by the county.

C. Federal

1. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Tasks federal agencies to perform SAR activities under a Declaration of Emergency or Major Disaster Declaration by the President.

2. Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC)

Coordinates federal resources providing SAR assistance to states during non-disaster times (reference *National Search and Rescue Plan*).

VI. REFERENCES

- A. RCW 38.52 and WAC 118.04
- B. *Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*
- C. *National Search and Rescue Plan*