

Emergency Support Function #9 SEARCH & RESCUE

Lead Agency

- Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

Support Agencies and Organizations

- Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
- Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP)
- Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOP)
- Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF)
- Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)
- Virginia State Police (VSP)
- Department of Military Affairs (DMA)
- Civil Air Patrol (CAP)
- Virginia Search and Rescue Council Organizations

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 rapidly deploys components of the Search and Rescue (SAR) Response System to provide specialized life-saving assistance to local jurisdictions during any type of incident. Search and Rescue activities include locating, accessing, stabilizing, and transporting lost, missing, stranded or trapped subjects to a place of safety or another provider within the chain of the emergency response system.

Scope & Applicability

The SAR Response System integrates a broad range of professional and technical specialists who respond to a wide range of mission assignments. Mission assignments are divided into three primary operational environments of Search and Rescue:

- Land Search and Rescue
- Maritime Search and Rescue
- Catastrophic Incident Search and Rescue

It is understood that certain skill sets may have crossover to one or more of the three operational environments of Search and Rescue.

Policies

- All agencies assigned responsibilities within this ESF will develop and maintain the necessary plans, standard operating procedures, mutual aid agreements, and model contracts to successfully accomplish their tasks.
- SAR will deploy any or all available resources, including trained personnel, facilities and appropriate equipment to locate and render necessary assistance to persons, aircraft and vessels in known jeopardy, or presumed to be in jeopardy.

Organizational Structure

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) is the lead agency responsible for the state-level coordination of Search and Rescue activities. Requests for state or federal SAR assets and coordination will be made through the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC), which serves as the State Rescue Coordination Center (SRCC).

Other state agencies may provide SAR resources or conduct SAR operations within their jurisdiction or capability and may assist SAR efforts at the local, state, or federal level.

Each local jurisdiction should designate a Local SAR Coordinator through a jurisdictional SAR plan, local emergency operations plan, or other form of designation. The Local SAR Coordinator is responsible for SAR operations with their respective political subdivision, including training, organization, and response. In the absence of a formal appointment of a Local SAR Coordinator, it is presumed that the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of that jurisdiction will serve as the default Local SAR Coordinator. The Chief Law Enforcement Officer is the senior law enforcement official of the primary law enforcement agency for a given political subdivision. It is further understood that a SAR incident, and in particular a missing person incident, may occur as the result of criminal activity and would therefore be the responsibility of law enforcement.

Federal agencies may participate in SAR operations within the Commonwealth either by direct jurisdictional authority and responsibility, or in response to a request for assistance from the SRCC.

Concept of Operations

Regardless of the cause or size of the incident, SAR operations are conducted to affect the rescue and/or recovery of:

- Overdue, lost, missing, stranded, injured, or trapped persons.
- Overdue, missing, or downed aircraft.
- Overdue, missing, disabled, stranded, or sinking vessels.

The VEOC will allocate requested SAR resources based upon availability and the appropriateness of the request.

The VEOC will notify the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC), the Coast Guard District Five Operations Center (CGDFIVE OPCEN), or the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) if federal resources are needed.

- The AFRCC retains jurisdiction at the federal level for incidents involving missing / overdue civil aircraft (both commercial and general aviation), and military aircraft over U.S. air space.
- The AFRCC will coordinate search efforts through the SRCC and state assistance will be determined upon the circumstances of each incident.

Roles & Responsibilities

Virginia Department of Emergency Management

- Coordinate SAR efforts statewide to include the deployment and use of SAR assets to support operations at the local, state or federal level.
- Assist with the coordination of SAR assets for national or international SAR incidents upon request.
- Serve as the coordinating agency (SRCC) at the state level for incidents involving civil aircraft presumed lost over Virginia air space.
- Administer wilderness-based SAR performance standards and conduct SAR training for law enforcement, fire-rescue, EMS, and volunteer SAR organizations.
- Maintain a database of SAR resources and SAR incidents coordinated by the SRCC.
- Provide on-scene or direct coordination of specific SAR incidents under the following criteria:
 - ✓ Any incident at the request of the local jurisdiction.
 - ✓ All declared overdue / missing aircraft events that result in a ground search effort.

- ✓ Any incident that involves on-scene multi-state jurisdictional coordination.
- ✓ Any viable intra-state lost or missing person search that cannot be assigned local responsibility due to lack of initial geographical specific incident assessment information. Once local jurisdiction can be assigned, coordination responsibility will immediately transfer to the Legal Responsible Agent.
- ✓ Any high-profile incidents involving state coordinated assets as determined by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management or his/her designee.

Department of Conservation and Recreation

- Support requests for SAR assets within their capabilities and within the parameters of other operational commitments, existing agreements, protocols, and statutes as required.

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

- Support requests for SAR assets within their capabilities and within the parameters of other operational commitments, existing agreements, protocols, and statutes as required.

Virginia Department of Forestry

- Provide human-tracking bloodhounds, aerial photography resources, and GIS-based mapping capabilities to support SAR missions.

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

- Support requests for SAR assets within their capabilities and within the parameters of other operational

commitments, existing agreements, protocols, and statutes as required.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

- Support requests for SAR assets within their capabilities and within the parameters of other operational commitments, existing agreements, protocols, and statutes as required.

Virginia State Police

- Support requests for SAR assets within their capabilities and within the parameters of other operational commitments, existing agreements, protocols, and statutes as required.

Virginia Department of Military Affairs

- Support requests for SAR assets within their capabilities and within the parameters of other operational commitments, existing agreements, protocols, and statutes as required.

Civil Air Patrol

- Support requests for SAR missions within their capabilities and within the parameters of existing agreements, protocols, and statutes as required.
- The Civil Air Patrol is a shared asset between the Commonwealth and the U.S. Air Force, and may be tasked directly through the AFRCC in accordance with existing agreements and operational protocols.

Virginia Search and Rescue Council Organizations

- Volunteer SAR organizations who hold a Memorandum of Understanding with VDEM, and are affiliated with the Virginia Search and Rescue Council, provide resources and assistance to local, state, and federal agencies in accordance with existing agreements, operational

procedures, or statutes upon request for services to the SRCC.

and assign specific areas of responsibility for performing essential functions in response to an emergency or disaster.

Authorities & References

Authorities

- Search and Rescue Agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States Air Force
- Statement of Understanding between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States Coast Guard
- Joint Agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Commander, Virginia Wing, Civil Air Patrol
- Memorandums of Understanding between the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Emergency Management and Volunteer Search and Rescue Groups
- Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws

References

- The National Search and Rescue Plan
- The Land Search and Rescue Addendum to the National Search and Rescue Supplemental
- The Catastrophic Incident Search and Rescue Addendum to the National Search and Rescue Supplemental
- The Virginia Search and Rescue Plan
- FEMA 508-8: Typed Resource Definitions – Search and Rescue
- FEMA 509-8: Job Titles – Search and Rescue
- Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) 4.6.3: The emergency operations/response plan shall identify