

**Coordinating Agency:**

Emergency Management Division

**Primary Agencies:**

Department of Transportation  
 Washington Military Department  
 Emergency Management Division

**Support Agencies:**

Department of Corrections	Washington Military Department
Department of Ecology	National Guard
Department of Enterprise Services	Washington State Patrol
Department of Fish and Wildlife	U.S. Department of Defense
Department of Health	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Department of Natural Resources	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Parks and Recreation Commission	U.S. Coast Guard

**INTRODUCTION**

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**Purpose**

Coordination and effectively utilize all available resources in the conduct of Search and Rescue (SAR) operations.

**Scope**

State law encompasses both wilderness and disaster SAR within the definition of Land SAR, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 38.52.010 (7) and Air SAR, RCW 47.68.380. The federal government defines Land, Air and Maritime SAR conducted prior to a presidential declaration in the National SAR Plan and categorizes SAR according to the complexity of the incident, i.e., normal, mass rescue or catastrophic incident SAR. The National Response Framework (NRF), Emergency Support Function 9 (ESF 9) covers Disaster SAR, specifically SAR operations following a presidential declaration, and provides information on Urban Search and Rescue (US&R), maritime/waterborne SAR and Land SAR.

A separate Underground (Mine) Rescue Plan is maintained by the Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division (EMD), SAR Program Manager.

**Policies**

Land SAR operations are primarily initiated, coordinated and directed by local jurisdictions in accordance with state and local jurisdiction plans. However, one political subdivision may not be able to provide the necessary equipment or sufficient numbers of trained personnel to successfully carry out a SAR mission, especially a mission(s) resulting from an emergency or disaster.

Requests for additional resources including special skills, expertise or equipment are coordinated by the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) Alert & Warning Center or the SEOC ESF 9 Lead.

Air SAR for missing or downed civil aircraft is the responsibility of Department of Transportation (WSDOT), functioning as the SEOC ESF 9 Lead. An Underground (Mine) SAR Plan is required by RCW 38.52.037.

The National Incident Management System (NIMS), Incident Command System (ICS) will be used for incident management of SAR operations within the state. In accordance with RCW 38.52.400 (1), ICS shall be used for multi-agency/multi-jurisdiction SAR operations.

## **SITUATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

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### **Situation**

The wide range of and easy access to outdoor recreational activities in the state and the large number of people who participate in those activities results in a significant number of lost and/or injured or killed residents and visitors every year. In addition, use of civil aircraft within the state continues to increase.

Incidents involving lost or missing children and the elderly in urban/suburban areas are increasing.

The state is threatened by events such as airline crashes, avalanches, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis which can result in large, multi-jurisdictional SAR operations.

Earthquakes pose a particularly severe threat. A major earthquake would trigger SAR operations involving local responders, statewide SAR volunteer organizations, the Washington National Guard (WNG), local jurisdiction and state/provincial responders from neighboring jurisdictions, federal response agencies, including the military and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) US&R Task Forces.

A major subduction zone earthquake may also generate a large tsunami, impacting the state's Pacific Coast, as well as, avalanches and landslides in the Cascade and Olympic Mountains resulting in large, multijurisdictional SAR operations in these regions as well.

### **Assumptions**

SAR missions will increase as the population and recreational opportunities continue to grow. Incidents involving searches in urban and suburban areas will also increase.

The widely differing terrain and climatic conditions in the state mandate a locally based SAR first response system.

Natural and technological disasters will greatly increase the scope of SAR operations.

A major earthquake in the Puget Sound area will result in major, multijurisdictional SAR operations.

## **CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

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### **General**

Land SAR operations are primarily initiated, coordinated and directed by local jurisdictions in accordance with state and local jurisdiction plans using local resources registered in

accordance with Chapter 118-04 Washington Administrative Code (WAC), The Emergency Worker Program. Requests for additional resources including special skills, expertise or equipment are coordinated by the SEOC Alert & Warning Center and/or the SEOC ESF 9 Lead. Multi-jurisdictional SAR operations may be coordinated by the SEOC, when requested.

Air SAR for missing or downed civil aircraft is the responsibility of WSDOT, functioning as the SEOC ESF 9 Lead from the SEOC, an alternate EOC or a remote operating location.

The Underground (Mine) Rescue Plan covers aspects of underground rescue including caves, active mines, abandoned mines and underground works. The plan is maintained by the EMD SAR Program Manager.

If a catastrophic event results in major, multi-jurisdictional SAR operations, the state Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) may be activated to manage ESF 9 activities. The RCC is an extension of the SEOC and is activated in an emergency or disaster to support local search and rescue operations by coordinating state, out-of-state, federal and international search and rescue operations conducted in support of the incident. The RCC may be co-located with the SEOC or deployed to a location in proximity to the incident site.

Communications with the SEOC from the incident command post, the RCC and/or from the local jurisdiction's EOC will be through normal radio and telephone capabilities. These capabilities may be augmented by back-up direction and control systems and resources provided by the WNG, federal military organizations and/or FEMA, as appropriate.

### **Land SAR**

The SEOC Alert & Warning Center will issue a state mission number when notified of a SAR mission by an authorized official. The issuance of this mission number authorizes the employment of local volunteers under the provisions and protection of Chapter 38.52 RCW. A WSDOT Incident Commander will be designated for any SAR operations, Land SAR or Air SAR, involving a downed or missing aircraft in accordance with RCW 47.68.380. The SEOC will issue a mission number in response to a downed or missing aircraft for Land SAR operations to an authorized official or the WSDOT Incident Commander. The WSDOT Incident Commander may obtain the mission number on behalf of local agencies involved in order to facilitate response. All Land SAR operations involving downed or missing aircraft will be coordinated with WSDOT.

An Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) mission number is required for all missions in which federal support has been or will be requested. A block number will be requested for mass rescue operations covering all operations within the first 72-96 hours of the incident.

The SEOC, upon receiving a request for assistance from an authorized official, will coordinate the resources of other political subdivisions, as well as state, out-of-state, federal and international agencies in support of the requesting jurisdiction. A State SAR Coordinator may be deployed to the scene to provide this coordination.

Multi-jurisdictional SAR operations may be coordinated by the SEOC, when requested. Major, multi-jurisdictional SAR operations may require state RCC activation. The RCC will either collocate with the SEOC or deploy to a location in proximity to the incident site. The

RCC Director is also the state SAR Coordinator. ESF 9 Primary and Support Agencies provide personnel and equipment to staff and operate the RCC, as requested. The RCC will process and prioritize requests for assistance it receives directly from jurisdictions in the affected area or from the SEOC. The RCC coordinates the reception, staging, preparation for employment and deployment to the scene of local, state, out-of-state, federal and international SAR resources responding to the disaster with the SEOC Logistics Section. The RCC will serve as the state's interface with National ESF 9 lead agency when the NRF is implemented.

The WNG Homeland Response Force (HRF) is primarily oriented to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear & Explosive (CBRNE) incidents; however, the HRF 50 member “search and extraction” element may be used as a standalone force or to augment a US&R Task Force such as Washington Task Force 1.

### **Air SAR**

Air SAR for missing or downed civil aviation aircraft is the responsibility of WSDOT (RCW 47.68.380). WSDOT may receive an alert notice (ALNOT) of overdue aircraft from the Federal Aviation Administration and/or be notified of an activated Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) from the AFRCC or other sources. The SEOC Alert and Warning Center is the initial point of contact for these notifications.

The WSDOT Incident Commander exercises command over all aircraft and air crew personnel participating in the Air SAR mission.

The Air SAR mission transitions to a Land SAR once the downed aircraft is located. The mission (Land SAR) will then be under the direction and control of the chief law enforcement officer having jurisdiction at the incident site location. The WSDOT Incident Commander provides support, as available, to the Land SAR Incident Command and assumes responsibility for the crash site for investigatory purposes. Consideration should be given to establishing a Unified Command.

The WSDOT Incident Commander may notify the SEOC Alert & Warning Center to obtain a mission number on behalf of participating local law enforcement agencies for coverage of volunteers involved in related Land SAR operations. The state SAR Coordinator may deploy to the scene to coordinate SAR resources or provide other assistance, as required.

### **Underground (Mine) SAR**

The *Underground (Mine) Rescue Plan* and associated State Emergency Operations Officer (SEOO) procedures are maintained by the EMD SAR Program Manager. The SEOOs use these procedures when responding to a local jurisdiction's request for SAR resources in the event of an underground rescue incident.

## **ORGANIZATION**

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### **Local Jurisdictions**

The jurisdiction's chief law enforcement officer is responsible for SAR operations within their area of responsibility. Local emergency management directors coordinate direct support for SAR operations in their political subdivisions and register volunteers in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 118-04 WAC. Local programs also provide training and education for

volunteer SAR units as well as for the organization and deployment of SAR resources. In addition, local resources may include significant technical rescue capability, to include US&R, within the fire service.

### **Local Volunteer Organizations**

SAR volunteer units have varying capabilities and are organized under local jurisdiction authority. Volunteers, otherwise known as emergency workers, are registered at the local jurisdiction in accordance with Chapter 38.52 RCW and Chapter 118-04 WAC. The volunteers are trained to respond to a variety of local emergencies or disasters. The SEOC coordinates volunteer support to local jurisdictions statewide as well as neighboring states or provinces when provided for by mutual aid agreements. Volunteers specific to Air SAR mission support are registered by WSDOT under Chapter 47.68 RCW and Chapter 468-200 WAC.

### **State Organizations**

The SEOC Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MACG) appoints a state coordinator for SAR operations, maintains a 24-hour capability to respond to requests for assistance from local jurisdictions and coordinates local jurisdiction resources with other political subdivisions, as well as state, out-of-state, federal and international agencies. The state SAR Coordinator may be deployed to the scene to coordinate SEOC support to the Incident Command (IC). Multijurisdictional SAR operations may be coordinated by the SEOC, when requested. Major, multi-jurisdictional SAR operations, such as a natural or technological disaster, may require RCC activation.

WSDOT maintains a response capability to conduct Air SAR operations for missing or downed civil aircraft as mandated by Chapter 47.68 RCW. The WSDOT Incident Commander exercises command over all aircraft and aircrew personnel participating in Air SAR missions in Washington State. The state SAR Coordinator may deploy to the scene to coordinate Land SAR resources or provide other assistance to the IC, as required.

Washington Task Force 1 (WA-TF1) is one of FEMA's 28 National US&R Response System US&R Task Forces. WA-TF1 will be mobilized as a state resource for disasters occurring within the state.

The WNG Homeland Response Force (HRF) primarily response to CBRNE incidents; however, the HRF 50 member Search and Extraction Element may be used as a standalone force or to augment a US&R Task Force such as WA-TF1 in support of SAR operations.

### **Federal Organizations**

The U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) through the Air Forces Northern (AFNORTH) Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) directs inland SAR operations for downed or missing military aircraft, scheduled carriers, aircraft carrying people or things of national significance and aircraft of international origin. The AFRCC also coordinates federal military assistance for local and state SAR operations including mass rescue operations under the National SAR Plan.

The U.S. Coast Guard directs maritime SAR operations on or above navigable waters and off shore along the Pacific coast in accordance with the National SAR Plan. The Coast Guard may also assist with inland SAR operations. The Seattle Rescue Coordination Center

(RCC), 13th Coast Guard District Command Center directs and coordinated these operations within the state of Washington. The Coast Guard is the NRF ESF-9 Primary Agency for maritime/waterborne SAR.

The National Park Service directs SAR operations on the lands under its exclusive jurisdiction unless by agreement this is delegated to or shared with another responsible agency such as local jurisdiction law enforcement. The National Park Service is the NRF ESF-9 Primary Agency for Land SAR.

FEMA administers the National US&R Response System and is the Primary Agency for NRF ESF 9 structural collapse/US&R. The National US&R Response System consists of 28 US&R Task Forces capable of responding anywhere in the nation. One such task force, Washington Task Force 1 (WA-TF1) is located in Washington State. WA-TF1 will be mobilized as a state resource for disasters occurring within Washington State.

## **ACTIONS**

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### **Mitigation Activities**

#### Primary Agencies

##### Department of Transportation

- Develops and provides training and education in aviation safety and aircrew survival.
- Reviews proposed SAR legislation, as it applies to the use and control of aircraft, to assure it is supportive of the state's emergency management mission.

##### Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division

- Reviews proposed SAR legislation to assure it is supportive of the state's emergency management mission.
- Supports preventive SAR programs.

#### Support Agencies

Departments of Corrections, Ecology, Enterprise Services, Fish and Wildlife, Health and Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington State Patrol, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U. S. Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- Support preventive search and rescue, aviation safety and survival programs with available resources, when requested.

#### Local Jurisdictions and Volunteer Organizations

- Develop and present preventive SAR programs through public awareness and school education programs.

## Preparedness Activities

### Primary Agencies

#### Department of Transportation

- Establish systems to direct and control air SAR operations for downed or missing civil aircraft.
- Plan for and prepare to provide for staff representation to the state RCC.
- Plan for and prepare to provide air resource support for Land SAR operations.
- Publish/prepare to implement the State and Regional Disaster Airlift (SARDA) Plan.

#### Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division

- Facilitate the SEOC MACG's appointment of a state coordinator of SAR operations.
- Establish and maintain systems to coordinate requests for in-state, state, out-of-state, federal and international SAR resources.
- Support law enforcement personnel and volunteer organizations and individuals with SAR related training.
- Assist local jurisdictions in the organization of SAR units.
- Coordinate and maintain liaison with local SAR Coordinators, local departments of emergency management, WSDOT, WNG, the SAR organizations of neighboring states and provinces, the federal military organizations of the United States and Canada and NRF ESF 9 agencies.
- Plan for and prepare to activate the state RCC.

### Support Agencies

Departments of Corrections, Ecology, Enterprise Services, Fish and Wildlife, Health, and Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington State Patrol, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U. S. Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Defense, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- Plan to support SAR operations with available resources, when requested.

#### Washington Military Department, National Guard

- Maintain the WNG HRF Search and Extraction Team within its defined operational capability at a NIMS Type 3 US&R TF equivalent level. Be prepared to mobilize and deploy the HRF as a stand alone force or to augment a US&R Task Force such as WA-TF1.

## Response Activities

### Primary Agencies

#### Department of Transportation

- Provide qualified staffing to direct and control Air SAR operations for downed or missing civil aircraft in the SEOC or RCC.

- Provide staff representation to the SEOC and state RCC.
- Provide air resources, when available, for Land SAR operations.
- Implement the SARDA Plan in accordance with established WSDOT procedures.

#### Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division

- Staff the SEOC Alert & Warning Center, Logistics Section and Operations Section to coordinate requests for in-state, state, out-of-state, federal, and international SAR resources.
- Provide personnel and equipment to establish the state RCC.
- Provide qualified candidates for the position of state SAR Coordinator and RCC Director.
- Provide resources for SAR operations, when available.

#### Support Agencies

Departments of Corrections, Ecology, Enterprise Services, Fish and Wildlife, Health and Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Commission, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U. S. Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Defense, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- Support SAR operations with available resources, when requested.

#### Washington Military Department, National Guard

- Mobilize and deploy the WNG HRF as a stand alone force or to augment a US&R Task Force such as WA-TF1, when requested.
- Provide resources for SAR operations, when available.

### **Recovery Activities**

#### Primary Agencies

Department of Transportation and Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division

- Assist in returning all SAR organizations and personnel to a state of preparedness which will enable them to respond to future SAR missions with available resources, when requested.

#### Support Agencies

Departments of Corrections, Ecology, Enterprise Services, Fish and Wildlife, Health, and Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Commission, National Guard, Washington State Patrol, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U. S. Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Defense, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- Assist in returning all SAR organizations and personnel to a state of preparedness which will enable them to respond to future SAR missions with available resources, when requested.



## RESPONSIBILITIES

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### Primary Agencies

Department of Transportation, Aviation Division

- Direct Air SAR operations for downed or missing civil aircraft as the SEOC ESF 9 Lead.
- Provide support to local law enforcement agencies during Land SAR operations by providing aircraft and air operations support.

Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division

- Facilitate the SEOC MACG's appointment of a state coordinator of SAR operations.
- Maintain a 24-hour coordination and warning system.
- Provide protection and reimbursement for SAR volunteers statewide.
- Provide and maintain the SEOC capability required to expeditiously coordinate resource requests for local jurisdictions involved in SAR operations and to coordinate multi-jurisdictional SAR operations, when requested.

### Support Agencies

Departments of Corrections, Ecology, Enterprise Services, Fish and Wildlife, Health, Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington State Patrol, American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Defense, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- Provide appropriate support to the state SAR programs.

Washington Military Department, National Guard

- Maintain the WNG HRF Search and Extraction Team within its defined operational capability at a NIMS Type 3 US&R TF equivalent level. Be prepared to mobilize and deploy the HRF as a stand alone force or to augment a US&R Task Force such as WA-TF1.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

- Coordinate with federal agencies to perform US&R operations in accordance with the NRF ESF 9.

U.S. Department of Defense, Air Force Rescue Coordination Center

- Coordinate federal resources providing SAR assistance to local and state officials in accordance with the National SAR Plan.

U.S. Department of Defense, U. S. Army North (ARNORTH)

- Coordinate federal military resources in support of SAR operations under a Disaster Declaration by the President (NRF ESF-9).

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U. S. Coast Guard Seattle Rescue Coordination Center

- Coordinate U.S. Coast Guard resources providing SAR assistance to local jurisdiction and state officials in accordance with the National SAR Plan.

## REFERENCES

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*Chapter 38.52 Revised Code of Washington (RCW)*

*Chapter 47.68 Revised Code of Washington (RCW)*

*Chapter 118-04 Washington Administrative Code (WAC)*

*Chapter 468-200 Washington Administrative Code (WAC)*

*National Response Framework (NRF), Emergency Support Function 9 (ESF-9)*

*National Incident Management System (NIMS)*

*National Search and Rescue Plan*

*U. S. SAR Supplement to the International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR Manual*

*Underground (Mine) Rescue Plan, State of Washington, Emergency Management Division, 1985.*