



Annex I: Emergency Support Function #9 – Search & Rescue

November 2020

Coordinating Agency

Hamilton County Fire Chief's Urban Search & Rescue (USAR)

Supporting Agencies

Hamilton County Emergency Management/Homeland Security

Hamilton County Engineer's Office

Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

Local Jurisdictional Fire/EMS Departments

Ohio Civil Air Patrol (CAP)

Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Ohio Task Force One (OHTF-1)

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Search & Rescue is to establish how activities related to search and rescue will be coordinated during and after disasters to meet the emergency needs of Hamilton County, OH. This ESF describes the operational components as well as roles and responsibilities of the agencies necessary to fulfill the duties of ESF #9.

Scope

ESF #9 serves to provide for the guidance and organization of county agencies that may be employed during Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. SAR operations include, but are not limited to, the location, recovery, and extrication of victims who become lost or entrapped as the result of a major disaster or life-threatening emergency. The goal of search and rescue operations is to save the lives of victims who are unable to ensure their own survival without assistance.

Activities of ESF #9 include supporting search and rescue operations within Hamilton County including structural collapse search and rescue, waterborne search and rescue, inland/wilderness search and rescue, and aeronautical search and rescue operations, as well as coordinating resource support for teams in the field.

Situation

Hamilton County agencies and/or departments may be tasked to initiate a SAR mission that may require the utilization of air, ground, and water rescue operations to preserve life.

Agencies that conduct preplanning for SAR mission(s) must consider hazards such as fire, confined space rescue, high-rise structures, urban or rural areas, trench, subsurface, recreational areas/facilities, waterways, chemical/biological/ radiological/nuclear/explosive locations.

Responders may face added difficulties or hindrances after a disaster because of extensive damage to the local infrastructure. Such damage then may create environmental safety and health hazards such as

downed power lines, unstable foundations or structures, rapidly rising waters, exposure to biohazards, toxins, blood-borne pathogens and explosive environments.

Responders must also take into consideration when their safety and the safety of the victims are being impacted by severe weather conditions such as temperature extremes, snow, rain, high winds, and by civil unrest.

Assumptions

Planning requires assumptions based on statistics, history, behavior patterns and likely future trends. The following assumptions were made as consideration for ESF #9:

- Every community may experience the need for search and rescue operations.
- Many of these search and rescue operations only necessitate the need for local resources or responders.
- Especially in the case of a localized incident, community volunteers often freely want to offer assistance with the mission. These well-meaning volunteers must be directed to volunteer reception centers to prevent either their personal injury, contamination of the search area and to provide accountability.
- Access to the areas impacted by the disaster may be limited or restricted. Initially some areas may only be accessible to aviation, maritime assets or by foot.
- Support such as helicopters, tracking dogs, and outside search and rescue groups may be required from adjoining political subdivisions or from state resources to ensure maximum search and rescue effectiveness.
- A survival window for many victims occurs within the first 48 hours of the incident. A concentration of efforts should be directed then towards locations where the greatest potential for survivors exists.
- The availability of personnel with foreign language and /or special needs communications skills maybe necessary.

Concept of Operations

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Search & Rescue consists of two broad activities in relation to the Hamilton County Emergency Operations Plan. These activities are:

ESF #9 Activities	
1.	Supporting Active Search & Rescue Operations
2.	Coordinating Resource Support for SAR Teams in the Field

General

1. The Hamilton County SAR Coordinator will be the Commissioner of the Hamilton County Urban Search and Rescue Task Force or his/her designee.
2. The Hamilton County SAR Coordinator is the point of contact for Search and Rescue operations in the Hamilton County ROC. All requests for additional resources will be channeled through the ROC and the County SAR Coordinator.
3. When it is determined that the scope of the incident will or has overwhelmed local, county and state resources, the ROC will contact OEMA and request appropriate assets to fit the needs of the emergency.

4. For the overall efficiency of the SAR mission(s), where there exists the overlapping of jurisdictional authority, responders will utilize a unified command system following the guidelines established in the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
5. The Ohio National Guard is a state asset that, if activated, can:
 - a. Provide general and unique engineering services such as debris hauling, emergency road repairs, and emergency erosion control and demolitions.
 - b. Augment civilian law enforcement agencies to prevent looting, prevention of unauthorized scene access, or maintaining the continuance of routine services to the communities.
 - c. Provide emergency medical services to civilians and emergency transportation to medical providers.
 - d. Provide air assets, including fixed wing and rotary aircraft.
6. Local jurisdictions should develop their own SOPs and annexes to their EOPs for SAR incidents.

Overview

1. A staging area for all incoming agencies to be involved in the SAR mission(s) should be established.
2. If the need exists, additional communications resources or redundant systems should be established and coordinated through ESF #3 — Engineering and Public Works, ESF #2 — Communications, or ESF #7 — Resource Support.
3. Begin to acquire the resources necessary to sustain the mission(s) and to meet the needs of the responders. Examples of such resources may include shelter, food supplies, fuel, and sanitation facilities.
4. In search mission(s) the media can be a valuable resource. In coordination with the Authority Having Jurisdiction, determine the best location for the media to set up their operations. The Hamilton County Public Information Officer will coordinate PIO functions for county level emergencies, establish the Joint Information Center and establish a media briefing schedule.
5. The Hamilton County SAR Coordinator will go to the Hamilton County ROC when requested by the HCEM/HS. He/she will brief Hamilton County ROC representatives and coordinate between all local, county, state and federal resources involved in search and rescue operations
6. Each agency involved in the SAR mission(s) will maintain authority with its jurisdictional assets and relay “Situation Status Reports” to the County SAR Coordinator.
7. All requests for mutual-aid support will be submitted through established channels.
8. Ensure the completion of all recommended reports occurs in a timely manner.
9. Account for all equipment utilized during the mission(s). Assure the repair or replacement of any equipment damaged or destroyed during rescue operations.
10. All reports and documentation, including but not limited to after action reports and situation status reports, shall be maintained by each agency with copies being provided both to the Hamilton County SAR Coordinator and HCEM/HS for inclusion in possible reimbursement requests.

Relationship between Levels of Government

1. Federal
 - a. Coordination with federal ESF #9 may occur in the Regional Operations Center, Ohio ROC, at the site of the emergency and/or in the Disaster Field Office (DFO).
 - b. The state ESF #9 will interface with the federal ESF #9 during assessment, response, and recovery operations in order to ensure coordinated activities.
2. State
 - a. The state ESF #9 will maintain communications with Search and Rescue related organizations throughout the state of Ohio.
 - b. The State of Ohio is a participant in the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, so other State’s USAR assets could be requested in the event that the emergency exceeds Ohio’s capabilities within the State.

3. Local
 - a. The Hamilton County ROC will direct local-level requests related to ESF #9 for action.

Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

The Hamilton County Fire Chief's Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) has the primary responsibility for the search and rescue functions in Hamilton County. The Hamilton County Fire Chief's USAR will serve as the coordinating agency for this ESF.

Coordinating Agency Responsibilities

Hamilton County Fire Chief's Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) will:

1. Coordinate the activities of Support Agencies within ESF #9 to fulfill operational objectives.
2. Direct the activities of the ESF #9 in conjunction with assistance from ESFs at the local, State, or Federal levels as applicable.
3. Collaborate with other Coordinating Agencies to ensure an effective response between ESFs.
4. Designate sufficient representatives (no less than three) to support/staff 24-hour operations at the Hamilton County EOC. The Hamilton County EMHSA will maintain listings of these personnel, 24-hour contact information, and directions for contacting them in the event of communication outages.
5. Develop and train all staff responsible for implementing ESF #9 on standard operating procedures.
6. Share ESF #9 activity information with appropriate EOC personnel.
7. Prioritize ESF #9 operational strategies in alignment with the EOC and on scene objectives.
8. Provide, as required, information on the availability of rescue equipment on a countywide or area specific basis.
9. Receive, manage, and track resource requests for ESF #9 in accordance with established resource management procedures.
10. Coordinate with ESF #15 – Emergency Public Information for the inclusion of appropriate information for public dissemination.
11. Provide longer-term coordination of fire suppression and EMS activities across Hamilton County and support the all mass casualty operations.
12. Assist in the development of the After Action Report. This report is a detailed, written analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of county-level emergency response and short-term recovery activities based upon extensive research of the event and interviews with participating assessment, response, and short-term recovery personnel.

Supporting Agencies Responsibilities

Hamilton County Emergency Management/Homeland Security will:

1. Coordinate Rapid Needs Assessments to prioritize communities for SAR operations.
2. Assist in prioritizing debris removal operations to provide access to SAR mission area(s).

Hamilton County Engineer's Office will:

1. Assist in SAR operations within capabilities.
2. Provide vehicles and crews to assist in debris removal and access to SAR mission(s) area(s).
3. Provide for the transportation of supplies and equipment to the affected area(s).

Hamilton County Sheriff's Office will:

1. Assist in SAR operations within capabilities.
2. Provide site security and access restrictions to areas upon request.
3. Assist in establishing communications webs and command centers.
4. Ensure evidence collection is provided once a deceased person(s) is found.

Local Jurisdictional Fire/EMS Departments will:

1. Assist in SAR operations within capabilities.

Ohio Civil Air Patrol (CAP) may:

1. Provide ground support crews for S & R missions
2. Provide air reconnaissance
3. Provide communications capabilities

Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) may:

1. Provide heavy equipment (bulldozers, dump trucks, graders), fire-fighting equipment.
2. Provide additional Law Enforcement personnel.
3. Provide air assets, including fixed wing and rotary aircraft.
4. Provide trained personnel and watercraft resources for missions involving SAR in aquatic environments.
5. Provide assistance with swift water rescues, side-scan sonar, underwater video capabilities, night vision and thermal imaging equipment.
6. Provide a wide range of vehicles, including 4-wheel drive and All-Terrain Vehicles.
7. Provide K-9 units for assistance in searches.

Ohio State Highway Patrol may:

1. Provide additional Law Enforcement personnel.
2. Provide air assets, including fixed wing and rotary aircraft.

Ohio Task Force One (OHTF-1) may:

1. Assist with SAR operations within Hamilton County, if activated by the State of Ohio.