

## Emergency Support Function #9 - Search and Rescue

### ESF Coordinator:

Floyd County Sheriff or Designee

### Primary Agencies

Local Law Enforcement  
Volunteer Search and Rescue Groups  
EMS  
Local Fire Departments

### Secondary/Support Agencies

Emergency Management  
Virginia Department of Emergency Management

## Introduction

### Purpose:

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Search and Rescue provides for the coordination and effective use of available resources for search and rescue activities to assist people in potential or actual distress.

### Scope:

The locality is susceptible to many different natural and technical hazards that may result in the damage or collapse of structures within the county. Search and Rescue must be prepared to respond to emergency events and provide special life saving assistance. Their operational activities include locating, extricating, and providing on site medical treatment to victims trapped in collapsed structures. In addition to this, people may be lost, missing, disoriented, traumatized, or injured in which case the search and rescue agency must be prepared to respond to these incidents and implement search and rescue tactics to assist those who are, or believed to be, in distress or imminent danger. Predominately, these search operations occur in “open field” situations, such as parks, neighborhoods, or other open terrain.

### Policies:

- The EOP provides the guidance for managing the acquisition of Search and Rescue resources;
- All requests for Search and Rescue will be submitted to the EOC for coordination, validation, and/or action in accordance with this ESF;
- Communications will be established and maintained with ESF #5 – Emergency Management to report and receive assessments and status information;
- Will coordinate with State and Federal agencies when necessary;
- Personnel will stay up to date with procedures through training and education; and
- Search and rescue task forces are considered Federal assets under the Robert T. Stafford Act only when requested for a search and rescue for a collapsed structure.

## Concept of Operations

### General:

Law enforcement and local volunteer search and rescue agencies will be responsible for rescue and search operations during a disaster with assistance from EMS and local fire departments. The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers will also assist with other functions of search and rescue as set forth in the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squad's Operations Plan.

### Organization:

Law enforcement followed by volunteer search and rescue agencies will be the primary agency in any search and rescue operation. The local EMS, fire departments, law enforcement, public works and environmental services will assist when required for structural evaluation of buildings and structures (ESF #3). Local Law Enforcement will be the primary agency in any ground searches. The local chapter of the American Red Cross will assist with support efforts during searches such as mass care feeding; sheltering; bulk distribution; logistics; and health and mental health services for rescue workers, support personnel, and the victims. The Health Department will advise search and rescue medical teams on industrial hygiene issues as they become apparent. The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services will assist with any equipment, maps, staff, and vehicles. In a secondary role local law enforcement will assist with perimeter security, communications, and assistance as required. The Fire Department and EMS as a secondary role will provide medical resources, equipment and expertise.

Communications will be established and maintained with ESF #5 – Emergency Management to report and receive assessments and status information.

## Actions

- Develop and maintain plans and procedures to implement search and rescue operations in time of emergency;
- Provide emergency medical treatment and pre-hospital care to the injured;
- Assist with the warning, evacuation and relocation of citizens during a disaster;
- The designated representatives should report to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). When necessary assign duties to all personnel;
- Follow established procedures in responding to urban search and rescue incidents; and
- Record disaster related expenses.

## Search and Rescue Response

Search and rescue is divided into 4 elements according to the conditions and environment of where or how the incident has occurred.

- **Aeronautical** missions include downed or missing / overdue civil aviation aircraft missions, and emergency calls for help broadcast through an Emergency Distress Beacon. An EDB might originate from aircraft, marine craft or a personal locator beacon.
- **Inland / Wilderness** missions comprise the bulk of the agency's response in support of local jurisdictions to help locate a lost or missing person. On average the agency will support 80-90 missions per year throughout the Commonwealth. Missing children and wandering Alzheimer's/ dementia subjects comprise the top two demographics of missing person missions.
- **Marine / Waterborne** missions include distressed / sinking vessels, boating incidents, flooding, and swift water rescue incidents, which often result in a drowning.

- **Urban Search and Rescue / disaster** incidents are major events with significant impact to multiple citizens that may result in victims being stranded or trapped in collapsed structures or fallen debris.

## **Responsibilities**

- Manages search and rescue task force deployment to, employment in, and redeployment from the affected area;
- Coordinates logistical support for search and rescue during field operations;
- Develops policies and procedures for effective use and coordination of search and rescue;
- Provides status reports on search and rescue operations throughout the affected area; and
- Coordinates with ESF 5 to request further assistance from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for additional resources **VDEM EOC** at **1-800-468-8892**.