



## EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION 9

### SEARCH AND RESCUE

**PRIMARY AGENCY:** Kittitas County Law Enforcement Agencies

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

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

This support function provides guidance for search and rescue (SAR) operations. The primary human resource for SAR operations comes from volunteers, in most cases Kittitas County Search and Rescue. Other programs, such as Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), help mitigate the loss of life.

### Scope

This support function details the roles and responsibilities of agencies responding to search and rescue operations. Such operations may occur in wild land or urban settings, and state law encompasses both in RCW 38.52.010(7).

Planning for every search and rescue contingency is far beyond the scope of this ESF. This plan will outline broad objectives that will provide for the greatest protection of life and property that can be achieved with resources available. This ESF should be used as a guideline for those in command of search and rescue operations and should not be viewed as a prescribed action plan.

## II. POLICIES

1. Land and water SAR activities are initiated, coordination and directed by the local law enforcement agency responsible for the jurisdiction.
2. Volunteer SAR teams are organized by specialty. Team members maintain current registration with the Washington Emergency Worker Program with approval through the Kittitas County Sheriff's Office.

3. Kittitas County Sheriff's Office is responsible for SAR operations in the unincorporated areas of Kittitas County and may, by agreement or upon request, support SAR operations in the incorporated cities and towns (RCW 38.52.400).
4. Air SAR for mission or downed civil aircraft is the responsibility of the Department of Transportation (WSDOT) (RCW 47.68).
5. SAR operations will be managed under Incident Command System (ICS) through National Incident Management System (NIMS) as the method of on-scene incident management.
6. When possible, in addition to the rescue of individuals, both service animals and pets will be rescued.

### III. SITUATION

#### **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 and 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. This includes river and lake activities that require Sheriff Office Marine Units to assist in SAR operations.

#### **Planning Assumptions**

1. People will be lost, injured, or killed while outdoors, requiring SAR assistance.
2. Local resources are capable of handling day to day Search and Rescue activities.
3. The military will respond to most requested Rescue situations for air support.
4. Law Enforcement Agencies, by RCW, are the responsible agencies for Search and Rescue activities.
5. Searches for overdue/lost aircraft are coordinated by the Aeronautics Division of the Department of Transportation.

6. Natural and man-made disasters and / or acts of terrorism may create the need for structural collapse search and rescue as well as wide area search operations.
7. An emergency or disaster may overwhelm volunteer and local SAR agencies and may require the technical skills of an Urban Search and Rescue task force.
8. Large numbers of local residents and volunteers will initiate activities to assist SAR operations and will require coordination. Convergent (spontaneous) volunteers will require coordination and direction within the local incident command structure.
9. Access to damaged sites and / or wilderness locations may be limited. Some sites may be initially accessible by only air or water.
10. Some individuals may have communication impediments such as hearing or speech impairment, or behavioral or cognitive impairment.

#### **IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

##### **General**

1. All Search and Rescue operations will be managed by the concepts of the NIMS, with the responsible Law Enforcement Agency as the Command Agency.
2. Search and Rescue operations will normally be controlled from a field command post location.
3. Large scale Search and 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 Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) Division Duty Officer at the Alert and Warning Center (SEOC) 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 EOC. The state EOC 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 statewide for search and rescue communications purposes.

### **Organization**

1. Local chief law enforcement officers are responsible for SAR operations within their jurisdictions.
2. The US Forest Service has 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 (such as a collapsed building or 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 advice concerning structures.

### **Procedures**

1. Upon receiving information of a possible SAR operation, the responsible law enforcement agency will initiate its 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 NIMS, with the responsible law enforcement agency being the Incident Command agency.

## Mitigation Activities

### Primary Agency:

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

## 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.

## Response Activities

### Primary Agency:

1. Initiate all SAR operations within their jurisdiction, except those operations tasked to State DOT, Aeronautics Division.
2. Establish NIMS for SAR operations and become Incident Command for all SAR operations, this includes 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.

## **Recovery Activities**

### **All Agencies**

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

## **V. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Primary Agencies**

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**

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

## **VI. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

Search and 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. Other resources are dependent on the situation.

## **VII. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING PLANS**

- None identified at this time.

## **VIII. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

- ANNEX A: Definitions & Acronyms