

## **EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION - 9**

### **SEARCH & RESCUE**

**PRIMARY AGENCY:** Area Law Enforcement Agencies

**SUPPORT AGENCIES:** Kittitas County Fire Agencies  
Kittitas County Emergency Management  
Kittitas County EMS Agencies  
Kittitas County Search and Rescue

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance for search and rescue operations. The primary source of man power for SAR operations comes from volunteers, in most cases Kittitas County Search and Rescue. And CERT programs, the purpose of these groups is to help mitigate the loss of life through their operations.

#### **SCOPE:**

This ESF details the roles and responsibilities of agencies responding to Search and Rescue operations, either wildland or urban. State law encompasses both wild land and disaster (urban) SAR (Section 38.52.010(7) RCW).

#### **POLICIES**

Land SAR activities are initiated, coordination and directed by the local law enforcement agency responsible for the jurisdiction.

Air SAR for mission or downed civil aircraft is the responsibility of the Department of Transportation (WSDOT) (RCW 47.68)

The Incident Command System (ICS) is the preferred method of on-scene incident management for all SAR operations.

#### **SITUATION**

##### **A. Emergency/Disaster Hazards and Conditions**

Kittitas County is threatened by major events such as avalanches, earthquakes or airline crashes. Such disasters have the potential of resulting in large SAR operations that could be multi-jurisdictional.

Kittitas County is an extremely mountainous county. Avalanches are another situation that could present a situation to the local Search & Rescue capabilities.

The wide range of and easy access to outdoor recreation in Kittitas County and the increasing number of people recreating in the outdoors will result in possible increase in SAR operations.

**B. Planning Assumptions**

1. Local resources are capable of handling day to day Search and Rescue activities.
2. The military will respond to most requested Rescue situations for air support.
3. Law Enforcement Agencies, by RCW, are the responsible agency for Search & Rescue activities.
4. Searches for overdue / lost aircraft are coordinated by the Aeronautics Division of the Department of Transportation.

**CONCEPTS OF OPERATIONS****A. General**

1. All Search & Rescue operations will be managed by the concepts of the Incident Command System (ICS), with the responsible Law Enforcement Agency as the Command Agency.
2. Search & Rescue operations will normally be controlled from a field command post location.
3. Large scale Search & Rescue may utilize the EOC for coordination of resources.
4. In the event of a search and rescue emergency, all necessary equipment and personnel, including organized volunteer services, will be mobilized and dispatched to the scene. Control of all emergency search and rescue functions will remain the responsibility of the law enforcement agency concerned.
5. Upon notification of a search and rescue emergency, Kittitas County Emergency Management will advise the state Division of Emergency Management of any search and rescue mission which utilizes volunteers and request a mission number. This extends liability coverage to participating registered personnel and equipment.
6. Whenever local resources are exhausted, unavailable, or unqualified for a particular search and rescue mission, Kittitas County Emergency Management may request assistance through the state Division of Emergency Management. The state office will authorize state, federal and

state-wide search and rescue volunteer organization resources and initiate the access of personnel, equipment, air support, and other specialized or requested supplies.

7. The radio frequency 155.160 MHz has been dedicated state wide for search and rescue communications purposes.

## **B. Organization**

1. Local chief law enforcement officers are responsible for SAR operations within their jurisdictions.
2. The US Forest Service and National Park Service have SAR responsibilities on their lands. The USFS has requested that the Kittitas County Sheriff's Office handle SAR operations on Forest Service lands.
3. Emergency Management will work in a coordinating capacity in direct support of search and rescue activities and:
  - a. Obtain state mission number for actual and training missions
  - b. Register local search and rescue volunteers as emergency workers
4. Fire and EMS agencies will assist SAR operations with technical, medical and personnel support.
5. Heavy rescue (IE: collapsed buildings, trench rescue) shall be a team effort of Law Enforcement, fire services Volunteers other agencies and the private sector, with the Fire Department providing overall command , control and coordination. The Public Works Department, Street Division is the lead agency for the provision of heavy equipment. The Planning Dept. Building Division is the lead agency for providing technical advise concerning structures.

## **C. Procedures**

1. Upon receiving information of a possible SAR operations, the responsible law enforcement agency will initiate their SAR procedures.
2. When personnel from outside the law enforcement agency are used, the responsible agency will contact Emergency Management for a State Mission Number.
3. Direction and Control of the SAR operations will follow the concepts of the Incident Command System (ICS), with the responsible law enforcement agency being the Incident Command agency.

## **D. Mitigation Activities**

Primary agency

1. Provide ongoing public education to recreational users
2. Maintain an active SAR program.

#### **E. Preparedness Activities**

##### Primary agency

1. Provide SAR training to responsible personnel and appoint a SAR coordinator. SAR training shall include response to Urban SAR as well as wild land SAR.
2. Develop and maintain support procedures for response to SAR operations.
3. Develop and maintain a training program for personnel and volunteers for SAR operations.

##### Support agencies

1. Establish coordination with primary agency.
2. Develop and maintain procedures for responding to SAR operations, which are coordinated with primary agency's procedures.
3. Develop and maintain training for SAR operations.

#### **F. Response Activities**

##### Primary agency

1. Initiate all SAR operations within their jurisdiction, except those operations tasked to State DOT, Aeronautics Division.
2. Establish ICS for SAR operations and become Incident Command for all SAR operations, this include Urban Search and Rescue.
3. Provide trained personnel for SAR operations.
4. Request additional resources, as appropriate.

##### Support agencies

1. Provide resources for SAR operations, as appropriate.
2. Respond following the concepts of the Incident Command System.

#### **G. Recovery Activities**

## All Agencies

1. Assist in the return of all SAR resources in an organized fashion, so as to be able to respond to future SAR missions.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

## Primary agency

1. In accordance with RCW 38.52.400 the chief law enforcement officer of each political subdivision is responsible for conducting search and rescue operations within the jurisdiction.
2. Provide a 24 hour point of contact for the public to report possible SAR operations.
3. Provide direction and coordination for SAR operations, to include Urban SAR operations.

## Support agencies

Upon request, provide support in search and rescue operations and aid victims within their means of personnel, training and equipment.

**RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

Search & Rescue resources are obtained and kept, for the most part, by the Kittitas County Sheriff's Office. They have obtained a pool of active volunteers and equipment.