

# Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 Search and Rescue

When the federal government mobilizes resources and conducts activities to support state and local response to disasters, it does so under 15 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). Emergency Support Function #9 (ESF #9) - Search and Rescue (SAR) deploys Federal SAR resources to provide lifesaving assistance to local, state, tribal, territorial and insular area authorities including, local SAR Coordinators and Mission Coordinators, when there is an actual or anticipated request for Federal SAR assistance.

FEMA is the ESF #9 coordinator and one of four ESF #9 primary agencies, along with DoD/USNorthcom, DOI/NPS, and USCG. For every incident, FEMA assesses the specific SAR requirements and designates one of the four primary agencies as the Overall Primary Agency (OPA) for SAR for that particular incident. The OPA coordinates planning and operations between primary and support agencies and coordinates resolution of conflicting operational demands for SAR response resources.

The OPA for an event is determined by the nature of the event based on authorities, resources and capabilities in a particular functional area. FEMA is the OPA for Urban Search and Rescue. The USCG has the OPA role for incidents involving maritime SAR. The DOI/NPS and the DoD share responsibility for filling the OPA role in large scale, land-based and wide-area SAR.



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## The National Urban Search & Rescue Response System

*A Component of the National Response  
Framework Under ESF#9*



FEMA





# The National Urban Search & Rescue Response System

The National Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Response System, established under the authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 1989, is a framework for organizing federal, state and local partner emergency response teams as integrated federal disaster response task forces. The 28 National US&R Task Forces complete with the necessary tools, equipment, requisite skills, and techniques, can be deployed by FEMA to assist state and local governments in rescuing survivors of structural collapse incidents or to assist in other search and rescue missions.

The 28 Task Forces are located throughout the continental United States. Each Task Force must mobilize its personnel and equipment within 4 hours of activation if traveling by ground, or arrive at the embarkation point within 6 hours of activation if being transported by air so that it can provide this life saving capability as quickly as possible.

A Type I Task Force is made up of 70 multi-faceted, cross-trained personnel who serve in six major functional areas to include: search, rescue, medical, hazardous materials, logistics and planning. This Task Force also includes technical specialists such as physicians, structural engineers and canine search teams. A Task Force is able to conduct physical search and heavy rescue operations in damaged or collapsed reinforced concrete buildings. Each Task Force can be divided into two 35 member teams to provide 24 hour search and rescue operations. The Task Forces can also be configured as a Type III US&R Task Force for searching lighter construction usually encountered in weather related events such as hurricanes and tornadoes. Self-sufficient for the initial 72 hours, the Task Forces are equipped with convoy trailers to support over-the-road deployments.



## 28 US&R TASK FORCES

STATE	TASK FORCE	ORGANIZATION
Arizona California	AZ-TF1	Phoenix Fire Dept.
	CA-TF1	Los Angeles City Fire Dept.
	CA-TF2	Los Angeles County Fire Dept.
	CA-TF3	Menlo Park Fire District
	CA-TF4	Oakland Fire Dept.
	CA-TF5	Orange County Fire Authority
	CA-TF6	City of Riverside Fire Dept.
	CA-TF7	Sacramento Fire Dept.
Colorado Florida	CA-TF8	San Diego Fire-Rescue
	CO-TF1	West Metro Fire Protection District
	FL-TF1	Miami-Dade Co. Fire Dept.
Indiana Maryland	FL-TF2	City of Miami Fire Dept.
	IN-TF1	City of Indianapolis Dept. of Public Safety
	MD-TF1	Montgomery Co. Fire and Rescue
Massachusetts Missouri	MA-TF1	City of Beverly
	MO-TF1	Boone County Fire Protection District
	NE-TF1	City of Lincoln
Nebraska Nevada	NV-TF1	Clark County Fire Dept.
	NM-TF1	State of New Mexico
New Mexico New York	NY-TF1	NYC Office of Emergency Mgmt.
	OH-TF1	Miami Valley Fire EMS Alliance
	PA-TF1	Philadelphia Fire Dept.
Ohio Pennsylvania	TN-TF1	Memphis Division of Fire Services
	TX-TF1	State of Texas
	UT-TF1	Unified Fire Authority
Tennessee Texas	VA-TF1	Fairfax County Fire & Rescue
	VA-TF2	Virginia Beach Fire Dept.
	WA-TF1	Pierce County Dept. of Emergency Mgmt.
Utah		
Virginia		
Washington		

## Task Force Capabilities

- Physical search and rescue operations in damaged/ collapsed structures
- Emergency medical care for entrapped survivors, task force personnel and search canines
- Reconnaissance to assess damage and needs. Provide feedback to local, state and federal officials
- Assessment/shut-off of utilities to houses and other buildings
- Hazardous materials survey/evaluations
- Structural/hazard evaluations of buildings needed for immediate occupancy to support disaster relief operations
- Stabilizing damaged structures, including shoring and cribbing operations on damaged buildings
- Hazardous Materials Equipment Push Packages (HEPP) for operations in a contaminated environment
- US&R operations in a water environment

## US&R Incident Support Team

The National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Incident Support Team (IST) provides a group of highly qualified specialists readily available for rapid assembly and deployment to a disaster area. The IST furnishes federal, state, and local officials with technical assistance in acquiring and using US&R resources. It provides advice, Incident Command assistance, management and coordination of US&R Task Forces and US&R logistics support. The IST is organized according to basic Incident Command System (ICS) guidelines, with a Command Staff, Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance and Administration Sections. There are three rostered IST teams in the National US&R Response System.