

NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN (NCEOP)
ANNEX A | APPENDIX 3 | TAB H
SEARCH and RESCUE (NCESF-9)
2023

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this appendix is to provide state support to local governments by using state resources in missing person, swift water/flood, and urban/disaster Search and Rescue (SAR) activities during daily events as well as actual or potential disasters.

B. SCOPE

Search and rescue activities include emergency incidents that involve locating missing person(s), boats lost at sea, downed aircraft, extrication if necessary, and treating victims upon rescue. Swift water and flood search and rescue activities includes locating victims and effecting safe rescue(s) in a moving water environment by ground, water, or air. Urban/disaster search and rescue activities include locating, extricating, and coordinating the immediate medical assistance to victims trapped in collapsed structures.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. SITUATION

A major disaster may cause many people to be in life threatening situations that require prompt rescue and medical care. Since the first 72 hours are crucial to minimizing the mortality rate, search and rescue must begin immediately. Search and rescue personnel may be required to deal with extensive damage to buildings, roadways, public works, communications, and utilities. Secondary events such as fires, explosions, flooding and hazardous material releases may compound the problems and threaten both survivors and rescue personnel.

The most common SAR missions in North Carolina involve lost persons, missing aircraft, and watercraft. The extent may vary from a few individuals looking for a single person to a full-scale SAR operation involving local, State, and Federal agencies in addition to private sector and volunteer groups looking for many individuals, missing aircraft or watercraft.

B. ASSUMPTIONS

1. All available and trained SAR resources will be committed and additional specialized resources may be needed from the state.
2. Coordination and direction of local efforts, including volunteers, will be required.

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3. Damaged areas will have access restrictions and not be readily accessible except, in some cases, by air or water.
4. Secondary events will threaten survivors, as well as SAR personnel.
5. Search operations will be conducted at the lowest level of government compatible with operational requirements.
6. The state has 7 designated, trained, and equipped urban search and rescue teams. In the event of a catastrophic disaster with wide spread building collapse, the SERT Emergency Services Branch will coordinate the deployment of necessary teams.
7. The Emergency Services Branch will coordinate with ESF-9 for Federal urban search and rescue support if the event exceeds state capabilities.
8. In the event of disaster involving building collapse, there will be convergent volunteers but their capabilities will be limited.
9. Workers' compensation will not be available for convergent volunteers assisting in urban search.
10. The level of urgency may be high, and as such, may require specialized resources, such as aircraft, to affect the rescue(s).
11. The Emergency Services Branch maintains a current typed resource database of specialized resources including missing person, swift water/ flood, and urban/disaster search and rescue.

III. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. LEAD STATE AGENCY

1. NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY (NCDPS)

NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (NCEM)

- a. Provide a liaison to local government and coordinate assistance and/or response from State and Federal governments and private SAR organizations.
- b. Organize and appropriately train emergency management personnel for participation in all aspects of SAR operations.

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- c. Coordinate additional training for state and local government agencies and volunteer organizations to ensure an acceptable level of SAR preparedness.
- d. Ensure specialized resources are capable by maintaining training records, applications, and typing criteria.
- e. Maintain current directory of qualified resources for search and rescue.
- f. Coordinate air assets to transport specialized resources in a timely fashion following the Air Operations Tab.

B. SUPPORTING STATE AGENCIES

1. NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY (NCDPS)

STATE HIGHWAY PATROL (SHP)

- a. Conduct air and ground search as directed.
- b. Provide immediate assistance (including traffic control and law enforcement) as required to local authorities during the onset of the emergency.
- c. Conduct searches on highways.
- d. Conduct swift water/flood search and rescue using qualified civilian helicopter aquatic rescue technicians.
- e. Conduct stranded personnel rescue and injured personnel extraction through operating aircraft with rescue hoist and/or short-haul operations capability.
- f. Conduct annual recurrent qualification training with pilot(s), crew chief(s), and qualified civilian rescuers.

CIVIL AIR PATROL (CAP)

- a. All support will be provided once a mission number is received from the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) or once a request from Emergency Management is approved and accepted.
- b. Provide an Incident Commander (IC) for search operations as tasked by the US AFRCC.

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- c. Provide qualified personnel for ground, lake or river SAR operations.
- d. Provide aircraft to support air search and aerial surveillance.

NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD (NCNG)

- a. Conduct air and ground search as directed.
- b. Conduct swift water/flood search and rescue using qualified civilian helicopter aquatic rescue technicians.
- c. Conduct stranded personnel rescue and injured personnel extraction through operating aircraft with rescue hoist and/or short-haul operations capability.
- d. Conduct annual recurrent qualification training with pilot(s), crew chief(s), and qualified civilian rescuers.

2. NC DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (NCDEQ)

DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES (DMF)

- a. Act as guides in coastal areas.
- b. Provide air, sea, and land transportation suitable for SAR missions.
- c. Provide SAR teams.

3. NC WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION (NCWRC)

- a. Act as guides in woodland and water search areas.
- b. Provide air, water, and land transportation suitable for SAR missions.
- c. Provide SAR teams.

4. NC DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES (NCDNCR)

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

- a. Act as guides in state park search areas.

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- b. Provide transportation and make state park facilities available to support search and rescue.
- c. Provide SAR teams.
- d. Provide security and traffic control support.

5. NC DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES (NCDA&CS)

NC FOREST SERVICE (NCFS)

- a. Provide air and ground search and rescue as directed.
- b. Act as guides within the state forest areas.
- c. Provide two small mobile headquarters to function in a search management role as required.

6. NC DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE (NCDOI)

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHALL (OSFM)

- a. Provide search and rescue training.
- b. Coordinate and mobilize qualified resources from fire and rescue services statewide through the NC Association of Rescue and EMS and the NC Firemen's Association.

C. SUPPORTING VOLUNTEER AGENCIES

1. NC SEARCH AND RESCUE ADVISORY COUNCIL (NCSARAC)

- a. Provide and recommend personnel, equipment, education, and training for the effective delivery of search and rescue in NC.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. GENERAL

The SERT Emergency Services Branch will provide support to local search and rescue operations. North Carolina Emergency Management, as the lead agency, will coordinate the provision of other state personnel and equipment.

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B. NOTIFICATION

Upon notification by the State EOC of a potential or actual event requiring response, SERT search agencies will be notified by phone call, text, or email. All support agency contact persons for the SAR emergency support function will be instructed to alert their contacts throughout the state to ensure all resources are available. The Emergency Services Branch will provide daily situation reports, starting D-3, to all specialized state teams (USAR, Swiftwater, Mountain Rescue, Helo-aquatic Rescue, and Wilderness).

C. RESPONSE ACTIONS

1. INITIAL

- a. State and local resources from outside the disaster area are committed through coordination with other agencies with SAR resources.
- b. Transportation will be provided, if available, or may be the responsibility of the resource agency. Coordination with the SERT Logistical Support Services Branch may be required. Resources may be pre-positioned if necessary.

2. CONTINUING

- a. Coordination between state, local, and if requested, Federal SAR resources is controlled by NCEM.
- b. SAR resources are reassigned as needed and requested.
- c. SAR resources are withdrawn when no longer needed.
- d. NCEM will use the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) to support search and rescue missions if requests overwhelm capable state resources.

D. RECOVERY ACTIONS

1. INITIAL

- a. Provide SAR resources to assist recovery efforts upon request.
- b. Maintain normal day-to-day operations.
- c. Return all activities expeditiously to pre-emergency status.

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2. CONTINUING

- a. Maintain and update all plans and programs.
- b. Modify all aspects of this plan.

V. DIRECTION, CONTROL AND COORDINATION

1. LOCAL

Organization of the search and rescue function varies from county to county. The Emergency Management Coordinator, Rescue Chief, or law enforcement may be designated as the search coordinator. Mutual aid agreements usually exist among emergency services groups. Local emergency services support Federal agencies when the search and rescue occurs on Federal land. When a SAR situation exceeds the capabilities of local government, assistance from the state may be requested through normal emergency management channels.

2. STATE

State government agencies assist local government in planning, training, and obtaining resources. The state may assume operational control of any SAR mission when requested by the local government, when the situation involves multi-county areas or when the Governor directs. When deemed appropriate by the SERT leader, NCEM will activate the State EOC and notify SERT search agencies that state assets are required to augment SAR efforts.

3. FEDERAL

Federal ESF-9 will coordinate urban search and rescue support to state and local SAR operations through the SERT Emergency Services Branch. SAR activities on Federal property, such as national parks, will be under the direction and control of the Federal agency under whose jurisdiction the emergency occurs.

The US Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) has jurisdiction of federal air search assets for incidents involving aircraft.

The US Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Center (CGRCC) has jurisdiction of search missions over coastal and navigable inter-coastal waterways.