



**Emergency Support Function 9  
Search and Rescue**



**Coordinating Agency**

West Virginia Division of Homeland  
Security and Emergency Management  
(WVDHSEM)

**Support Agencies and Organizations**

West Virginia Department of Commerce  
West Virginia Department of Military  
Affairs and Public Safety  
(WVDMAPS)/West Virginia National  
Guard (WVNG)  
West Virginia Department of Health and  
Human Resources (WVDHHR)  
West Virginia Department of  
Administration, Aviation Division  
West Virginia Civil Air Patrol (WVCAP)  
West Virginia K-9 Search & Rescue Team  
(WV K9 SAR)

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**Purpose**

ESF 9 – Search and Rescue (SAR) establishes the state’s system and assigns responsibilities for providing lifesaving assistance and services to local jurisdictions when there is an actual or anticipated request for state SAR assistance.

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**Scope**

**A.** The SAR Response System integrates a broad range of professional and technical specialists who respond to a wide range of mission assignments. It is understood that certain skill sets may have a crossover to one or more of the three operational environments of Search and Rescue.

**B.** During incidents or potential incidents requiring a unified SAR response, state SAR responsibilities reside with the ESF 9 coordinator at the WVDHSEM, who will coordinate timely and specialized SAR capabilities. Support agencies and organizations will provide specific capabilities or resources that support ESF 9.

**C.** State SAR response operational environments are classified as:

- *Land SAR*, locating lost persons or civilian aircraft, where this is the sole purpose of the operation. (NOTE: West Virginia state and local resources may be called upon to assist with searches for downed military aircraft. US military authorities retain command of the scene.)
- *Structural Collapse Urban Search and Rescue (US&R)*, structural explosions, collapse or transportation accidents involving Urban Search and Rescue

techniques, such as trench rescue, high-angle rescue and confined space (does not pertain to mine emergencies)

- *Waterborne SAR*, natural disasters, where boat response and rescue is an integral part of the overall disaster operations, including body recovery.

**D.** State SAR services include distress monitoring, incident communications, locating distressed personnel, coordination, and execution of rescue operations, including extrication and/or evacuation, along with providing medical assistance and volunteer services through the use of public and private resources to assist persons and property in potential or actual distress. See Incident Specific Annex 5 – Coal Mine Emergency.

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## **Policies**

All departments and agencies assigned responsibilities within ESF 9 will develop and maintain the necessary plans and standard operating procedures needed to accomplish their tasks. WVDHSEM will coordinate deployment of 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.

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## **Organizational Structure**

### **A. General**

1. Operations involving lost persons are under the direction of local government and employ local resources. The exception to local government direction is operations on state or federal property, i.e., parks, forests and non-navigable waterways. These are under the direction of the appropriate state or federal agency.
2. Operations involving lost aircraft are conducted in accordance with the West Virginia Civil Air Patrol's SAR plans and the National Search and Rescue Plan. State and local government organizations may be requested to assist in the operations; however, overall direction of the operation is by WVDHSEM in coordination with the US Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), if appropriate.

### **B. Categories and Lead Agencies**

1. Law enforcement has the lead role in SAR operations. As soon as the lost person(s) is located, the local fire department assumes the lead during rescue operations. When not in a 'lead' role for an operation, other organizations provide support as they are capable. Waterborne rescue is most likely to vary based on local resources.

<b>Type of Rescue Operation</b>	<b>Lead Discipline</b>	<b>Support Discipline</b>
Aircraft Accident	WVDHSEM	Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS)/CAP
Confined Space	Fire	Law Enforcement/EMS
Entrapment	Fire	Law Enforcement/EMS
High Angle	Fire	Law Enforcement/EMS
Missing Person	Law Enforcement	Fire/EMS
Trench	Varies with local policy	Varies with local policy
Waterborne	Varies with local policy	Varies with local policy

## **Concept of Operations**

### **A. General**

1. Operations are directed and accomplished by local government utilizing local resources. These resources may include supplies, equipment, and personnel belonging to any public entities and/or private sector companies that may be involved with SAR activity. State assistance may be provided upon request.
2. Overall coordination of SAR operations within a county are performed by the local government, except when:
  - a. the local government requests the state to perform the coordination function.
  - b. the Governor directs state coordination of SAR operations in a multi-county area due to the magnitude and severity of the situation.
3. Overall coordination of SAR operations for missing aircraft is performed by WVDHSEM with the support of the WVCAP in coordination with the AFRCC.
4. All resource requests must indicate the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Resource Type requested, if applicable.

### **B. Phases of Management**

1. Preparedness
  - a. Develop and maintain internal plans, policies, and procedures to perform duties and responsibilities outlined in this annex.
  - b. Ensure individual licenses, qualifications, certifications, etc. are current at all times.

- c. Conduct organizational level training to develop and maintain proficiency in SAR tasks.
- d. Conduct organizational exercises internally and in coordination with other SAR organizations.
- e. Conduct After Action Reviews (AARs) after all exercises to document strengths and weaknesses within the organization's preparedness status.

2. Response

- a. Local authorities utilize either the Incident Command (IC) or Unified Command (UC) Structure.
- b. Communications is first a local issue with outside resources being incorporated into local communications. Other communications needs are addressed in ESF 2 Communications.
- c. An Incident Action Plan (IAP) is developed and implemented.
- d. Responder safety is the first priority.
- e. An EMS unit is located on-scene.
- f. The WVDHSEM Watch Center or the West Virginia State Emergency Operations Center (WVSEOC), when activated, is notified that a SAR activity is being conducted.
- g. public information activities are established to advise the public of safety issues and encourage the public to provide information, especially in cases of a missing person, which may assist rescuers. See ESF 15 – External Affairs for more information.
- h. The public is kept at a safe distance from the search scene for its own safety, and also to prevent the unintentional contamination of possible evidence and prevent additional persons from becoming lost or injured.
- i. A Demobilization Plan is developed by the Planning Section Chief.
- j. Mutual Aid
  - 1) Mutual aid may be requested when local resources have been fully committed and additional resources are required; or if technical expertise is not locally available.

- 2) Arriving resources are integrated into the existing IC or UC structure.
- 3) Team integrity is maintained within arriving units.
- 4) The initial Demobilization Plan is modified to accommodate the mutual aid resources.

k. State and Federal

- 1) If local mutual aid resources are inadequate, or if appropriate expertise is not available, a request for assistance may be made to the WVSEOC.
- 2) Requests may include, the Wilderness Search and Rescue, the Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) or Federal US&R Teams. These requests must include specific details on the types of search and rescue missions required.
- 3) When state resources are utilized, assignment is on a mission-by-mission basis to the maximum extent possible.
- 4) IC and UC track state and federal resources as with any other mutual aid resource.

3. Demobilization

- a. Demobilization planning begins with the establishment of IC or UC as required by NIMS. As the volume of resources increases, the Demobilization Plan is appropriately modified.
  - b. If possible, state and federal resources are released first, followed by local mutual aid resources.
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**Agency Responsibilities Matrix**

<b>Supporting Agency</b>	<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
West Virginia Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management	WVDHSEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides coordination for all state agencies.</li> <li>• Receives local requests for state, volunteer (K9, CAP, horse, cave, and mountaineer) and federal SAR assistance.</li> <li>• Requests SAR assistance as required from any state agency.</li> <li>• Verifies inventories of available state volunteer search and rescue resources and keeps current a summary of said resources.</li> <li>• Establishes protocols for prioritizing state volunteer response activities.</li> <li>• Coordinates state, volunteer and federal support</li> </ul>
West Virginia Department of Commerce		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides assistance for ground, air, and water search and rescue operations for the state</li> </ul>
West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety	WVDMAPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides assistance for ground and air SAR operations for the state. This includes K-9 operations needed for search. (WV State Police, WV Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation)</li> <li>• Provides mobile command center for communications support (WV State Police)</li> <li>• Provides personnel assistance for ground, water, and air operations through the National Guard</li> </ul>
West Virginia Department of Administration, Aviation Division		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides air and ground transportation in support of SAR operations for the state</li> </ul>
West Virginia Civil Air Patrol	CAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepares plans and procedures to accomplish air and ground SAR missions for the state in accordance with existing agreements</li> </ul>
West Virginia K-9 Search & Rescue Team	WV K9 SAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides search dogs, handlers, and field support personnel in support of SAR missions throughout the State of West Virginia</li> </ul>

**Authorities & References**

*Authorities*

State of West Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws

West Virginia Code §15-5

West Virginia Code §15-1

West Virginia Code §15-2

West Virginia Code §15-10

West Virginia Code §16-4C

West Virginia Code §29-3

*References*

State of West Virginia Emergency Operations Plan – Basic Plan

West Virginia State Emergency Operations Center (WVSEOC) Standard Operating Procedures

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

National Response Framework (NRF), as amended.

Memorandum of Agreement Between the State of West Virginia and The SAR Coordinator for The Inland Region in Support of The National Search and Rescue Plan

*EMAP Standards*

4.4.3 - (26) Search and Rescue.

**RECORD OF CHANGES**

CHANGE NUMBER	DATE OF CHANGE	PAGE/CHANGE	CHANGE MADE BY (SIGNATURE)
1	5/1/2017	ESF 9 – 7, (Record of Changes Added)	
2	5/1/2017	ESF 9 - 8, EMAP Standard Added, (4.4.3 - (26) Search and Rescue)	