

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION #9

SEARCH & RESCUE

ANNEX COORDINATOR: Thurston County Sheriff's Office

LEAD: Thurston County Sheriff's Office

SUPPORT: Thurston County Emergency Management
Thurston County Search and Rescue (SAR) Council
Thurston County Fire Agencies
Thurston 911 Communications (TCOMM 911)
Thurston County Special Operations Rescue Team
Thurston County Dive Team
State/Federal 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 Emergency Support Function (ESF) addresses wilderness, urban 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. 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 all of Thurston County. The

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Sheriff will appoint one or more deputies within the department as SAR Coordinator(s) to work with Thurston County Emergency Management and the Thurston County SAR volunteer organizations.

- 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)
- D. Emergency Management coordinates direct support to all SAR activities and registers SAR volunteers as emergency workers. (RCW 38.52.400[1]). 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. When possible, in addition to the rescue of individuals, both service animals and household pets will be rescued.

III. SITUATION

A. Emergency/Disaster Conditions and Hazards

- 1. Disasters vary widely in scope, degree of devastation, and threat to human life.
- 2. Events such as structural collapse, flooding, landslide, missing aircraft, outdoor or marine recreational activity incidents, persons that wander off from their normal living environment, or any other disaster whether it be natural or human caused are likely to occur.
- 3. Secondary events, such as aftershocks from earthquakes may compound problems.

B. Planning Assumptions

- 1. People will become lost, injured, or die while outdoors, requiring search and rescue activities in Thurston County.
- 2. Natural and man-made disasters and/or acts of terrorism may create the need for structural search and rescue as well as wide area search operations.
- 3. Emergencies and/or disasters may cause buildings to collapse or leave people stranded due to rising water, threatening lives and requiring prompt search, rescue and/or medical care.

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4. 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.
5. Large numbers of local residents and volunteers will initiate activities to assist in SAR operations and will require coordination and direction.
6. Some individuals may have communication impediments such as hearing or speech impediments or behavioral or cognitive impairment. Communication could also be difficult due to a language barrier.
7. Some individuals may have medical needs that require transport or the need to bring medical equipment with them.
8. An emergency or disaster will overwhelm volunteer and local SAR agencies.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. The Thurston County Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) 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.
2. 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 ECC.
3. Families and friends will be called upon to assist when a language barrier presents itself on a search for missing persons. American Sign Language, or foreign language interpreters will be requested through the Language Line, via dispatch, to convey information to individuals requiring information presented in a language other than English.
4. Requests for outside resources must be made through normal emergency management channels.
5. 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).
6. 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.

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

B. Organization

The Thurston County Sheriff's Office is responsible for SAR operations within Thurston County. Local emergency management registers volunteers in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 118-04-WAC.

C. Procedures

Coordination from the local ECC to the State EOC will be through the normal radio and telephone capabilities, augmented by back-up command and control communications systems.

Thurston County Sheriff's Office will receive a request for assistance from State Emergency Management Division or Thurston 911 Communications (TCOMM 911). Sheriff's Office will notify local emergency management of the request.

State Emergency Management, upon receiving requests for assistance from appropriate local authorities, will coordinate the acquisition of all requested resources.

D. Prevention and Mitigation Activities

Refer to the Thurston County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

E. Preparedness Activities

a. Training

Annual training requirements for all active SAR volunteers include Communications, First Aid, Wilderness Survival, Helicopter Operations, Searcher Safety and Incident Command System.

b. Exercise

To get the greatest benefit from holding exercises, SAR teams often exercise together. Typically exercises are focused around Mock Searches, Field Demonstrations, Basic Navigation and Compass Use/Geocaching, however, may be scaled to include SORT and Dive Team operations.

c. Public Education

SAR units use events such as parades, safety fairs and other community events to educate the public on ways to stay safe, prevent themselves from becoming lost, and what steps to take if they do become lost.

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F. Response Activities

1. Upon activation of a search and rescue mission the SAR Incident Coordinator (IC) shall ensure that a mission number is obtained from the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD).
2. Reviews initial information provided by responding officer, gathers additional information from reporting parties if needed, assesses the need for SAR resources, and initiates initial resource callout. Additional resources will be called as needed at any point during the mission at the discretion of the IC.
3. During the mission managers utilize responders to locate and facilitate the rescue of missing or injured in a safe and effective manner.
4. In the event of a natural or human caused disaster, SAR resources can be called to assist other responding agencies or personnel within the scope of their training.
5. Upon completion of a mission, the IC or designee will complete and submit the final report to Thurston County Emergency Management for submission to the State.

G. Recovery Activities

1. During a SAR mission for missing person(s), on scene teams will provide for the initial care of any subject(s) found during the search. Additional advanced medical assistance will be requested as needed through normal emergency management channels.
2. During a disaster response, SAR volunteers will work through the established chain of command to provide any assistance that is within the scope of their training.
3. Participate in after-action briefings and develop after-action reports.
4. Initiate financial reimbursement process for activities when support is available.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Primary Agencies

1. Sheriff
 - a. Provides direction, control and coordination of SAR operations.

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- b. Identifies resources needed in support of SAR operations.
- c. Maintains a current SAR Call-Out Roster.
- d. Informs Emergency Management of SAR activations.

B. Support Agencies

1. Search and Rescue Council

- a. Develops and maintains policies and procedures related to SAR and EM activities.
- b. Maintains a current SAR Call-out Roster.
- c. Coordinates search and rescue activities and training.
- d. Develops and implements local SAR programs in coordination with the Sheriff's Office.

2. Emergency Management/Emergency Coordination Center (ECC)

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

3. Search & Rescue Units (Jeep Patrol, Mounted Patrol, South Puget Sound Mobile Search & Rescue, Thurston Search & Rescue, WESAR)

- a. Provides resources for search and rescue activities under the direction and control of the Sheriff's Office.
- b. Ensures equipment is in proper working order and response personnel attain and retain proper certification to meet state and local requirements.
- c. Provides assistance as requested.
- d. Trains, prepares and maintains records for search and rescue activities.

4. Thurston 911 Communications (TCOMM 911)

TCOMM 911 is the public safety access point and dispatch center for Thurston County. Calls to TCOMM 911 for Search & Rescue operations are dispatched to Thurston County Sheriff's Office.

5. Thurston County Sheriff's Office Dive Team

The Thurston County Sheriff's Office Dive Team is comprised of members from the cities of Lacey, Tumwater and Olympia, as well as Thurston County, and specialize in water related events.

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The Dive Team provides specialized rescue assistance when requested

- Zero Visibility Diving
- Ice Diving
- Helicopter Operations
- Ship Hull Search
- High Angle Rescue

6. Thurston County Special Operations Response Team (SORT)

The SORT team is comprised of highly trained personnel and a substantial equipment cache. The team currently meets a USAR Type III team rating and Type II Structural Collapse rating.

SORT provides specialized rescue assistance when requested

- Structural Collapse Rescue
- Rope Rescue
- Tree Rescue
- Trench Rescue
- Confined Space Rescue

7. State/Federal Agencies

a. WA State Emergency Management

- Assist and support SAR operation when requested.
- Provide State Mission Number.

b. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

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

c. Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC)

Coordinates federal resources providing SAR assistance to states during non-disaster time.

VI. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Search and Rescue resources for SAR operations are owned and maintained by the individual units. Based on capability requirements for specific incidents, resource shortfalls will be identified, and requests for resources will be through mutual aid. When mutual aid is exhausted, request for resources will be made to the State.

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VII. REFERENCE AND SUPPORT PLANS

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

VIII. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

AFRCC – Air Force Rescue Coordination Center

ECC – Emergency Coordination Center

EM – Emergency Management – The managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disaster.

EMD – Emergency Management Division of the Washington Military Department

EOC – Emergency Operations Center

ESF – Emergency Support Function – Serve as the coordination mechanism to provide assistance to local and tribal governments.

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

IC – Incident Commander

ICS – Incident Command System

NIMS – National Incident Management System

PSAP – Public Safety Access Point

RCW – Revised Code of Washington

SAR – Search & Rescue

SORT – Special Operations Rescue Team

TCOMM 911 – Thurston 911 Communications – Public Safety Access Point and dispatch center.

WAC – Washington Administrative Code

WESAR – Washington Explorer Search and Rescue

IX. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: SORT Team Capabilities

Attachment 2: Dive Team Capabilities