

Response Manual

National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R)
Response System
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FEMA

NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM RESPONSE MANUAL

Foreword

This Response Manual provides a guide to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel to perform Federal disaster response operations during major disasters or emergencies.

The National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Response System provides for the coordination, development, and maintenance of the Federal effort with resources to locate, extricate, and provide immediate medical treatment to survivors trapped in collapsed structures and to conduct other life-saving operations.

The National US&R Response System (the System) methods of operation, organization, capabilities, and procedures for pre-response preparedness activities, in mobilization, on-site operations, and demobilization are described in this document. This document is compliant with the goals of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Questions, comments, and suggested improvements related to this document are encouraged.

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Table of Contents

NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE I

RESPONSE SYSTEM I

RESPONSE MANUAL I

FOREWORD I

TABLE OF CONTENTS III

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

1. Purpose 1

2. National US&R Response System Overview 2

3. The National US&R Response System within the National Response Framework 4

CHAPTER 2: NATIONAL US&R RESPONSE SYSTEM OVERVIEW 18

2-1 National US&R Response System Coordination Group 18

2-2 National US&R Response System Coordination Group Annex A 18

CHAPTER 3: NATIONAL US&R RESPONSE SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION 22

3-1 Agency Responsibilities 22

3-2. Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 (Search and Rescue) 24

3-4. Task Force Capabilities 30

3-5. FEMA Task Force Requests 30

3-6. Notification Procedures for US&R Resource Requests 31

3-7. National US&R Response System Task Force Rotation System 31

3-8. Notifications 32

3-9. Task Force Allocation 34

3-10 Procedures for Accepting International US&R Assistance 36

CHAPTER 4: TASK FORCE MOBILIZATION 37

4-1. Task Force Transportation Requirements 37

4-2. Task Force Mobilization Guidelines 38

4-3. Point of Departure Activities 40

CHAPTER 5: ARRIVAL AT THE MOBILIZATION CENTER 42

5-1 Establishment of a Basecamp or Base of Operations 42

5-2 Task Force Reception/Support 42

5-3. Task Force Deployment 44

CHAPTER 6: STAGING AREA AND INCIDENT ASSIGNMENT 45

6-1. Staging Areas 45

6-2. On-Site Assignment 45

CHAPTER 7: ON-SITE OPERATIONS 45

7.1 Base of Operations 46

7-2. Equipment Cache Management 47

7-3. Task Force Command Post 48

7-4. Shelter Requirements 48

7-5. Tactical Assignments and Operations 49

7-6. Agency-Specific Communications 52

7-7. Agency Support to Families 52

7-8. Personnel Injuries 52

CHAPTER 8: TASK FORCE REASSIGNMENT AND DEMOBILIZATION 53

8-1. Reassignment Considerations 53

8-2. Reassignment/Demobilization 53

8-3. Equipment Cache Management 54

8-4. Cessation of Base of Operations 54

8-5. Return to a Basecamp or Base of Operations 54

CHAPTER 9: POST-MISSION ACTIVITIES 56

9-1. Return to Point of Departure 56

9-2. Equipment Management and Rehabilitation 56

9-3. Behavioral Health Follow-up 57

9-4. After Action Review 57

9-5. After-Action Report 57

9-6. Fiscal Accountability and Reimbursement 58

9-7. Return to State of Readiness 58

CHAPTER 10: US&R RESPONSE SYSTEM PROGRAM MAINTENANCE 59
10-1. Mobilization Manual *59*
10-2. Cache Maintenance *59*
10-3. Training and Exercises *59*
APPENDIX A: LIST OF ACRONYMS 61

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose

This National US&R Response System document:

- Describes the composition and capabilities of the System;
- Describes the process that issues System Alerts, Advisories, activates and deploys FEMA US&R resources under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5121, et seq. (Stafford Act);
- Delineates organizational roles and responsibilities;
- Describes the purpose and functions of the US&R Incident Support Team (IST) and its relationship to System resources;
- Describes the relationships between System resources, national-level resources (e.g. State Urban Search and Rescue [SUSAR]) and Federal resources such as FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT), the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the Department of the Interior/National Park Service (DOI/NPS), the Department of War (DOW), and other supporting organizations;
- Outlines how System resources will be assigned or allocated during disasters;
- Describes the process for accepting international assistance to supplement domestic U.S. search and rescue capability, including the FEMA International Assistance System;
- Provides guidelines and procedures for the movement of System resources during a response;
- Describes the purpose of a base of operation (BoO), basecamps, staging areas, and activities related to the System's use of these facilities;
- Identifies the procedures for on-site operations, System resource reassignment, and demobilization;
- Identifies the utilization of Search and Rescue Intelligence (SARI), the use of Intelligence by the Search and Rescue Intelligence Group (SARIG) and the procedures for use of the Search and Rescue Common Operating Platform (SARCOP); and
- Ensures that as much as is possible, all references and current doctrine is identified and maintained throughout. In these instances, many of the doctrinal and referential material is hyperlinked throughout this document. Additionally, the majority of the US&R Doctrine that can and should be reviewed under the responsesystem.org/doctrine web page.

This Response Manual provides a detailed overview of the FEMA National US&R Response System. Other operational information is provided in the National US&R Response System Field Operations Guide (FOG). The reader should also refer to the Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 Annex—Search and Rescue (SAR) of the National Response Framework (NRF) to understand how System resources function in the overall Federal response to a presidential declaration of a disaster. Additional

resources are the various annexes and appendices related to this parent document and can be found at responsesystem.org/doctrine>301 (Response Manual Annex A) – 309 (Response Manual Annex I).

2. National US&R Response System Overview

The National US&R Response System is a framework for structuring local emergency services personnel into integrated Federal response resources. The 28 System Sponsoring Agencies (SA) maintain US&R task forces that complete the necessary tools, equipment, skills, and techniques, can be deployed by FEMA to assist state, tribal, territorial, and local governments in rescuing survivors of national-level disaster incidents, or to assist in other search and rescue activities. Each System task force is required to accept or decline a request for alert or activation within one hour of receipt. If a request for activation is accepted, the task force is then required to have all its personnel and equipment at its embarkation point as designated by the acceptance of the order and in the activation call with the FEMA US&R Branch, generally within four hours if being deployed by ground transport or at an identified Aerial Port of Embarkation (APOE) within six hours of activation if deployed by air transport. The task force can be mobilized and en route to its destination within a matter of hours.

All System Sponsoring Agencies are capable of deploying a Type 1, Type 2, Type 3, Type 4 US&R Task Force, or modular Mission Ready Package (MRP). A Type 1 US&R Task Force is staffed with 70 personnel and all required equipment. Up to an additional 10 support personnel may be activated when a task force travels by ground transportation (See Figure 1).

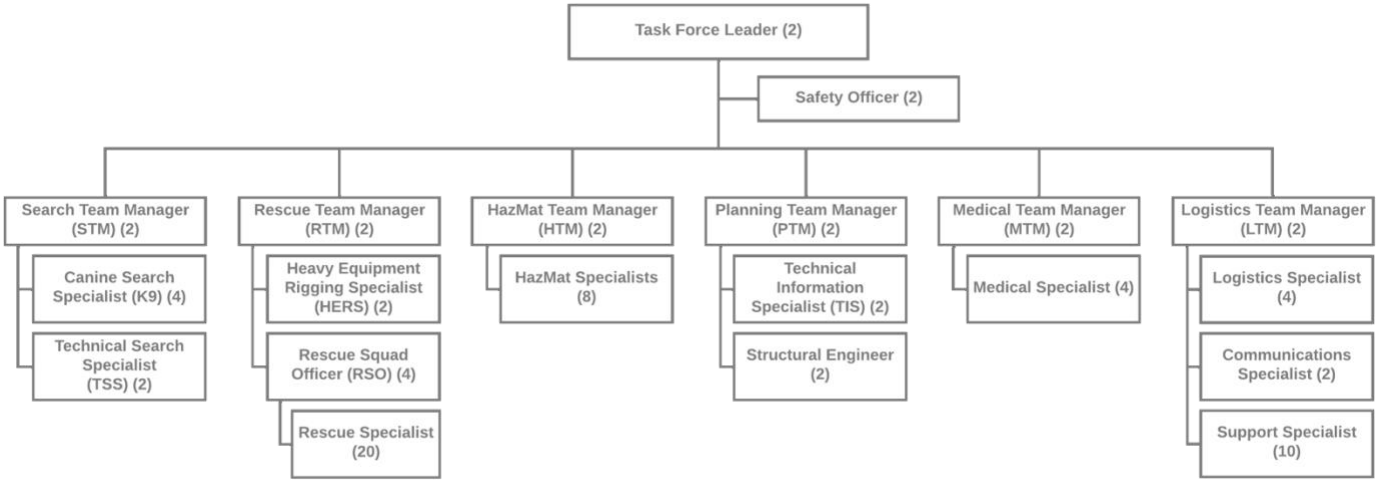

Figure 1 - Type 1 Task Force Organization

System resources operating at a potential or suspected Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) incident will closely interface with local law authorities and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (responsible for crisis management under Presidential Decision Directive 62). They should also work closely with local hazardous materials responders, emergency medical service providers, and other NRF support agencies.

A Type 2 US&R Task Force has all the elements and personnel of a Type 1, without the capability of responding to a CBRN incident.

In a disaster or other situation where the capabilities of a Type 1 US&R task force are not required, FEMA also supports a 35-person Type 3 task force, with up to an additional ten support personnel when a task force travels by ground transportation (due to the Type 3 taking the Type 1 cache). The Type 3 US&R task force is developed as a rapid needs assessment and search team that responds to disasters as part of the NRF. (See Figure I-2)

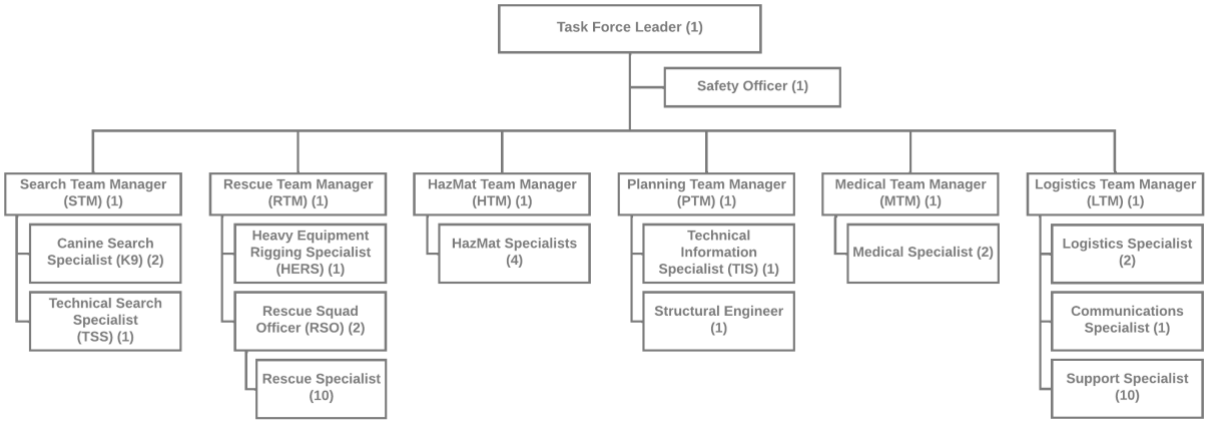

Figure 2 - Type 3 Task Force Organization

A Type 4 US&R Task Force consists of a 22-person team with the similar core capabilities as a Type 3 task force, with a focus of operations on light to moderate frame construction damaged structures, capable of 12-hour operations.

Type	Capability	Personnel
1	(CBRN Capable) - A Type 1 Urban Search and Rescue US&R Task Force is a 70-person multi-disciplined resource which conducts search and rescue response efforts for all hazards, including locating, accessing, medically stabilizing, and extricating survivors from light through heavy frame construction damaged structures. Specialized operational personnel include rescue, canine search, medical, hazardous materials (hazmat), technical search, and communications. A Type 1 task force is capable of continuous 24-hour operations, which can split into two 12-hour operational period teams. Additional operational capabilities include wide-area search, floodwater operations, and US&R operations in contaminated environments, to include Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Defense (CBRN) events. This resource is self-sustaining for 72 hours and deployable for up to 14 days.	70
2	(Non-CBRN Capable) - A Type 2 US&R Task Force is a 70-person multi-disciplined resource which conducts search and rescue response efforts for all hazards, including locating, accessing, medically stabilizing, and extricating survivors from light through heavy frame construction damaged structures. Specialized operational personnel include rescue, canine search, medical, hazmat, technical search, and communications. A Type-2 task force is capable of continuous 24-hour operations, which can split into two 12-hour operational period teams. Additional operational capabilities include wide-area search, floodwater operations, and US&R operations in contaminated environments, non-CBRN events. This resource is self-sustaining for 72 hours and deployable for up to 14 days.	70

3	A Type 3 US&R Task Force consists of a 35-person multi-disciplined team with the same core capabilities as a Type-2 US&R task force, capable of 12-hour operations periods for up to 14 days.	35
4	A Type 4 US&R Task Force consists of a 22-person team with the similar core capabilities as a Type-3 US&R task force, only instead with the focus of operations on light to moderate frame construction damaged structures, capable of 12-hour operations periods for up to 14 days.	22

When a smaller, modular package or personnel with specific specialties and requirements is needed, the US&R System has the ability to support both internal and external requests for assistance. Those configurations are identified as a Mission Ready Package (MRP), or single-resource capabilities. An MRP configuration could consist of personnel only (without an equipment package) or personnel and an equipment package. The System would have the option to activate personnel and/or equipment packages from a single task force or multiple task forces to configure a requested MRP. While it is preferred that all members of each MRP be from the same task force, it is not required. They are designed for rapid deployment and can be requested, identified within the System, ordered, and tracked effectively during an emergency, when time is of the essence.

For all current information and deployable MRPs, refer to the MRP Concept of Operations (CONOPS) found under responsesystem.org>doctrine>304 - Annex D – MRP CONOPS.

For more information regarding task force composition, qualifications, position descriptions, operational checklists, and requisite equipment, refer to the National US&R Response System FOG, handbooks, and job aids. All current documents live on responsesystem.org/doctrine.

3. The National US&R Response System within the National Response Framework

The NRF is the Federal Government's guiding principles for responding to disasters when:

- State and local response capabilities are overwhelmed;
- A state government requests Federal assistance; and
- The President formally declares that a disaster has occurred or will occur, activating the disaster assistance authority outlined in the Stafford Act.

Once these criteria have been met, the Federal Government may activate any or all of the 15 ESFs that are described in the NRF (see Figure I-3).

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

Emergency Support Function	ESF Primary Coordinator
1. Transportation	DOT
2. Communications	DHS/National Communications Systems
3. Public Works and Engineering	USACE
4. Firefighting	USDA/USFS

5. Emergency Management	FEMA
6. Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services	FEMA
7. Logistics Management and Resource Support	GSA, FEMA
8. Public Health and Medical Services	HHS
9. Search and Rescue	FEMA, USCG, DOI/NPS, DOW
10. Oil and Hazardous Materials Response	EPA
11. Agriculture and Natural Resources	DOA
12. Energy	DOE
13. Public Safety and Security	DOJ
14. Long-Term Community Recovery	FEMA
15. External Affairs	DHS

Figure 3: Emergency Support Functions

ESF #9 – Search and Rescue (SAR) rapidly deploys Federal SAR resources to provide lifesaving assistance to state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) authorities, to include local SAR Coordinators and Mission Coordinators, when there is an actual or anticipated request for Federal SAR assistance.

During incidents or potential incidents requiring a unified SAR response, Federal SAR responsibilities reside with four ESF #9 primary agencies: FEMA, USCG, DOI/NPS, and DOW, that provide timely and specialized SAR capabilities. Support agencies provide specific capabilities or resources that support ESF #9. Federal SAR response operational environments are classified as:

- Urban Search and Rescue (US&R)
- Maritime/Coastal/Waterborne Search and Rescue
- Land Search and Rescue

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 civilian services using public and private resources, to assist persons and property in potential or actual distress.

Each ESF is coordinated by a primary Federal agency in concert with other Federal agencies that may provide relevant support. DHS/FEMA is the ESF #9 coordinating agency.

FEMA activates ESF #9 when an incident is anticipated or occurs that may result in a request for a unified SAR response to an affected area. As required, the primary agencies may be represented at the NRCC, JFO, and SLTT EOCs. Additional representation of an intelligence component may be seated within those identified locations or at FEMA Branch as appropriate.

For each incident requiring Federal ESF #9 SAR support, the ESF #9 Coordinator (FEMA), in coordination with the other ESF #9 Primary Agencies, designates the

Overall Primary Agency (OPA) based on the circumstances of the incident, the predominant SAR environment, and the type of response required. The designated OPA, in consultation with the other ESF #9 Primary Agencies and through the Federal Search and Rescue Coordination Group (FSARCG), coordinates the provisioning and integration of Federal ESF #9 resources in support of the SLTT authority having jurisdiction, or other Federal agency requesting SAR assistance. The other ESF #9 Primary and Support Agencies provide resources, representation, coordination, and other support to the designated OPA, as required.

1-3.1. Types of Search and Rescue

A. Urban Search and Rescue

Primary Agency: DHS/FEMA

Operational Overview:

US&R includes operations for natural; manmade disasters; and catastrophic incidents, that primarily require DHS/FEMA US&R task force operations. The National US&R Response System integrates DHS/FEMA US&R task forces, Incident Support Teams (ISTs), and technical specialists. The federal US&R response integrates DHS/FEMA task forces in support of unified SAR operations conducted following the U.S. National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP) — (The NSP is the policy guidance of the signatory federal departments and agencies for coordinating SAR services to meet domestic needs and international commitments.)

Operational Responsibilities:

- Manages US&R task force and IST deployments in the affected area.
- Coordinates logistical support for US&R assets during field operations.
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.
- Coordinates with SLTT designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and SLTT EOCs.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.

DHS/FEMA develops national US&R policy, provides planning guidance and coordination assistance, standardizes task force procedures, evaluates task force operational readiness, funds special equipment and training within available appropriations, and reimburses, as appropriate, task force costs incurred as a result of ESF #9 deployment.

The National US&R Response System is prepared to deploy and initiate operations immediately in support of ESF #9. The task forces are staffed primarily by emergency services personnel or technical specialists who are trained and experienced in SAR operations and possess specialized expertise and equipment. Upon activation under the National Response Framework (NRF), FEMA US&R task forces are considered federal assets under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and other applicable authorities.

ISTs provide coordination and logistical support to US&R task forces during emergency operations. They also conduct needs assessments and provide technical advice and assistance to SLTT government emergency managers.

FEMA reimburses the Sponsoring Agencies of US&R task forces for authorized US&R deployments. FEMA is authorized to reimburse such activities when there is a Stafford Act declaration or in anticipation of a declaration. For non-Stafford Act US&R deployments, the federal department or agency requesting US&R assistance reimburses FEMA following provisions contained in the Financial Management Support Annex of the NRF. FEMA uses the funding provided by the requesting federal department or agency to reimburse the Sponsoring Agency (SA) for the task forces.

B. Maritime/Coastal/Waterborne Search and Rescue

Primary Agency: USCG

Operational Overview: Maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR includes operations for natural and manmade disasters that primarily require DHS/USCG air, cutter, boat, and response team operations. The federal maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR response integrates DHS/USCG resources in support of unified SAR operations conducted per the NSP.

Operational Responsibilities:

- Manages USCG SAR resources in the affected area.
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.
- Coordinates with Federal, SLTT designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and SLTT EOCs.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports, as required.

USCG personnel are trained and experienced in maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR operations and possess specialized expertise, facilities, and equipment for conducting an effective response to distress situations. USCG develops, maintains, and operates rescue facilities for SAR in waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction and is designated the primary agency for maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR under ESF #9. In addition, USCG staffing at Area, District, and local Sector Command Centers promotes interagency coordination with SLTT emergency managers during incidents requiring a unified SAR response in which maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR resources allocation are required.

C. Land Search and Rescue

Primary Agencies: DOI/NPS; DOW

Operational Overview: Land SAR includes operations that require aviation and ground forces to meet mission objectives, other than maritime/coastal/waterborne and structural collapse SAR operations as described above. Land SAR primary agencies integrate their efforts to provide an array of diverse capabilities under ESF #9.

Operational Responsibilities:

- Manages DOI/NPS or DOW land SAR resources in the affected area.
- Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.
- Coordinates with Federal, state, tribal, and local designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.
- Coordinates logistical support for DOI/NPS or DOW resources during field operations.
- As required, provides representation at the NRCC, JFO, and SLTT EOCs.
- Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.

DOI/NPS maintains SAR resources that are specially trained to operate in various roles including ground search, small boat operations, swiftwater rescue, helo-aquatic rescue, and other technical rescue disciplines. DOI/NPS maintains preconfigured teams that include personnel and equipment from DOI/NPS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other DOI components in planning for ESF #9

When requested, DOW, through U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and/or U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), coordinates facilities, resources, and special capabilities that conduct and support air, land, and maritime SAR operations according to applicable directives, plans, guidelines, and agreements. Per the NSP, the U.S. Air Force and USPACOM provide resources for the organization and coordination of civil SAR services and operations within their assigned SAR regions and, when requested, to assist federal, SLTT authorities.

DOW's role as a primary agency is based on SAR Coordinator responsibilities stipulated in the NSP and is generally limited to a coordination function.

Appendix 30 to Annex C to United States Northern Command Operations (USNORTHCOM) Order (OPORD 01-21) (Civil Search and Rescue Operations) establishes the DOW as one of four primary agencies for Federal Search and Rescue (ESF #9) operations under the NRF. Under this directive, the Secretary of War (SecWar) designates Commander, Untied States Northern Command (CDRUSNORTHCOM) as the lead to plan and execute these missions. Driven by DOW Directive 3025.18 (Defense Support of Civil Authorities) and DOW Instruction 3003.01 (Civil SAR Support), the Appendix dictates that USNORTHCOM delegate operational search and rescue (SAR) coordination to Commander, Air Forces Northern (CDRAFNORTH) (for the continental U.S.) and Commander, Alaska Command (CDRALCOM) (for Alaska) to coordinate Title 10 military forces during catastrophic search and rescue events. DOW assists civil authorities by conducting SAR missions on a reimbursable basis pursuant to the Stafford Act or Economy Act, as appropriate.

1-3.2 - NRF Field-Level Organization

Federal coordinating structures, processes, and protocols are employed to manage significant incidents. These coordinating structures and processes are designed to enable the execution of the responsibilities of the President through the appropriate Federal departments and agencies and to integrate SLTT, nongovernmental organization, and private-sector efforts into a comprehensive national approach to domestic incident management.

1-3.3 - NRF Organizational Structure

A. National Response Coordination Center (NRCC)

The NRCC is a multi-agency center that provides overall Federal response coordination and emergency management program implementation (including both Stafford Act and non-Stafford Act incidents). FEMA maintains the NRCC as a functional component in support of incident management operations. Multi-agency coordination entities aid in establishing priorities among incidents and their associated resource allocations, resolving agency policy conflicts, and providing strategic guidance to support incident management activities.

B. Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC)

An RRCC is a standing facility operated by a FEMA regional office that is activated to coordinate regional response efforts, establish Federal priorities, and implement local Federal program support. Currently, there are 10 FEMA RRCC's for the initial coordination of Federal response and recovery activities. The responsibility of an RRCC is to establish and coordinate communications with the affected state emergency management agency and the NRCC, coordinate deployment of the incident management assistance team to field locations, assesses damage information, develop situation reports, and issues initial mission assignments.

An RRCC will coordinate regional response efforts, establish Federal priorities, and implement Federal support until an IMAT or Joint Field Office (JFO) is established and the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) assumes their NRF coordination responsibilities.

An RRCC will gather information on the status of the affected area and serves as a temporary coordinating office for Federal activity until an IMAT is established. The RRCC:

- Serves as a point of contact and establishes communications for the affected state, the NRCC, and regional elements of Federal agencies;
- Supports IMAT deployments;
- Implements initial information/planning activities, including collection of the situation and needs data;
- Serves as initial coordinator of Federal activities until an IMAT is operational; and
- Coordinates resources for multiple state (or multiple IMAT) operations.

When an IMAT assumes management of the disaster, or a JFO becomes operational, the RRCC may be transitioned to a lower level of operation or deactivated. In multiple-state disasters, the RRCCs remain operational to assist the NRCC with the prioritization and deployment of resources until JFOs are established within each affected state in the region.

C. Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT)/Joint Field Office (JFO)

Initially during the early stages of a disaster, a Regional IMAT may be deployed from a FEMA Region, or a National IMAT will be deployed by FEMA Headquarters. The IMAT will begin the initial coordination at the field level and will become the command structure for the JFO as it begins its operations. A JFO is a temporary Federal facility that provides a central location for the coordination of SLTT governments and private-sector and non-governmental

organizations with primary responsibility for response and recovery. It is established to unify the Federal assistance effort at the state and local level and to coordinate the provision of Federal assistance to the affected jurisdiction(s) during national incidents. The JFO provides a central location for the Federal, or SLTT executives who are responsible for incident oversight.

The JFO structure is organized, staffed, and managed in a manner consistent with NIMS principles. Although a JFO employs an ICS structure, the JFO does not manage on-scene operations. Instead, the JFO focuses on providing support to on-scene efforts and conducting broader support operations that may extend beyond the incident site. The JFO organization utilizes the scalable organizational structure of the NIMS ICS and unified command. The JFO organization adapts to the magnitude and complexity of the situation at hand and incorporates the NIMS principles regarding span of control and organizational structure. The JFO organization also adapts to respond to various types of incidents including:

- Natural disasters
- Terrorist incidents
- Federal-to-Federal support
- National Special Security Events (NSSE)

Personnel from state and Federal departments and agencies, other jurisdictional entities, and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations may provide staffing for the JFO, generally through their respective ESFs.

The IMAT is generally staffed with an Emergency Services Branch Director (ESBD) who the IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor coordinates with. In the absence of an ESBD the coordination will occur with the Operations Section Chief (OSC) or their designee.

D. State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC)

A SEOC is the physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support state incident management activities normally takes place. Emergency management organizations for each state coordinate state-wide emergency response. Each state conducts its emergency response coordination activities from an EOC facility.

E. Local Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Each local jurisdiction will usually establish an EOC to coordinate response to and support of moderate to large-scale incidents. Initial damage and needs assessment information is consolidated at this location to determine response needs and state and Federal resource requirements. Authority for the management of a disaster primarily rests with the local officials and/or incident commander of the affected jurisdictions. State and Federal response supports state and local requests when resources and capabilities are overwhelmed.

F. Incident Command Post (ICP)

The ICP is the primary field location where tactical-level; on-scene incident command functions are performed.

G. Incident Support Basecamp (ISB)

An ISB is a temporary satellite facility that is established at a strategic location (such as military installations) to receive, process, and support response resources, including US&R resources, during the mobilization and demobilization phases of a response.

H. Point of Arrival (POA)

The POA is the assigned reporting location for deploying US&R task forces as well as for other Federal response entities or organizations as designated. The POA may be situated at an alternate site other than the primary mobilization center location identified in initial activation orders.

I. IST Basecamp or IST Base of Operations (BoO)

The IST Basecamp or BoO is the operational area established by an IST and includes the basecamp and logistical support for the IST. It is where US&R response activities are coordinated. When possible, having a combined IST and task force BoO may be desirable to achieve more effective coordination and logistical support.

1-3.4. NRF Field-Level Teams

The IST may interact with various Federal response teams during a deployment and it is beneficial for IST members to know the functions of the various teams.

A. FEMA National Response Coordination Staff (NRCS)

The NRCS oversees the national-level response support effort and coordinates activities with participating Federal departments and agencies when administering Federal response requirements through the 15 ESFs. The NRCS is the staff at the NRCC, located at FEMA Headquarters in Washington, DC. The NRCS structure contains the ICS functional groupings of planning, operations, logistics, and administration/finance. However, the NRCS is organized using the National Incident Support Manual (NISM) branches of: Situational Awareness (ICS planning section); Planning Support (ICS planning section); Resource Support (ICS operations, logistics, and admin/finance sections); and Center and Staff Support (coordination center specific section). For the most part, the NRCS does not play an operational role except in the following situations:

- During the initial period when the Federal government is staging or immediately dispatching initial response resources in preparation for an event or immediately following a disaster and prior to the establishment of the JFO
- When multiple-state disaster responses require an arbitrator regarding the allocation of scarce Federal resources

The ESF #9 SAR Unit assigned to the NRCS reports to the Emergency Services Group Supervisor (ESGS) or the Emergency Services Branch Director (ESBD) in the Response & Capabilities Branch of the Resources Support Section and is mostly comprised of US&R Branch personnel and/or detailed US&R System Members that assist with coordination of Federal SAR resources in an overall Federal disaster response. They are supervised by the ESF #9 SAR Unit Leader. Their responsibilities may include, but are not limited

to: the selection of US&R task forces to be activated, issuing advisories, alert and activation orders, coordination of task force transportation requirements, tracking task force and IST personnel movement, mission assignment requests, financial advances and reimbursements, etc.

The NRCS ESF #9 SAR Unit Leader (SARUL) at the NRCC will maintain overall accountability and tracking of deployed US&R resources until the US&R resources are assigned to an incident, an operational IST or demobilized.

B. FEMA Regional Response Coordination Staff (RRCS)

The RRCS is the focal point for oversees the regional-level response support effort and is the focal point for coordination activities with participating Federal departments and agencies when administering Federal response requirements through the 15 ESFs. The RRCS is the staff at an RRCC, located at each of the ten regional offices. The RRCS structure contains the ICS functional groupings of planning, operations, logistics, and administration/finance. However, the RRCS is organized using the National Incident Support Manual (NISM) branches of: Situational Awareness (ICS planning section); Planning Support (ICS planning section); Resource Support (ICS operations, logistics, and admin/finance sections); and Center and Staff Support (coordination center specific section).

Before the IMAT/Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) assumes control of the Federal response and management of the incident, the RRCS will do the following:

- Establish and maintain all RRCS positions needed, including ESF coordinators.
- Contact the Emergency Operations Center in the affected state(s) to identify capabilities and anticipate shortfalls to determine initial response and support requirements.
- Implement processes for gathering, collating, analyzing, and disseminating incident information to all appropriate parties.
- Provide the NRCC with information necessary to make critical national-level incident management decisions.
- Acquire other Federal agencies' resources through the use of mission assignments and interagency agreements.
- Establish basecamps and staging areas as needed.
- Deploy Regional IMATs and incident staff.
- Request the deployment of a National IMAT(s) or additional Regional IMATs from other Regions when needed.

The ESF #9 SAR Unit assigned to the RRCS reports to the Emergency Services Group Supervisor (ESGS) or the Emergency Services Branch Director (ESBD) in the Response & Capabilities Branch of the Resources Support Section and is mostly comprised of regional personnel that assist with coordination of Federal SAR resources in an overall Federal disaster response. Their responsibilities may include, but are not limited to the coordination of state requests for SAR assistance, developing Action Request Forms to request Federal SAR resources, relaying operational assignments to the IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor, mission assignment requests, etc.

The RRCS ESF #9 SAR Unit at the RRCC coordinates with the FEMA ESF #9 Group Supervisor in the management of deployed US&R resources once the US&R resources are assigned to that region for an incident or reassigned.

IST Liaison Officers are typically assigned to the RRCC to support RRCS operations.

C. Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT)

The primary mission of a FEMA IMAT is to rapidly deploy to an incident or incident-threatened venue and provide leadership in the identification, provision, and integration of Federal assistance in coordination with the affected state, tribe, or territory. IMATs are full-time, rapid response teams with dedicated staff able to deploy within two hours and arrive at an incident within 12 hours to support a state or local incident commander. An IMAT supports the initial establishment of a unified command and provides situational awareness for Federal and state decision makers crucial to determining the level and type of immediate Federal support that may be required. They serve as the initial command and general staff of a JFO/IOF as it is being established. There are two levels of IMATs: regional and national. Regional IMATs correspond with each FEMA region. National IMATS maintain additional positions to support the management of more complex incidents. In most cases, IMATs integrate at the state/field level and report to the respective FEMA region.

The state's local authority manages the immediate response, and the IMAT coordinates additional assistance in the form of mission assignments and technical assistance from team members or other Federal partners. The IMAT team leader is responsible for the overall management of the incident until an FCO is appointed.

The state's local authority manages the immediate response, and the IMAT coordinates additional assistance in the form of direct expert advice from team members or from other Federal partners via the JFO when established. The IMAT team leader is responsible for the overall management of the incident until an FCO is appointed.

D. ESF #9 Federal Search & Rescue Coordination Group (FSARCG)

The purpose of the FSARCG is to provide SAR Subject Matter Expertise (SME) advice to the person or agency determining the best federal SAR solutions for state or federal SAR requirements. To accomplish this, the FSARCG must maintain timely communication and seamless coordination among all responsible SAR authorities to obtain and/or identify accurate capability gaps, coordinate among agencies, to ensure that the right SAR resources are provided to the right places at the right time. The FSARCG was formed and implemented to fill this coordination requirement.

The activation of the FSARCG during Federal ESF #9 deployments is accomplished through the generation of a FEMA Prescripted Mission Assignment (PSMA).

For additional review, refer to the ESF #9 Federal Search & Rescue Coordination Group (FSARCG) Handbook.

E. ESF #9 Group and Group Supervisor

An ESF #9 Group may be assigned to various locations in addition to the ESF #9 SAR Unit assigned to the NRCC or RRCCs as mentioned in Section IV, A. While the NRCC and RRCCs are staffed primarily by US&R Branch personnel and FEMA Reservists when authorized, ESF #9 Group personnel may be assigned to IMATs, JFOs, state and local EOCs and other locations as found necessary to provide coordination, SAR technical expertise, liaison and communication linkage with deployed US&R resources. When one or more resources are assigned to an ESF #9 Group, a Group Supervisor will be assigned.

F. ESF #9 SAR Unit, SAR Unit Leader

An ESF #9 SAR Unit Leader may be assigned to various RRCCs in addition to the ESF #9 SAR Unit assigned to the NRCC as mentioned in Section IV, A. ESF #9 SAR Unit personnel provide coordination, SAR technical expertise, liaison and communication linkage with deployed US&R resources. When one or more resources are assigned to an ESF #9 SAR Unit, a Unit Leader will be assigned. When one or more resources are assigned to an ESF #9 SAR Unit, a Unit Leader will be assigned.

G. Domestic Emergency Support Team (DEST)

The DEST is a rapidly deployable, interagency team of experts within the U.S. Government that is staffed from the FBI, FEMA, DOE, HHS, and the EPA. The DEST provides the FBI Special Agent in Charge (SAC) subject matter expertise guidance concerning CBRNE threats or during an actual incident.

H. Other Federal teams

Numerous special teams are available to support incident management and disaster response and recovery operations. Examples include: The Nuclear Incident Response Team (NIRT), Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMATs), HHS Secretary's Emergency Response Team, Department of Labor (DOL) / Occupational Safety and Health Administrations (OSHA's) specialized response teams, National Veterinary Response Team, disaster mortuary operational response teams, national medical response teams, science and technical advisory and response teams, donations coordination teams, and domestic animal and wildlife emergency response teams.

1-3.5 – Sequence of ESF #9 Activation

The structures contained within the NRF and NIMS provide for the orderly activation of ESFs and other elements of a Federal response. Realizing that most incidents are handled at the local level, a sequence of events may occur before activation of the National US&R Response System can take place.

A. Event occurs and local agencies may respond in the following manner:

- Local EOC activated and notifications made to state
- Mayor/county executive declares state of emergency or disaster
- State notifies FEMA region of significant event has occurred
- Governor declares state of emergency or disaster
- State EOC activated

- Governor requests presidential declaration
- Presidential emergency or major disaster declaration issued
- State coordinating officer identified
- State requests Federal assistance

B. FEMA region is responsible for the following actions:

- Notifying FEMA National Watch Center
- Activating RRCC
- Developing Action Request Forms to provide requested Federal support
- Activating and deploying Regional IMAT

C. FEMA Headquarters is responsible for the following actions:

- Advising the President
- Activating and deploying resources
- Implementing the NRF
- Activating and deploying one or more of the three National IMATs
- Activating ESF #9 through the NRCC or US&R Branch
- The ESF #9 SAR Unit (US&R Branch) issues advisories, alerts, and activation orders

1-3.6 – Task Force Composition and Functions

Federal US&R Task forces are structured to safely operate on the scene of an incident for up to 14 days. A US&R task force is an all-hazards response organization that can perform the functions of search, rescue, and medical care for survivors as well as medical care for task force members. The individual team components and primary functions are outlined as follows:

A. Management

Composition: Task Force Leader
Safety Officer
Planning Team Manager
Search Team Manager
Rescue Team Manager
Logistics Team Manager
Medical Team Manager
Hazardous Materials Team Manager

Function: Provide overall leadership and coordination of task force operations

B. Search

Composition: Canine Search Specialists
Technical Search Specialists

Function: Use canines and technical/electronic search equipment to locate trapped survivors

C. Rescue

Composition: Rescue Specialists – Organized into four squads with a leader and five specialists

Function: Perform extrication of trapped survivors. Personnel are skilled in cutting, shoring, lifting, and breaching steel and reinforced concrete.

D. Medical

Composition: Medical Doctors trained at the M.D. or D.O. level as well as Medical Specialists trained at the paramedic or equivalent level

Function: Provide pre-hospital and emergency care for task force members, survivors, and initial treatment for injured search canine. Medical Doctors and Medical Specialist are specifically trained in crush syndrome and confined space medicine for rescued survivors

E. Planning

Composition: Structural Engineers
Technical Information Specialists / Intelligence Functions

Function: Provide support to the overall search and rescue mission to include: planning, hazards evaluation, structural integrity assessments, technical documentation, data management, and intelligence functions

F. Logistics

Composition: Logistics Specialists
Communications Specialists
Support personnel (activated for ground transportation)

Function: Provide support to the overall search and rescue mission to include: logistics, communications, mobilization and demobilization of personnel, and transportation of personnel and equipment

G. Hazardous Materials

Composition: Hazardous Materials Specialists

Function: Provide initial and ongoing detection, monitoring and sampling, and identification of hazardous materials

CHAPTER 2: NATIONAL US&R RESPONSE SYSTEM OVERVIEW

2-1 National US&R Response System Coordination Group

The National US&R Response System (the System) is comprised of Federally authorized task forces staffed by state and local SAs, participating agencies, and affiliated personnel. Organizationally, the System resides within the US&R Branch, a component of FEMA, Office of Response and Recovery, Response Directorate, Operations Division. The continued growth and development of the System require involvement of subject matter experts from the Federal, state, and local levels. This section describes the System support structure and outlines the elements of the National US&R Response System Coordination Group.

The US&R Coordination Group (CG) is comprised of the US&R Strategic Group and the US&R Operations Group, which is comprised of work groups, sub-groups, focus groups, and ad hoc groups. Each of these groups is tasked with the development of their respective areas of responsibility and integrating their recommendations into the Advisory Organization. These groups draw from the membership of the System, utilizing their management and technical expertise, to provide advice and recommendations upon which strategic decisions are based. Decisions concerning recommendations of the various groups will be made through consensus whenever possible.

2-2 National US&R Response System Coordination Group Annex A

The FEMA National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Administration Manual, Annex A – Coordination Group, establishes the structure, roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes of the National US&R Response System's Coordination Group. It defines how strategic, operational, and technical input from Sponsoring Agencies, Task Forces, and subject-matter experts is organized through the Strategic Group, Coordination Group, Coordination Support Group, and the Coordination Group Framework to provide consensus-based recommendations to FEMA leadership. The Annex outlines membership requirements, selection and removal processes, functional group responsibilities, and a formalized workflow for developing, reviewing, and approving recommendations that impact policy, doctrine, budgeting, and system operations, ensuring transparent governance and coordinated system-wide decision making.

All Annex A documents can be found at responsesystem.org/doctrine > 201 – Annex A – US&R Coordination Group.

2-2.1 – US&R Coordination Group Definitions

For current responsibilities and all components of the Coordination Group, refer to Annex A US&R Coordination Group.

Ad hoc Group - A group temporarily established by the US&R Branch Chief for a specific purpose and period of time. The recommendation to convene an ad hoc group will be generated through the Coordination Group. The composition, organization, co-chairs, functional division assignment, and membership of an ad hoc group will be determined by the US&R Branch Chief and Coordination Chair, based on requirements.

Coordination Group Framework – Comprised of all elements of the Coordination Group, including the Strategic Group, Coordination Chair and Deputy, Coordination Group – Senior Staff, Coordination Support Group, the various Divisions, and members.

Coordination Group Chair – A member of a System task force, appointed by the US&R Branch Chief to coordinate the activities of the Coordination Group and Coordination Framework. Responsibilities include working with the Coordination Group to assign tasks to specific divisions, reviewing recommendations from the divisions, and forwarding supported recommendations to the US&R Strategic Group or US&R Branch for review and approval. The Coordination Chair is a voting member of the Strategic Group.

Coordination Support Group – A three- to five-member body tasked to assist Senior Staff and to work under the direction of the Coordination Group Chair and Coordination Group Deputy Chair. Their general responsibilities are administrative continuity, records management—to include doctrine tracking and upkeep, policies and processes (P&P) tracking and upkeep, tracking System After Action Reports / Improvement Plans (AAR/IPs)—and solicitations.

Divisions – The four divisions (Operations, Support, Preparedness and Command) are comprised of workgroups and other technical experts. Divisions are established by Annex A but may be created or modified as needed at the direction of Senior Staff.

Division Chief (DC) – Are part of the Coordination Body and are responsible for addressing issues of consequence within their areas of responsibility and those assigned by the Strategic Group. The DC acts as an advocate for their members, providing regular guidance and taskings, as well as bringing forward recommendations from workgroups and those assigned to them.

Deputy Coordination Group Chair – A member of a System task force, recommended by the Coordination Chair and appointed by the US&R Branch Chief. The Deputy is a member of the Coordination Group and will act in the Chair capacity during all official functions in the absence of the Coordination Chair.

Deputy Task Force Representative (Deputy TFR) – A member of a System task force who is appointed by that task force's Sponsoring Agency Chief or TFR, to serve as Deputy TFR. A Deputy TFR will act in the TFR capacity during all official functions in the absence of the TFR. Each TFR, in concurrence with their SAC, will determine if any Deputy TFRs will be appointed to the task force, up to a maximum of two. The Deputy TFRs are approved as additional points of contact for all formal System communications with their task force.

Focus Group – Part of the Coordination Group and responsible for performing specific functions or tasks assigned by the Coordination Body. Focus Groups are comprised of members from System task forces and other non-System technical experts as required. Members are chosen for their interest, experience, and expertise in the various US&R disciplines and are in either an active or reserve status. Each Focus Group will be assigned as identified by the Coordination Body at the time of formation.

Incident Support Team – Representative (IST-R) – A current US&R Incident Support Team (IST) Leader or Deputy IST Leader, recommended by the Coordination Group Chair and appointed by the US&R Branch Chief to represent IST interests in recommendations and work products submitted by various organizational levels within the Coordination Group. The IST-R is a member of Senior Staff.

Legal Representative - This individual is an attorney who is a member of, or represents a System Sponsoring Agency or Participating Agency, recommended by the Coordination Chair, and appointed by the US&R Branch Chief to participate in the National US&R System Coordination Framework. This representative provides legal perspectives and advice on behalf of System Members and, if necessary, interfaces with the FEMA Office of Chief Counsel on ongoing legal matters affecting the System.

Membership Status – The status of members is based on the requirements of the taskings currently assigned to the Group.

- **Active status** is defined as when members are tasked to perform specific actions or tasks to meet goals and objectives of the System related to their functional areas of responsibility.
- **Reserve status** is defined as when members are not tasked to perform specific actions during periods of time when there are no requirements of the group. Members in reserve status are permitted to stay informed on group business and are permitted, but not required, to attend meetings. Incurring travel costs to attend meetings is at the discretion of the member's task force.

Senior Staff – 14-member body, comprised of the Coordination Group Chair, Deputy Coordination Group Chair, TFR-D's (3), Legal Representative, US&R Branch Section Chiefs (2), IST Representative (ISTL or DISTL), all Division Chiefs (4), and the SUSAR Representative. The Coordination Body is responsible for coordinating activities and reviewing recommendations and work products submitted by the various organizational levels within the Coordination Framework. The Coordination Group Chair is not a voting member of the Coordination Body; they are the tie breaker. The TFR-N may cast the tie-breaking vote in the absence of the Coordination Chair.

Sponsoring Agency Chief (SAC) – The Chief (head) of the Sponsoring Agency of a System task force, who is ultimately the final authority for that task force.

Sponsoring Agency Chief Representative – Divisional (SAC-D) – A Sponsoring Agency Chief of a System task force who is elected by the SACs in their Division *(East, Central, or West)* to represent that Division on the Strategic Group.

Strategic Group – Comprised of the FEMA Operations Division Director, the US&R Branch Chief, the three Sponsoring Agency Chief Representatives - Divisional (SAC-Ds), the TFR-N, and the Coordination Chair. Responsible for providing the US&R Branch with recommendations to establish priorities for the System on matters regarding policy, strategic goals, budget, and issues with financial impact on System Sponsoring Agencies and task forces.

SUSAR Representative – A member of a System task force, recommended by the Coordination Chair and appointed by the US&R Branch Chief. The Senior Liaison Officer serves as a member of the Coordination Group Senior Staff as a non-voting member and functions as the Program Coordinator for all US&R System Representatives assigned to ESF-9 partner organizations. The Senior Liaison Officer provides oversight, facilitates coordination, and promotes collaboration, information sharing, and interoperability between the National US&R Response System and its state, federal, and international partners.

Task Force Representative (TFR) – A System task force member appointed by the SAC to act as its Task Force Representative (TFR). TFRs facilitate the review of, and comment on, system-developed products, including 21-day reviews and other system requirements, to ensure compatibility with task force and Sponsoring Agency requirements. TFRs will recommend changes to the Coordination Body on developed products for review and consideration. The TFR is the approved primary point of contact for all formal System communications with their task force.

Task Force Representative – Divisional (TFR-D) – A TFR or Deputy TFR who has been elected by the other TFRs in their US&R Division *(East, Central, or West)* to represent their Division's interests in the National US&R System Coordination Framework. The TFR-Ds

are members of the Coordination Body, supporting the TFR-N and representing their division by attending Strategic Group meetings as non-voting participants. TFR-Ds will ensure that work products and decisions are shared with the TFRs of their Division, and that their input is given full consideration within the National US&R System Coordination Framework.

Task Force Representative – National (TFR-N) – A TFR or Deputy TFR who has been elected by the System's 28 TFRs to represent their interests and ensure that their input on issues is given full consideration in the National US&R System Coordination Framework. The TFR-N is a voting member of the Strategic Group who provides consolidated input from, and coordinates the functions of, the TFR-Ds.

US&R Branch Project Officer (BPO) – A US&R Branch staff member assigned to the Strategic Group, Coordination Group, or one of the divisions who serves as that entity's Federal liaison, facilitates member elections, and manages meeting logistics. The BPO also provides the FEMA perspectives on Federal regulations, policies, procedures, as well as current Agency and US&R Branch priorities and fiscal considerations. The BPO attends meetings as necessary, monitors progress on assigned projects, and facilitates the product review, approval, and distribution processes.

Workgroup – Part of the Coordination Group and responsible for performing specific functions or tasks assigned by the Division to which it is assigned. Members are chosen for their interest, experience, and expertise in the various US&R disciplines. Each workgroup is assigned to one of the four divisions, and the Workgroup Leader is a member of that assigned Division. Workgroups are created as needed at the direction of the Strategic Group.

CHAPTER 3: NATIONAL US&R RESPONSE SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

3-1 Agency Responsibilities

3-1.1 – Federal Emergency Management Agency

A. FEMA Headquarters

The NRF designates FEMA as the ESF #9 primary agency responsible for US&R.

To accomplish this mission, FEMA will do the following:

- Maintain a national US&R capability.
- Administer the National US&R Response System.
- Provide technical assistance on the implementation of the NRF.
- Provide overall management of US&R operations.
- Provide supplemental logistical support to US&R resources while deployed.
- Develop situation and after-action reports.
- Maintain an ESF #9 response plan, along with other ESF #9 primary agency partners and associated support agencies.
- Maintain an inventory of US&R resources.
- Provide for functional training and exercises within the US&R System
- Maintain a roster of trained and appointed US&R IST personnel
- Identify the use of Search and Rescue Intelligence and the guidance of SARIG for intelligence responsibilities.

Additionally, FEMA is responsible for coordinating international US&R assistance within the continental United States when offered. FEMA will also manage public information dissemination and congressional liaison issues related to all ESFs. FEMA will reimburse all supporting agencies for allowable expenses related to ESF #9 activation and deployments when officially authorized.

B. FEMA Regional Offices

During the early stages of a disaster, a FEMA Regional ESF #9 representative will channel relevant SAR related information to FEMA Headquarters and affected states' EOCs. Once an RRCC is established, and until the IST is functional and/or an ESF #9 SAR Liaison is in place at the state EOC, the RRCC will coordinate the affected states' requests for US&R assistance with FEMA Headquarters. A FEMA ESF #9 representative from the regional office may assist the ESF #9 SAR Specialist at a JFO as the FEMA support representative. In the absence of the RRCC or JFO, the IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor will act as the liaison to the IMAT.

C. Supporting Federal Agencies

The agencies in Figure 4 provide support to FEMA during Federal ESF #9 Operations.

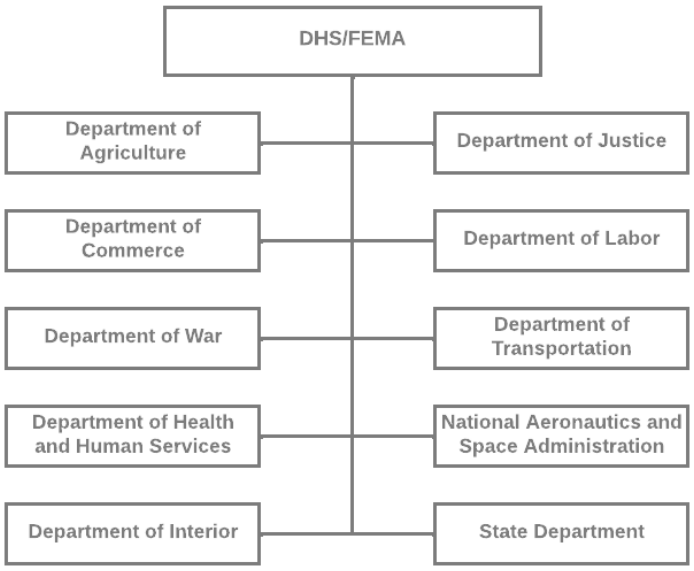

Figure 4 - Supporting Federal Agencies

3-1.2 – States

A. Affected States

A state affected by a significant event or disaster is responsible for conducting damage and needs assessments and for making all requests for Federal US&R assistance through ESF #9 at the state EOC or the JFO. The state may provide an ESF #9 Representative(s) to liaison with the ESF #9 at the JFO to assist in coordinating US&R requests and activities with their Federal counterparts. The affected state may establish priorities for allocating all US&R resources (Federal, state, and local) within the disaster area of the state in consultation with the local IC. If the local jurisdiction is incapable of providing a viable incident command structure to manage the overall incident, the state has the responsibility to ensure that a capable Incident Management Team is in place.

B. Responding States

The SA of a National US&R Response System task force is expected to maintain a 24-hour alert capability and to implement FEMA's alert and activation procedure for the task forces when requested by FEMA. In the event a state is the SA, that state will be responsible for the activities outlined in paragraph 3-1.3B, “Sponsoring Agency”.

3-1.3 – Jurisdictions

A. Affected Jurisdiction

An affected jurisdiction is responsible for the management of an incident. Those responsibilities should include, but are not limited to the following activities:

- Conduct initial damage and needs assessments.
- Assess and assign local SAR resources.
- Identify SAR shortfalls.
- Request assistance.
- Contact the state ESF #9 representative or SAR Coordinator to request additional state or Federal resources.

- Establish operational priorities.
- Providing a point of contact (POC), situation briefings, and identifying assignments for incoming FEMA US&R task forces.
- Ensure adequate communication between FEMA US&R resources and the local ICP.

The affected jurisdiction, along with an assigned IST, will perform continuous needs assessment to determine if additional resources will be required. Additionally, if US&R resources are assigned, they will report on the progress of US&R work accomplishments and determine if task forces are to be reassigned within the jurisdiction or released when their current assignments are completed.

B. Sponsoring Agency (SA)

The SA authorized as a member of the National US&R Response System will recruit and train personnel and organize an US&R task force according to policy and procedures of the National US&R Response System. It will ensure that each task force member meets the necessary license, certification, or other professional qualification requirements of their assigned position. The SA will ensure that the task force has the appropriate documentation on file to verify this information. The SA will provide training to upgrade, develop, and renew skills as needed to maintain qualifications for each position on the task force. The SA is responsible for developing, practicing, and implementing an internal call-out system for team members and for managing the financial, administrative, reporting, and personnel issues related to task force readiness. The SA will also perform all administrative functions as required and will submit periodic readiness inspections. The SA is responsible for ensuring that any change to the status of the task force readiness level is promptly reported to the FEMA US&R Branch.

When authorized by FEMA, the SA will activate the task force and ensure that all personnel and equipment are at the designated Point of Departure (POD) within the prescribed time frame. Personnel assigned to the task force and any replacements (backfill) will be compensated in accordance with the terms outlined in their Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The SA will also ensure that all appropriate reports and claims for replacing or rehabilitating equipment are submitted to FEMA within the time limits set forth in Chapter 9: Return to Readiness Activities. The SA is responsible for providing critical incident stress management debriefings for all task force members during or after a deployment as needed.

3-2. Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 (Search and Rescue)

The Federal ESF #9 SAR Response System is composed of four primary agencies (FEMA, USCG, DOI/NPS and DOW) that provide specialized SAR operations during incidents or potential incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response. SAR services include the following:

- Coordination
- Communications
- Distress monitoring
- Locating persons in distress
- Execution of rescue operations including extrication and evacuation
- Medical assistance

- Civilian services through the use of public and private resources to assist persons and property in potential or actual distress.
- Intelligence functions based on actionable information

FEMA activates ESF #9 when an incident that may result in a request for a unified SAR response to an affected area is anticipated or occurs. An ESF #9 response is scalable to meet the specific needs of each incident and is based on the nature and magnitude of the event, the suddenness of onset, and the capability of local or state SAR resources.

As required, ESF #9 primary agencies are represented at the various NRCC, RRCC, JFO, and SLTT emergency operations centers.

The US&R Branch will promptly notify all task forces within the FEMA National US&R Response System when a significant event has occurred or is anticipated that may result in a request for FEMA US&R resources. Refer to Section 3-8 for the Notification Procedures and types.

The US&R Branch will alert the ESF #9 primary agency partners and begin to identify transportation resources through FEMA Movement and Coordination Group (T&MCG). Once a reliable estimate of damage and need is ascertained, the US&R Branch will determine the allocation of US&R resources and alert and or activate the necessary resources of the System. If warranted, FEMA will attempt to initially activate one or more ISTs along with the three geographically closest task forces that are operational to a mobilization center or directly to an incident.

The IST will deploy as soon as possible to act as a liaison with state and local officials as well as make preparations for support of incoming task forces.

In the event all FEMA US&R resources are activated and an obvious need for more resources exists, FEMA may request either military support through the DOW "Military Support to FEMA US&R CONOP," or international support through the Department of State, which manages and coordinates offers of foreign assistance in support of domestic disaster response the Bureau of Disaster and Humanitarian Response. These military augmentation forces will be integrated into US&R operations through the assigned IST but are expected to be self-sufficient for life supporting items utilizing existing military logistical supply processes. SAR-specific logistical support may need to be fulfilled through the IST logistical support process. If international US&R teams are requested and deployed in support of a response, they will be coordinated and supported through the assigned IST logistical support process and will be expected to operate within the same framework as System resources based on the International Assistance System Concept of Operations.

Once the System has been activated, transportation requirements for task forces will be evaluated by the US&R Branch. Depending on the travel distance to an incident, task forces or IST personnel may deploy by air or ground transportation. For those task forces traveling by air, each will assemble and report to a pre-determined Aerial Point Of Embarkation (APOE) within six hours. The APOE loadmaster will ensure that the task force equipment cache is packaged and palletized in accordance with the FEMA Air Response Module (ARM), military or civilian regulations. The loaded aircraft will fly to their designated Aerial Point of Debarkation (APOD), normally a military airfield. Once the task force has reached its APOD, the IST Point of Arrival/Mobilization (POA/Mob) Specialist may be in position to meet the aircraft and arrange for off-loading and transportation to the designated mobilization center or incident location. If

a POA/Mob Specialist is not onsite, the arriving task force will be required to manage this function for their personnel and equipment. Where facilities permit, the APOD and the mobilization center may be located at the same facility. If traveling by ground, IST personnel and task forces will move to their designated Point of Arrival (POA) by the quickest route. All IST personnel and Task Force Leaders (or designees) are required to maintain contact and notification procedures based on Chapter 3-2.1 - NRCC Notification Procedures.

At the mobilization center or incident site, incoming task forces may receive a briefing from the IST POA/Mob Specialist, the IST Division/Group Supervisor (DIVS), IST Branch Director (BD) or the IST Operations Section Chief / Deputy (OSC), that will establish communications procedures and describe the current situation, the task force assignment, procedures for re-supply, and any transportation requirements to and from the incident site.

When the task force has received a mission assignment, the IST Logistics Section or the US&R Branch will coordinate transportation (either with internal task force or external capability) to a designated incident staging point in their assignment area or directly to the incident location. The task force will also receive a situation status update, operational assignment, and logistical and administrative information from the IST or local incident commander. The task force will proceed to its assignment and begin operations. If the task force is directed to move to another site, the IST Point of Arrival (POA)/Mobilization Center Specialist (POA/Mob) or the IST Ground Support Unit Leader (GSUL) will coordinate transportation in coordination with the IST Logistics Section Chief (LSC). The IST Logistics Section will work to ensure re-supply of food, water, and other items essential to the mission. The task force will perform operations until notified to demobilize, which will generally occur within 14 days after deployment.

The local IC, through the IST OSC or designee, has the discretion to move a task force assigned to their jurisdiction to another work location within their jurisdiction. Once it is determined that an assigned task force has completed its mission, the IST, in coordination with the state ESF #9 representative or SAR Coordinator and IMAT, will determine if the Task Force is required at other locations within the state.

The IST will coordinate with the state ESF #9 representative through the IST Liaison (LOFR), or the IMAT/JFO ESF #9 Group to determine any further requirements for the task force. If the objectives of the mission have been met and a task force is no longer needed, the IST will arrange for demobilization and the return of the task force to its home jurisdiction. If the Task Force is demobilized, they will perform site disengagement procedures, including going through the ICS 221 process. Task force members will then be debriefed and will begin preparations for demobilization and travel. Transportation will be coordinated by the IST and in synchronization with the NRCC, including the notification of the NRCC based on based on Chapter 3-2.1 - NRCC Notification Procedures.

Following the return of the Task Force to home unit, specific Behavioral Health recommendations should be followed, including a 30-day post-deployment survey that should be coordinated by the Sponsoring Agency Program Office. Any identified needs should follow the recommendations of the Behavioral Health Post-Incident Screening.

3-2.1 - NRCC Notification Procedures

Task Force Leaders and all IST personnel are required to check in with the NRCC ESF #9 desk every two hours while in transit utilizing the most current process. This includes the NRCC/IST Travel Chat for IST Members. The Task Force(s) are required to upload information and several documents on the "Team Fact Sheet" (TFS) on the responsesystem.org/incident and provide an update every two hours via the TFS. There is also currently the capability to utilize a live tracking component within SARCOP that will be used at the direction of the IST. The NRCC will maintain accountability of the teams within the SARCOP platform.

3-2.2 - Incident Support Team

The mobilization and use of US&R task forces provides a significant capability for disaster response and mitigation. The FEMA US&R IST provides SLTT officials with technical assistance in the deployment and use of ESF #9 resources through advice; incident command assistance; management, coordination, and administrative assistance of US&R task forces; and obtaining ESF #9 logistic support.

A. Background

The US&R IST was developed to provide a group of highly qualified specialists readily available for rapid assembly and deployment to a disaster area. To maximize the speed with which task forces are mobilized and used, a US&R IST was developed.

The IST must be available to mobilize within two hours of request. IST members are required to be self-sufficient for at least 24 hours and be prepared for a response assignment, generally extending as long as 14 days. An IST equipment cache is organized into functional kits and is available for deployment with the IST. FEMA maintains three strategically situated caches to support the IST with communications equipment, including radios, computers, printers, and administrative office supplies. The IST Logistics Section Chief maintains a copy of the cache inventory to facilitate ordering and accountability. IST members request any additional logistics support through the IST Logistics Section Chief upon arrival at the IST base of operations.

In addition, FEMA maintains seven Hazmat Equipment Push Packages (HEPPs) that are strategically placed around the country, which are standardized caches of hazardous materials equipment that can be rapidly deployed to support task forces responding to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or other hazardous incidents. These packages enhance a task force's ability to operate safely in contaminated or potentially contaminated environments by providing resources for hazard detection, monitoring, identification, and initial mitigation. HEPPs also include capabilities for personnel, casualty, and equipment decontamination.

When a significant event or disaster occurs, an IMAT from the affected FEMA Region, or one of the three National IMATS, will deploy to the affected state or states to join with state emergency management personnel to coordinate Federal assistance. The IMAT provides direction to the IST through the ESF #9 Group Supervisor assigned to the IST. The IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor reports to the IMAT Operations Section Chief or designee assigned to the affected area (see Figure 5).

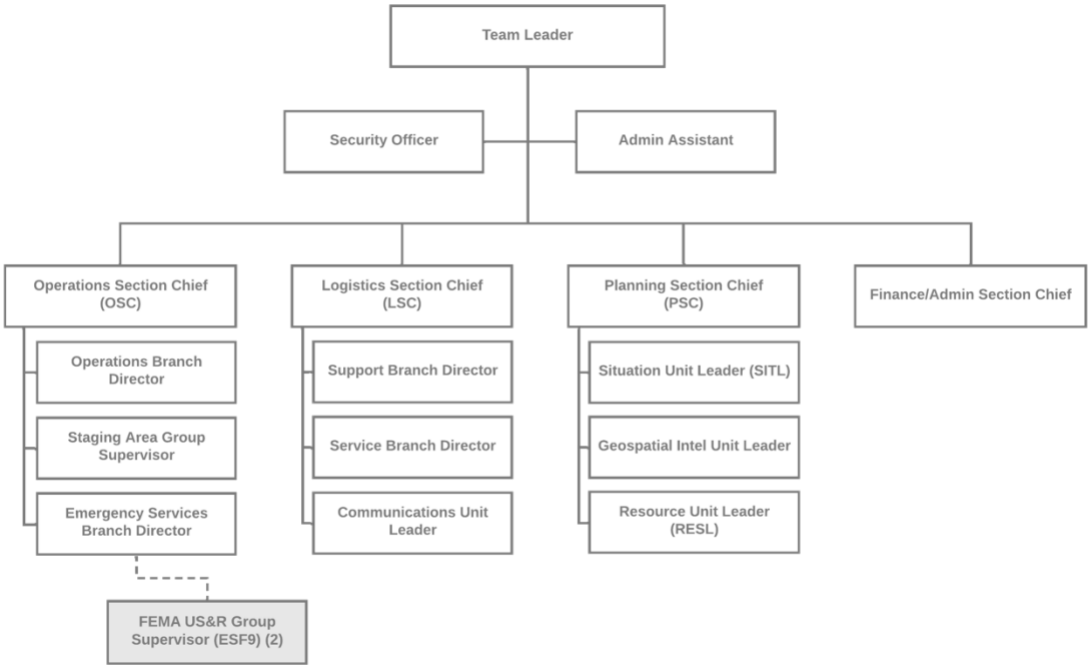

Figure 5 - Incident Management Assistant Team / IST Relationship

B. Mission Statement

The mission of the US&R IST is to provide SLTT officials with technical assistance in the acquisition and use of ESF #9 resources through advice, incident command assistance, management and coordination of US&R task forces, and obtaining ESF #9 logistic support.

C. Development Criteria

The US&R IST was developed and organized to be:

- Consistent with the terminology and organizational structure of the NRF and NIMS;
- Representative of the primary disciplines involved in US&R operations;
- Comprised of sufficient personnel to provide initial assistance at RRCCs, state EOCs, IMATs, JFOs, and local EOCs (may be augmented as necessary);
- Personnel available for 24-hour coverage at state EOC/JFO and other facilities for ESF #9; and deployable within two hours of activation.

D. Incident Support Team (Initial)

The initial element of the IST represents FEMA's efforts to establish on-site management and support for anticipated or actual arrival of one or more US&R task forces at a significant event, disaster or planned event. The use of SARI should be supported to ensure appropriate resources are initially sent to the area/s of most impact based on incident size and complexity.

The IST is generally deployed with an initial minimum complement of the 18 positions and 32 personnel shown in Figure 6 (to include two ESF 9 personnel and two FEMA Contracting Officers).

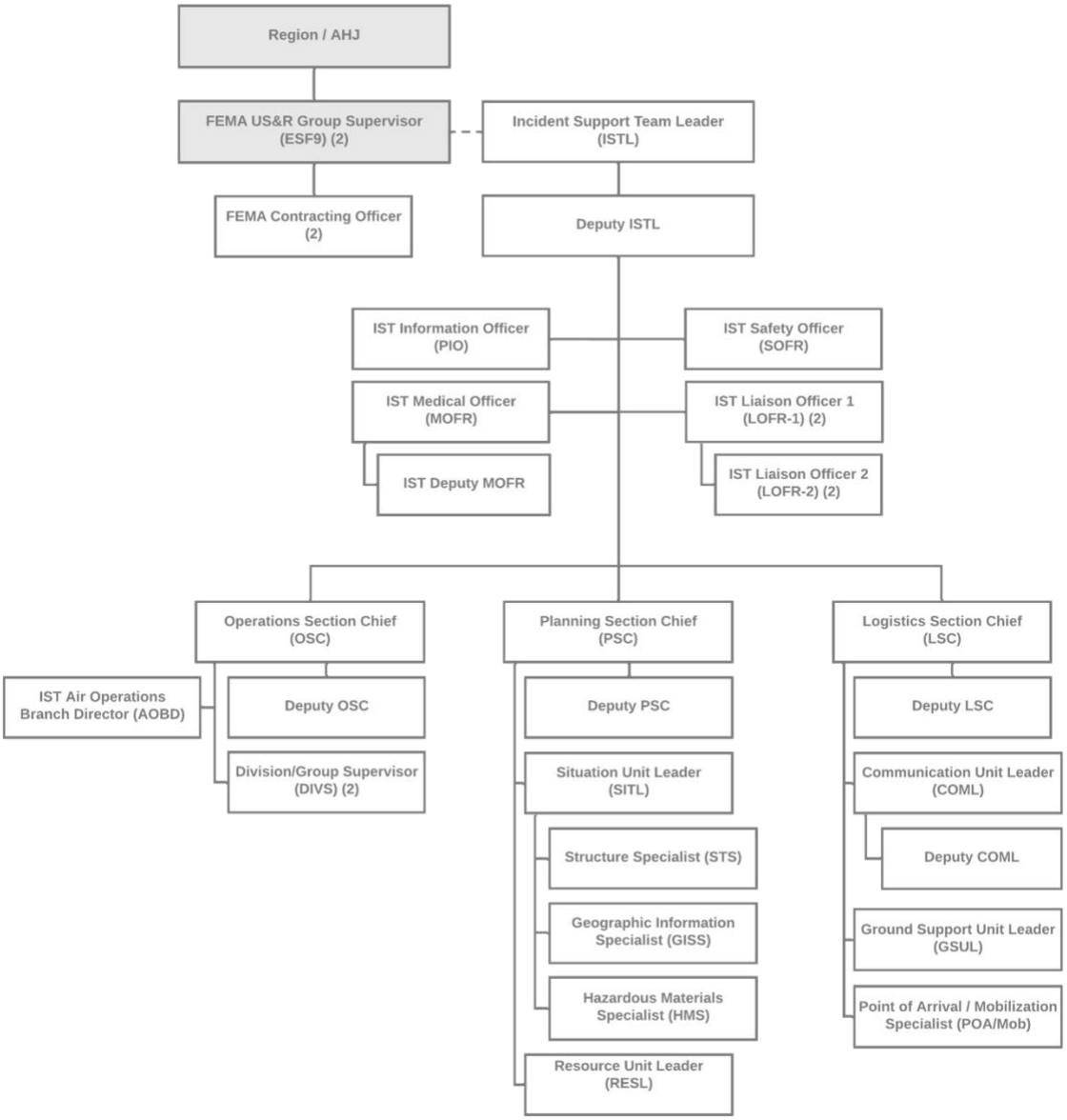

Figure 6 - Incident Support Team (Initial)

E. Incident Support Team (Expanded)

An IST generally mobilizes with an initial complement of 28 personnel, two ESF 9 Group Supervisors, and two FEMA Contracting Officers. As the complexity and duration of an event escalates and/or as the duties and responsibilities of the team expand, it may become necessary to augment sections of the IST. Positions may be filled with one or more persons each, but this will depend on the present IST deployed and the need for 24-hour coverage as reflected in a RRCC or IMAT/JFO request. If additional staffing is required, the IST Leader will request necessary personnel through the ESF 9 Group Supervisor embedded within the IST. There should also be

additional consideration to augmenting the IST with an intelligence capability as warranted within the incident response.

3-4. Task Force Capabilities

The primary purpose of the National US&R Response System is to provide a nationwide heavy search and rescue and all hazards response proficiency at the local jurisdiction level that can be Federalized and deployed to incidents requiring assistance.

For task forces to be able to function in this capacity, they must develop and maintain the following capabilities:

- Physical, canine, and technical search capability
- Rescue operations in a variety of structures including wood frame, steel frame, non-reinforced concrete, and reinforced concrete.
- Advanced life support capability, specializing in crush syndrome and confined space medicine.
- Structural integrity assessments of structures in rescue operations.
- Hazardous materials assessments in rescue operations.
- Perform rescue operations in a hazardous materials contaminated environment.
- Heavy equipment operations for rescue efforts.
- Water operations to support SAR efforts at water related events.
- Communications within the task force, with the IST, and with the home jurisdiction
- Resource accountability, maintenance, and equipment procurement
- Technical documentation
- Public information management
- Task force management and coordination
- Specialized task force operations
- 24-hour operations in two 12-hour shifts
- Self-sufficiency for 72 hours

In addition to the capabilities listed above, task forces are structured to operate under the following System approved guidelines:

- Report to depart the POD within four hours of activation if traveling by ground or at a designated APOE within six hours of activation if traveling by air.
- Identify cross-trained personnel.
- Utilize standard equipment and training.
- Follow standard operating procedures.
- Operate under NIMS guidance.

3-5. FEMA Task Force Requests

A formal request for Federal assistance involves several stages. When an incident occurs, local and state resources are deployed first by the affected state. If the incident exceeds their capabilities, the governor may request Federal resources from the FEMA regional office with jurisdiction over the affected area who forwards the request to FEMA headquarters. If the incident is of catastrophic proportions, the

President of the United States may declare an incident a Federal disaster prior to a formal request from a governor.

Within this framework, state requests for US&R resources will occur through the IMAT/JFO/RRCC. The sequence of activation is described in Chapter 1-3.5. The FEMA US&R Branch will alert and activate the US&R resources. At the same time, the US&R Branch will activate an IST to deploy to the incident to support any Federal US&R effort at the state, and local levels.

In the absence of a state request during, or in anticipation of, a significant event, FEMA may move or pre-stage Federal resources to a designated site in anticipation of a formal request being received.

3-6. Notification Procedures for US&R Resource Requests

Upon notification from an affected state, the FEMA Operations Center (FOC) or the NRCC will notify the US&R Branch leadership of a significant event that may require the deployment of US&R resources. The US&R Branch leadership consults with FEMA senior leadership for approval of US&R response activities and sends out advisories, alerts, or activation orders as necessary. The NRCC advises regional and state points of contact regarding actions taken.

Once a situation has been assessed, FEMA senior leadership will decide whether to activate ESF #9. The US&R Branch will identify the task forces to be activated. Action Orders are issued to the appropriate SA of each task force(s) selected for alert or activation—first verbally, followed by a written Action Order with the effective date and time of alert or activation. Included in the notification will be the initial situation report, the location where the task force will report, and other pertinent information. It is the SA's responsibility to inform the NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit or the US&R Branch of any restrictions regarding task force availability. When appropriate, it will be the US&R Branch's responsibility to cancel any alerts or activations after receiving direction from FEMA senior leadership or on request from the affected region. In the case of US&R notification and activation, the NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit will serve as a backup to the US&R Branch staff.

The US&R Branch will coordinate transportation requirements through FEMA's Transportation and Mobilization Coordination Group (T&MCG). The T&MCG will work with ESF #1 (transportation) and the Directorate of Military Support (DOMS) to secure transportation from all available sources. DOMS will provide information on the movement of military air transport assets to the task forces identified APOEs. There may also civilian contractual air transport capabilities that are utilized, based on current FEMA US&R Branch capabilities and direction.

3-7. National US&R Response System Task Force Rotation System

The purpose of the System's Task Force Rotation Model is to reduce subjectivity in the selection of task forces during activation. The model does not serve as approval for activation. It enables task forces to know when they are most likely to be activated during a major event. This knowledge should benefit the task force when preparing training and maintenance schedules.

The rotation model is based upon a monthly calendar rotation and divides the task forces into three regions (Western, Central, and Eastern).

During an incident that requires US&R resources, FEMA will initially activate the number of task forces it deems necessary for the incident. The first three task forces utilized will generally be the three geographically closest task forces that are operational.

If more than three task forces are required, the US&R Branch will primarily refer to the annual Task Force Rotation Model. However, during a response a situation may arise requiring the US&R Branch to make an exception and select task force selections based on operational requirements rather than the Rotation Model.

Task forces will be selected from the Rotation Model as follows:

- After the three closest selected task forces have been activated, the "1st Rotation" row is reviewed and the next closest task force in that row for the appropriate month is selected for activation, followed by the 2nd closest in the "1st Rotation" row, and finally by the 3rd closest in that row.
- The task forces in each row for the month will be used in order of proximity to the incident—closest first.
- After all the task forces in the "1st Rotation" row are activated the US&R Branch will then move to the "2nd Rotation" row and repeat the process.

This protocol balances the immediate needs of the survivors (by activating the closest task forces first) with the need to maintain a fair system of activations that will include all task forces.

3-8. Notifications

3-8.1 Advisory Notice

Upon the occurrence of a significant event or disaster or an impending event, the US&R Branch may issue an advisory to the System, FEMA Regional ESF #9 Representatives, and the Federal ESF #9 primary agency partners. The FOC may be used as a backup communication system for the notifications.

Any appropriate and pertinent information related to the event as identified in Figure 7 should be included in an advisory with updates provided as they become known. The advisory is for informational purposes only and does not constitute direction to begin any mobilization activities or incur any expense.

Advisories may also be issued periodically during an incident to inform all task forces in the national system of any mission information updates.

Advisory/Alert	Activation	Demobilization
• Type of event • Location • Magnitude • Weather conditions • Current situation • Determine funding levels (Alert only)	• Type of event • Location • Magnitude • Weather conditions • Current situation • Damage assessment • Determining fund levels • POD • Projected time of lift off • Aircraft information (size/type) • Contact person (call back) • POA • Task force radio frequencies • Mobilization center location • Other resources activated • Anticipated length of mission • Time of official activation • Person initiating activation • Tracking and contact procedures	• Reason for demobilization • Person initiating demobilization • Time of demobilization • Reimbursement information • Personnel and equipment rehabilitation allowances

Figure 7 - Information Requirements for Advisory, Alert, Activation, and Demobilization

3-8.2 Alert Order

If US&R resources have a probability of being requested, FEMA may issue an Alert Order prior to an Activation Order being issued. The state and SA of the task force being placed on alert must determine if the task force can be released for Federal service.

All appropriate and pertinent information related to the event as listed in Figure 7 is generally provided or updated as it becomes known.

The Alert Order will authorize a specific amount of funds for administrative expenses for the SA to begin planning and bringing together those personnel who are required to prepare for task force activation. The Alert Order may be verbal followed by written confirmation, normally within 12 hours.

3-8.3 Activation Order

If an event requires US&R resources, the US&R Branch will select the appropriate task forces to be activated. If time permits, prior to issuing an Activation Order, the US&R Branch will contact the SA (and/or state as appropriate) to determine the availability of the task force. Once the appropriate US&R resources are identified and approved for activation, the US&R Branch or the NRCC will issue an Activation Order that indicates the date and time of activation and other response specific information. If possible, this order will be issued in writing to the task force SA (and/or state as appropriate) however, may initially be issued verbally then followed up in writing. The task force, in conjunction with the state if appropriate, has one hour to accept or decline the Activation Order by a Task Force Representative upon receipt.

All appropriate and pertinent information related to the event as listed in Figure 7 should be provided and updated as it becomes known.

SAs accepting a mission are expected to field all necessary personnel, equipment, and supplies and report to their designated POD within four hours of accepting an Activation Order if deploying by ground or to the identified APOE within six hours. The POD will usually be determined by the task force if deploying by ground transportation and the APOE by FEMA to a designated military or civilian airport when deploying by air. From activation until arrival at the POA/Mob center or incident, the task force will be under the control of and will provide regular situation reports (every two hours) to the NRCC through the identified notification process outlined in Chapter 3-2.1 - NRCC Notification Procedures, currently through the TFS or phone calls to the NRCC. If traveling by air, contact with the NRCC will occur up until boarding on the flight and will continue every two hours upon deplaning.

FEMA will simultaneously activate and deploy an IST to the incident location in order for the supporting elements to be in place prior to task force arrival. However, a task force may arrive at an incident before any IST support elements are in place and may be required to coordinate directly with the US&R Branch, the IMAT/JFO/RRCC of the affected area, or the local incident commander for support or assignment.

3-8.4 Demobilization Order

If an Alert Order has been issued, and subsequent information indicates that mobilization of the task force is not warranted, the US&R Branch or the NRCC will issue a written Demobilization Order to the SA. FEMA will provide related information regarding the reason for the demobilization.

After activation, demobilization of the task force may occur at any time during the mobilization process, as determined by the US&R Branch. A written Demobilization Order will be issued to the SA. The order will include the official standdown time, personnel rehabilitation hours, cache rehabilitation hours, and other information deemed necessary by FEMA. Upon demobilization, the IST, in conjunction with the IMAT/JFO, RRCC or the NRCC, will arrange all transportation requirements in coordination with the T&MCG. After departure from the incident, a demobilized task force will be under the control of, and will provide regular situation reports to, the NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit until arrival at their home jurisdiction.

Authorized expenses incurred by the SA related to activation activities will be reimbursed by FEMA as outlined in Chapter 9: Return to Readiness.

3-9. Task Force Allocation

3-9.1 - Initial Task Force Assignments

When an incident occurs that may require US&R resources, FEMA will review available intelligence and criteria such as type and magnitude of the incident, type of mitigation assistance requested, and deployment guidelines. These criteria will be used to determine how many task forces will be activated for the event. FEMA will then determine the appropriate resources to activate based on geographic location of available task forces, incident specific operational requirements, the annual Task Force Rotation Model, task force levels of readiness, individual task force transport requirements, and availability of transport aircraft. The capabilities of the available mobilization centers if utilized may influence the assignment of specific task forces.

Once the task forces are activated and accept a mission, the task force will prepare for ground transportation as described in the Task Force Mobilization Manual or deployed by air, an APOE will be identified for appropriate air transportation. This APOE may be pre-designated by DOW. One or more mobilization centers may be identified near the affected areas. These may be military or civilian airports.

Should only one state be affected, the FEMA ESF #9 Group Supervisor assigned to the IST or the IMAT/JFO, will coordinate with the state's emergency management officials to determine which task forces should be assigned to affected localities. Task forces located within an affected state are considered state resources and are generally not Federalized by FEMA.

If more than one state is impacted prior to the deployment of an IMAT or the establishment of any JFOs, FEMA will determine the division of US&R resources between the affected states, depending upon the needs assessment and priorities of the incident. FEMA will coordinate with each state to determine where the resources should be sent.

Once mobilized, deploying task forces will move to their designated location. During the move, the task force(s) will contact the NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit Leader to provide progress updates based on Chapter 3-2.1 - NRCC Notification Procedures. Once the task force arrives at the affected location, the task force reports to the IST, which in turn reports to the local jurisdiction's IC or representative. The task force receives a strategic assignment through the IST and begins operations under the ICS structure. For more information, refer to Chapter 7: On-Site Operations.

3-9.2 Task Force Reassignments / Transfer Orders

Activated task forces are a Federal resource, under the ultimate direction of FEMA, as established in the NRF. Should it be determined that one or more task force assignments must be changed, the task forces shall be reassigned. This determination will be made by the IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor, in conjunction with the state emergency management officials and/or the IMAT/JFO. The length of a task force's operations, and its ability to sustain continued operations, would dictate whether the task force could be reassigned.

If a local IC and the IST Leader determine that the services of an assigned task force are no longer needed, the IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor in coordination with the IMAT/JFO and the US&R Branch will make a determination of possible reassignment of the task force (transfer) to other affected areas or demobilized. A Transfer Order may be verbal followed by written confirmation.

3-9.3 Demobilization of Task Forces

A task force will be demobilized when no reassignment is warranted and one of the following three scenarios occurs:

- The task force completes its assignment.
- Incident conditions change such that there is no longer a need for the Task Force.
- The Task Force is deemed unable to continue operations

This information will be communicated to the local IC through the IST and forwarded by the IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor to the IMAT/JFO/RRCC. The NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit Leader, with a recommendation from the IMAT/JFO/RRCC in coordination with the state emergency management officials, will initiate a written demobilization order for the task force. Refer to Chapter 8: Task Force Reassignment/Demobilization.

3-10 Procedures for Accepting International US&R Assistance

The possibility exists that during a major catastrophic disaster, foreign US&R teams may be needed to supplement national capabilities. The United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the U.S. Department of State have developed protocols for requesting and accepting foreign US&R task forces. The United States, as a signatory, will abide by the protocols described in the FEMA International Assistance System OCHA's International Search and Rescue Advisory Committee Guidelines.

3-10.1 Operational Procedures for International Requests

Once the state requests US&R resources beyond what the Federal government can provide from domestic resources, and FEMA has determined that foreign US&R teams are required, FEMA will request assistance through the U.S. Department of State. An assessment will be made to determine the appropriate number of teams available that best meet the requirements of the identified US&R mission.

3-10.2 Integration of International Teams

The U.S. Department of State will coordinate the arrival and integration of foreign US&R teams with FEMA. This process will include the establishment and notification of the designated Reception/Departure Center(s) (RDC) for international team arrivals, assignment of interpreters and FEMA US&R Liaison, special logistical requirements, such as the need for fuel, compressed gases, etc. International teams will be assigned to local jurisdictions under the direction of an IST. When assigned to a local jurisdiction, they will report to, and work under the direction of the local IC through the IST.

3-10.3 General Considerations

FEMA and the U.S. Department of State will debrief the international teams prior to their demobilization and departure through the RDC. FEMA, in conjunction with U.S. Department of State, will be responsible for preparing an after-action report for OCHA on the accomplishments, difficulties, and suitability of the international response.

CHAPTER 4: TASK FORCE MOBILIZATION

4-1. Task Force Transportation Requirements

Task forces are capable of providing ground transportation for their own equipment cache. Each task force manages and maintains a vehicle fleet which includes commercial-type semi-tractor trailers and box trucks capable of transporting an entire US&R equipment cache, SUV-type vehicles for command and task force operations, and ATVs, forklifts, and trailers for task force support. Task force logistics personnel are trained in the procedures to prepare, package, palletize, and document the equipment cache for commercial and/or military airlift. Task forces participate in training with their local commercial air cargo carrier and/or military aerial port to facilitate air transportation capabilities for the equipment cache and personnel. Task forces establish agreements or utilize SA contracts with local bus charter companies and/or rental agencies to coordinate transportation for personnel.

The US&R Branch is responsible for determining the appropriate mode of transportation for all activated task forces. During most activations within the continental United States, the primary mode of transportation for task force personnel and equipment will be ground transportation. FEMA will coordinate the airlift of task forces to an affected area(s) for responses both inside and outside of the continental United States.

FEMA will be responsible for providing air transportation from an Aerial Port of Embarkation (APOE) to the mobilization center and back. The aircraft used may be military or civilian contract aircraft.

- Military Aircraft: If military aircraft are used for the transportation of Task Forces, the US&R Form 18-022 must be used. Refer to the Time-Phased Force Deployment Data List (TPFDDL).

- Civilian Aircraft: If civilian contract aircraft are used for the transportation of Task Forces, the US&R Form 18-023 must be used. Refer to the FEMA Commercial Weights and Measurements.

Commercial airlines are the primary mode of transportation, and the DOW is a supporting agency for transportation. When traveling via airlines, utilization of the Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 24-604 AFMAN/IATA and the ARM cache configuration is the primary reference documents for movement of US&R caches.

Each FEMA US&R task force has their equipment cache descriptive data pre-loaded in FEMA's National Aircraft Load Plan Data database. Aircraft load plan data includes the task force name, geographic location, preferred military and civilian departure airfields, number of passengers and canines, number of vehicles, and weight of cargo. The information includes notes indicating that task forces are carrying hazardous cargo and are authorized to transport un-caged canines. A unit line number is an alphanumeric code that identifies each task force under FEMA's program identification number (294PJ).

When task forces are transported via airlift, additional information essential to the task force's deployment is provided by the US&R Branch or NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit Leader to the T&MCG when the request for deployment is submitted. The T&MCG is

co-located with the NRCC and includes representatives from ESF #1 (transportation), DOW, DOT, and FEMA. Additional information that is necessary for airlift transportation includes items such as task force POC and telephone number, ready-to-load date and time, available-to-load date and time, earliest and latest arrival date and time, and required delivery date and time.

There may be times where it is expedient to utilize a bi-modal transportation model, where the cache is transported via airframe and the personnel travel by ground transport. Such bi-modal models need to be discussed with FEMA Branch and receive formal approval prior to travel.

When task forces are transported by air, transportation to the mobilization center and to the worksite is the responsibility of the IST. If the IST is not co-located or operational, the responsibility will fall to ESF #9 Group at the IMAT/JFO region or the NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit.

4-2. Task Force Mobilization Guidelines

4-2.1 Departure Time Frames

Upon activation, the task force will depart its POD via ground within four hours of activation or arrive at the APOE within six hours. The task force's SA is expected to perform the following tasks within this time:

- Assess the level of readiness of the task force
- Receive approval from government officials to mobilize
- Assemble task force personnel for departure at the task force POD (or the APOE)
- Assemble all elements of the task force equipment cache at the task force POD (or the APOE)

SAs must meet the targeted timeframe for departure. The inability of a to mobilize a task force within the required timeframe could prevent it from being considered for mobilization.

4-2.2 Personnel and Equipment

A predetermined call-out system must be maintained to notify the personnel required to field the task force. A notification system shall be implemented to contact necessary personnel. Virtually all task force SAs use affiliated personnel who are not directly employed by the SA to fill various positions within their task force. These affiliated personnel must have agreements in place with their respective participating agency or employers that allow them to leave their jobs with little notice for deployment with a task force for up to 14 days. The travel distances of the task force personnel, either to the SA assembly point or to the task force's assigned POD, must meet the required timeframes in order to deploy with the task force.

Task force mobilization policies and procedures must be pre-established, well-planned and exercised in order for a task force to accomplish their required mobilization tasks in a short period of time. Task force personnel should have all necessary personal equipment pre-staged or pre-packed and ready for deployment.

At the assembly point, the task force must have a pre-established system to process personnel for an activation that includes gear inspection and weighing, medical screening of deploying personnel and canines, personal information checks, and the issuing of equipment. The medical screening must cover the criteria specified adopted by the System for the task force physicians and veterinarians to recommend personnel and canines as deployable or non-deployable.

All necessary equipment, tools, and supplies that support the task force should either be cached in one location or stored in other easily accessible locations. A process to quickly assemble all cache items required for deployment should be established. Procedures to procure specific cache items prior to a mobilization, such as water, controlled pharmaceuticals, and batteries, must be in place. Procedures must also be established that allow for the procurement of these supplies outside of normal business hours.

Load plans that document where specific items are placed on military aircraft pallets, with pallet weights and cubic feet already calculated, shall be in place and the FEMA Air Response Module (ARM) Load Plans should be referenced. Additionally, load plans for ground transport that show similar placement of cache items on ground transport trucks should also be in place.

Cache load plans must reflect priority loading and unloading of equipment in order to ensure effective task force operations can begin once a task force arrives at their assignment. This may include equipment for teams in various modular deployment configurations, reconnaissance (recon), or advance teams.

4-2.3 Establishing Points of Contact

SAs must provide the US&R Branch with a task force representative (TFR) contact information as a primary point of contact for receiving US&R task force Advisories and Action Orders. This determination is made in advance and must be functional 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Most agencies and jurisdictions have emergency dispatch centers that work well for this purpose. A directory of contacts should be established at the local, state, and Federal levels to ensure timely notifications.

SAs should establish a predetermined routing of Action Orders from their POC to the TFR who can accept or decline an Action Order. The TFR receiving an Action Order from FEMA should request a POC name and telephone number so a response may be returned to the NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit or US&R Branch within the required one-hour timeframe.

4-2.4 Task Force Briefing

After accepting a mission, the SA should assemble all necessary personnel according to their policy and procedures. A formal task force briefing should be provided to all team members and should include the following:

- Task force organizational structure
- Chain-of-command
- Latest event information
- Environmental conditions
- Media issues and procedures
- Safety issues

- Communications procedures
- Other information provided by specific task force specialists
- Peer support capabilities and procedures
- Transportation mode, estimated departure time, POA, etc.
- Transport/Convoy plan
- Emergency procedures
- FEMA US&R Code of Conduct

Task force supervisory personnel should also brief their subordinates about their expectations, distribute and review task force operational checklists, review the readiness of task force personnel for mission operations, and ensure members meet inoculation standards for location of deployment.

4-3. Point of Departure Activities

Ground transportation during mobilization to a site may require manual handling and loose loading of cache containers or mechanized loading of palletized material. Adhering to the container weight and size limitations ensures overall manageability of the cache.

The SA is responsible for the assembly, management, and movement of the cache from its home jurisdiction to the POD during mobilization. This requirement should be fully defined, preplanned, and exercised prior to any actual Federal deployment. The following processes should be addressed:

- Assembling and packaging all cache tools, equipment, and supplies (if the items are not maintained as a "stand alone" cache)
- Identifying, procuring, and packaging perishable or short shelf-life items (e.g., batteries, food supplies, water, fuels, etc.)
- Generating an inventory of all cache items as the cache is assembled

4-3.1 Identifying Appropriate Contacts

DOW has established a military APOE for each task force. The APOE is usually an airport or military air base located in close proximity to a task force's SA. Procedures for contacting appropriate officials at the APOE should be established prior to any actual deployment. When a task force accepts an Activation Order, the TFR or their designee should immediately advise the appropriate officials at the APOE of the activation. It is important that updated names and telephone numbers be made available to organizations involved in the deployment of a task force to ensure the accurate flow of information. The two usual types of APOEs are listed below:

- Military Air Bases – The on-duty air base operations officer will usually be the appropriate POC for military air bases. Issues regarding security, air base access, cargo handling areas, task force assembly areas, radio frequencies, etc., should be coordinated through that office.
- Civilian Airports – The airport manager will be the appropriate POC for civilian airports. In addition, airport police or fire personnel may provide assistance or information during a mobilization. These agencies may handle issues such as airport and hangar access, cargo handling areas,

security, task force assembly areas, etc. The SA must ensure that periodic follow-up contacts are made to keep the POCs informed.

4-3.2 Aircraft Loading Procedures

It is important that task force personnel coordinate closely with loadmasters to ensure that all elements of their cache are well-organized, properly packaged and labeled, prioritized, loaded, and secured. Certain cache items, such as fuels, oxygen, and compressed air, are considered hazardous materials. These items must be identified to the loadmaster or cargo handlers so that they can determine the proper placement of these items in the cargo bay. A manifest of personnel will also be generated (FEMA Form 18-015). Cache items should be reviewed and pre-certified in order to expedite the loading process. There is training available for task force Logistics Specialists and other task force personnel involved with the air transportation process and requirements.

4-3.3 Load Estimation/Limitations

The following guidelines are in place to control the total task force weight that will be transported.

- Team member – 210 lb. (average for estimation purposes)
- Personal gear (carry-on) – 25 lb. (strict limit)
- Gear bag – 50 lb. (strict limit)
- Canines and support – 100 lb. (average for estimation purposes)

4-3.4 Canine Transport

Canines transported as part of a task force shall be in the aircraft with their handlers. Due to the nature of the trained canine, coupled with the need for the handler to care for and maintain the proper attitude of the canine, they should not be transported in kennels (refer to the Records and Reports Section of the US&R FOG).

CHAPTER 5: ARRIVAL AT THE MOBILIZATION CENTER

5-1 Establishment of a Basecamp or Base of Operations

5-1.1 Set Up/Activation Responsibilities

The FEMA regional office, in support of the state emergency management agency, will pre-select potential basecamps, when or where possible.

If a task force is directed to a basecamp, the IST POA/MOB Specialist or Ground Support Unit Leader will coordinate or arrange transportation from the POA to the designated site. It may be determined that the POA will also serve as the basecamp or base of operations (BoO).

In some cases, the military, Region, or ESF #9 may designate a military installation, a Defense Coordinating Officer and integrated resource support for the DOW response effort. This is known in the military as a Base Support Installation (BSI). This installation may be located outside of, but within relative proximity to, the disaster area. In addition to support in the form of technically qualified personnel, essential equipment and procurement support, the BSI may serve as a staging or basecamp. US&R personnel encountering the term BSI during a response should consider a BSI as a basecamp or BoO.

5-1.2 Administrative Support

An IST POA/Mob Specialist should be assigned to the BoO to facilitate any administrative needs of the task force. This may include arranging for billeting, sanitation, and feeding, as well as providing briefings and debriefings, maps, communications, transportation requirements, and a system for re-supply as needed.

5-2 Task Force Reception/Support

5-2.1 Basecamp/BoO

Upon arrival at a basecamp or BoO, the Task Force Leader (TFL) or designee should notify the NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit of their arrival (based on notification process found in Chapter 3-2.1 - NRCC Notification Procedures) and also establish contact with the IST POA/Mob Specialist. If the TFL is unable to locate the appropriate IST representative (who may have not yet arrived), they should report to the local basecamp or staging area manager for further instructions. The following information should be obtained from the IST representative or the mobilization center manager if known:

- Location of the IST
- Local officials to whom the TFL should report
- Assigned jurisdiction/worksite for the task force
- Incident briefing/situation report requirements
- Mobilization center food, water, restrooms, and support facilities
- Transportation requirements
- Availability of maps for assigned jurisdiction
- Availability of medical treatment or facilities, if any
- Most current intelligence as identified by SARIG

Once a task force receives their assignment and arrives at their assigned jurisdiction, the TFL will be in coordination with the local IC through the assigned IST and IST DIVS. The TFL or the task force Logistics Team Manager will coordinate all task force logistical support requests with the IST. The IST, in conjunction with the local jurisdiction, will determine what re-supply can be obtained locally and what items must be requested through IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor. Task forces should not order equipment or re-supply items on their own unless it is necessary (e.g. assigned to remote location without IST support). The IST Leader is responsible for routing resource requests and reporting the task force's situation status to the IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor.

5-2.2 BoO Task Force Briefing

Once the TFL has received pertinent or updated information, a task force briefing should be conducted to apprise personnel of important information. The briefing should include the following:

- Assigned jurisdiction/worksite for the task force
- Incident briefing/situation report
- Mobilization center food, water, restroom, and support facilities
- Transportation issues and time frames
- Equipment off loading/security
- Issuing of maps (if available)
- Introduction of the IST POA/Mob Specialist or other POA POCs
- Most current intelligence based on the IST SARIG

5-2.3 Base of Operations Support Facilities

As required, the IST POA/Mob Specialist will be the POC with the support facility at the basecamp or BoO that is receiving US&R task forces. The basecamp or BoO should provide logistical support for the preparation and distribution of food and water, provide restroom facilities, shelter, etc., if not already available on site. The degree to which these needs will be supported will depend upon many variables, including available resources and the number of disaster response resources routed through the mobilization center, etc.

At a minimum, a TFL or their designee should ensure that the immediate needs of task force personnel and canines are addressed. The TFL and IST POA/Mob Specialist will address any issues as needed.

Most large-scale disasters may require that basecamps remain in operation for an extended period of time, while various disaster mitigation and restoration resources respond to the affected areas. The TFL should consider that the task force could demobilize and return through the basecamp or BoO at the conclusion of a deployment. Furthermore, the basecamp or BoO may play a part in ongoing operations, such as serving as an intermediate point for the removal of an injured task force member or the support of other disaster response agencies (i.e., ESF #8 [public health and medical], ESF #10 [hazardous materials], ESF #4 [firefighting]).

5-3. Task Force Deployment

It is important that the assignment of the task force to a worksite be made as quickly as possible. These decisions will be made by the appropriate state emergency management officials of the affected states or local incident commander in conjunction with the IST or appropriate ESF #9 officials with the IMAT/JFO (refer to the "Initial Task Force Assignments" discussion in Chapter 3 for more information).

The following duties should be immediate concerns of an IST OSC:

- Forward specific task force assignments as soon as possible
- Address the transfer and movement of all personnel, canine, and equipment cache items
- Establish the necessary transportation requirements
- Deploy the task force into the affected locality as quickly as possible

Task forces depart the basecamp or BoO to an assigned when a worksite is identified by the IST based on the most current actionable intelligence. Although the preferred route the task force should take would be directly to their assigned worksite or area of operation, routing a task force through a staging area may be necessary.

CHAPTER 6: STAGING AREA AND INCIDENT ASSIGNMENT

6-1. Staging Areas

A task force may be required to move through a staging area enroute to its assignment due to a change in logistical or operational requirements. The IST, in conjunction with the IMAT/JFO, will determine these requirements. The movement of a task force through a staging area should be conducted as quickly as possible.

6-2. On-Site Assignment

See Chapter 7-5 for On-Site Assignments.

CHAPTER 7: ON-SITE OPERATIONS

Upon arrival at the assigned worksite, a task force should begin operations as soon as possible. In the following sections there are specific objectives that should be considered. The order listed does not necessarily reflect a chronological order but should be addressed at the appropriate time. With respect to the number of personnel assigned to each task force, some of these objectives can be handled simultaneously. Figure 8 depicts a typical command structure for on-site operations.

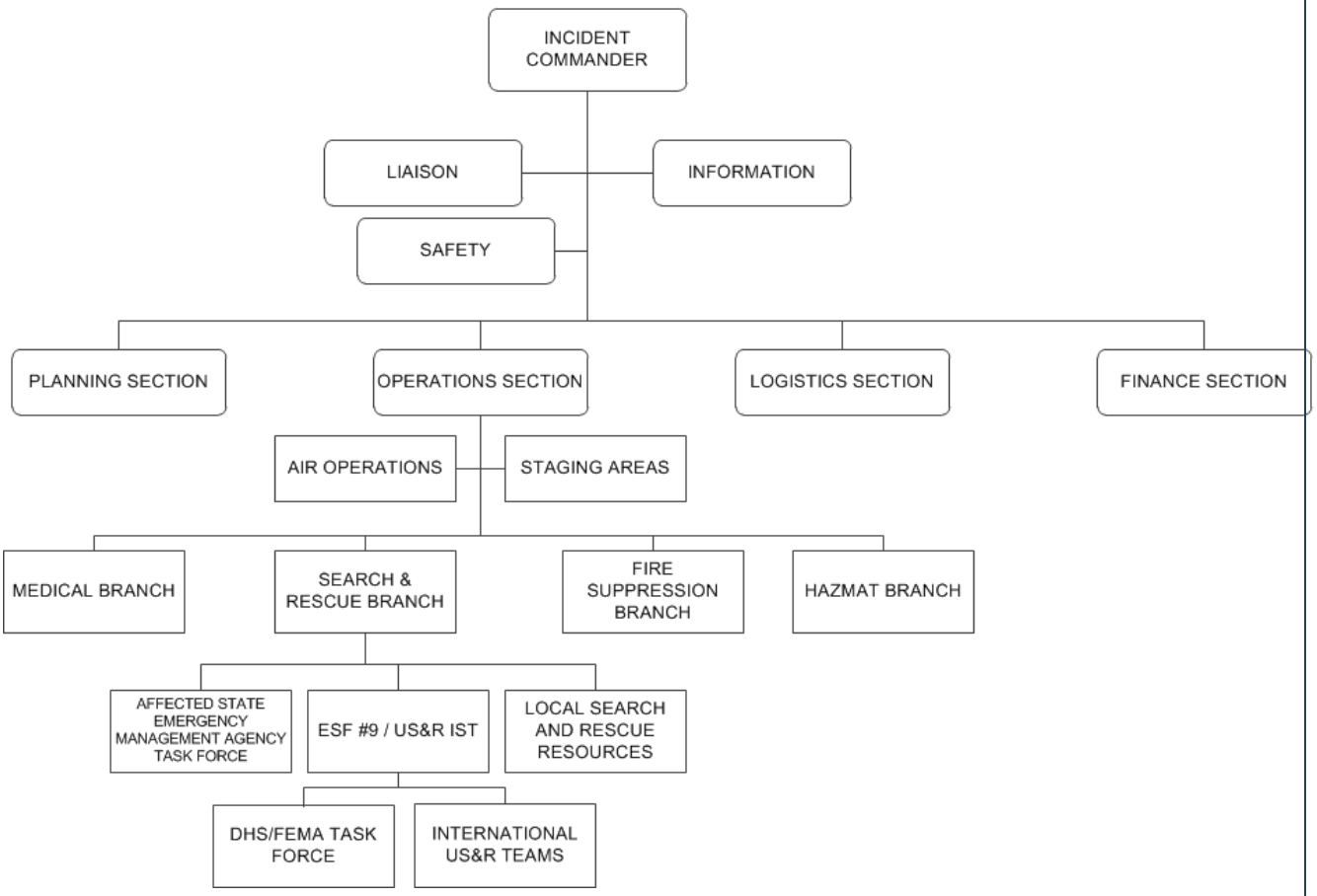

Figure 8 - Typical On-Site Command Structure

While deployed, there are two types of mission assignments (MA) where task forces may be assigned. Those are Direct Federal Assistance (DFA) and Federal Operations Support (FOS).

- DFA - A type of Mission Assignment which consists of goods and services provided to the affected state and local jurisdictions when they lack the capability to perform or contract for eligible emergency work. Eligibility criteria for DFA are set forth in the CFR, Title 44, Subpart H, "Public Assistance Eligibility." The Presidential declaration of a major disaster or emergency must take place prior to the provision of DFA. DFA is subject to the applicable state cost share, usually 25 percent, but the President may waive this for a specific period.
- FOS - A type of Mission Assignment that allows for the support of another federal agency to support federal operations.

7.1 Base of Operations

The selection of a suitable BoO is an important decision made during a deployment. The specific location may be predetermined by the local jurisdiction or the IST prior to the arrival of the task force. In absence of the IST, the TFL and the task force team managers must identify an appropriate site. Regardless of who makes the determination, the following factors should be considered:

- Proximity to assigned worksites
- Useable structures for shelter and cache set-up

- Safety of useable, adjacent structures
- Sufficient open, level space
- Access to transportation routes
- Safety and security
- Ability for Rest and Recovery (R&R) (facility's quality to accommodate resting off-duty personnel)
- Environmental considerations
- Communication/coordination with representatives from the AHJ.

The IST Leader should consult with the IST Communications Unit Leader, Logistics Section Chief, and their specialists in assessing these features. Likewise, if the task force is selecting the BoO site, the TFL should consult with the task force logistics managers, communications specialists, safety officers, and logistics specialists at the task force level. Consideration should be given to sending out an advance team to locate a suitable BoO site prior to a task force arriving. Once a BoO has been established, changing locations is extremely difficult.

The Task Force BoO location should be annotated on the Search & Rescue Common Operating Platform using the common terminology identified in NIMS Guidance and SARCOP to reflect the appropriate Task Force(s)/IST.

7-2. Equipment Cache Management

The setup and management of the task force equipment cache is an important consideration when choosing a BoO. Once a site selection is made, the following factors must be addressed:

- The equipment cache has a large footprint. Regardless of whether existing structures or tents are used to shelter all or part of the cache, an area providing sufficient workroom is required. Prior training and exercise in managing and setting up the cache BoO is required.
- The equipment cache list is subdivided into separate sections: Communications, HazMat/CBRN, Logistics, Medical, Plans, Rescue, Technical, and Water Operations[1]. These sections should be color-coded to denote the subdivision.
- The cache should be inventoried when set up to ensure equipment availability/location and to identify any items that may have been lost or damaged during transit (utilizing the FEMA Form 19-006).
- Some tools and equipment may require setup prior to operation, fueling, and a check of operation to ensure readiness.
- When preparing the worksite cache in the BoO, task forces Logistics Specialists, with coordination with the Rescue Team(s), may be required to develop a rapid deployment equipment pallet. This equipment may be loaded on a military pallet with essential rescue or reconnaissance equipment to allow for immediate task force operations at remote locations. It is designed to be slung from a helicopter and transported quickly to a worksite with a small cadre of personnel. The pallet should be designed to allow the accompanying personnel to begin an immediate rescue operation, recon a specific area, or perform another

[1] 9P7130- TFL Computer Based Training, Module 5

specific function. The rapid deployment pallet should only carry a maximum of 4,000 lbs. and be not more than four feet in height to allow for helicopter operations. It should be loaded in priority layers depending on the mission to which it is deployed.

- A computerized accountability system, with a manual back-up system, should be used for tracking of all cache items throughout the course of assignment deployment. The tracking system is essential to ensure that equipment or scarce cache resources can be located and shared among other task force elements if necessary.

7-3. Task Force Command Post

An integral component of the overall task force BoO is the task force command post, which serves as the focal point for all internal task force operations. A central command area should be established for task force supervisory personnel. This location should also incorporate the planning, safety, and communications functions of the task force.

The task force command post should be staffed continually throughout assignment deployment. It is imperative that communication channels be monitored for TF and IST communications, and communications with the local ICP. Messages from any of these entities must be received, recorded as necessary, and forwarded immediately to the appropriate task force personnel.

Each task force is identified by a distinct designator based on the two-letter state abbreviation followed by the letters "TF" (for task force) and a number. For example, the first task force established in the state of Florida was designated FL-TF1 in writing and verbalized as "Florida Task Force One." An operational task force command post will use their respective designator for radio communications.

The task force command post should be annotated on the Search & Rescue Common Operating Platform, utilizing the current nomenclature to reflect the appropriate Task Force(s)/IST.

7-4. Shelter Requirements

Two options are available for task force shelter. One is to use existing structures. The second option is to rely solely on the tents carried in the task force cache. In either case, the following shelter requirements should be addressed:

- Task force command post
- Communications
- Cache shelter (for environmentally sensitive supplies and equipment)
- Personnel sleeping quarters
- Food preparation and eating area
- Medical treatment
- Sanitation facilities
- Canine area

Should the task force supervisors use existing structures, the structural integrity of those structures should be evaluated by the task force Structural Specialist and Safety Officer. It is important to remember that following an earthquake, after-shocks should be expected and, in these situations, future structural integrity must also be considered. If structural integrity and safety prove questionable, tents should be used.

In such circumstances, task force supervisory personnel should coordinate with the IST Point of Arrival/Mobilization Specialist (POA/MOB) or TFL should seek a Land Use Agreement (LUA) with the local government or owner(s) of the facilities. A template LUA is available on the Response System SharePoint to task force Logistics Team Members and should be routed through the IST POA/MOB for Contracting Officer signature as the federal representative.

7-5. Tactical Assignments and Operations

Issues related to BoO setup and cache management need not delay the beginning of search and rescue operations. Task force staffing should be established to address several actions simultaneously. The task force Planning Manager or the Technical Information Specialist must maintain a task force unit log of chronological events (e.g. ICS 214).

The TFL should receive a briefing of the tactical assignment from the IST operations section and the local IC as soon as possible. This may be based on reconnaissance, survivor information, affected area intelligence mapping, or hazard analyses. Once assignments are determined, the task force supervisory personnel should coordinate the beginning of search and rescue operations as quickly as practical. This may necessitate that structure triage teams perform quick assessments of the assigned area and that reconnaissance teams evaluate each building deemed viable for rescue operations. All information obtained from reconnaissance missions should be captured in the SARCOP in a timely manner for use in overall incident action planning.

Some assignments may require specialized strategies & tactics (contaminated environments, swiftwater, etc.). These features are expanded upon in Annexes to this Response Manual. Specific Reporting Requirements for these assignments shall be noted by the task force supervisory personnel. If there is concern from the task force regarding an assignment, the TFL and Safety Officer should refer to the Refusal of Risk section in 306 - Annex F: Refusal of Risk Flowchart.

As remaining elements begin to arrive at the area identified as the BoO, task force supervisory personnel should meet to determine the short-range strategy. They should determine which initial issues must be addressed and how task force personnel should be organized to handle these issues. They should also identify areas of responsibility for the task force personnel.

A task force tactical worksheet that addresses the duration of the initial work cycle for the total task force should be developed prior to implementing work cycles, along with other specific objectives for a defined time period. Determination of task force work cycles should take into consideration incident operational periods as established by the local IC or IST. The total task force strength can be used in the initial stages of operation. Depending on a variety of factors, all personnel can be committed to initial operations for an extended period of up to 18 hours before requiring rest and rotation cycles. At that point, the task force should begin to implement alternating 12-hour cycles, with half the personnel resting and half working. Because experience has shown that the greatest numbers of survivors are rescued early in the incident, utilizing the greatest number of search and rescue resources that can safely be

committed early on will positively impact the rate of success for survivor location and extrication.

The National US&R System adopted a tiered approach to address System behavioral health needs during incident operations. As incident complexities increase, higher levels of support may be required and shall be facilitated in accordance with FEMA US&R Program Directive 2025-011 Behavioral Health Integration Within the US&R System.

7-5.1 Operational Task Force Briefings

As soon as task force personnel arrive at an identified area to establish a BoO, a briefing should be conducted for all personnel. After task force supervisory personnel have had an opportunity to meet, they should outline their strategy and delegate specific responsibilities. This process is extremely important and helps to ensure that the task force operates as a cohesive unit and that the goals are clearly understood by all members. A review of the following issues should be conducted:

- Incident situation reporting
- Intelligence-based information
- Task force objectives
- Tactical assignments and documentation requirements
- Task force support layout and requirements (BoO)
- Communications plan, frequencies, and radio designations
- Safety issues including emergency signaling and evacuation procedures (see the Task Force Communications Handbook)
- Medical treatment and medical evacuation procedures for task force personnel
- Process for ordering supplies and equipment through IST
- Shift assignments and rotations
- Task force security issues
- Behavioral Health considerations
- Incident stress management considerations

The TFL should establish contact with the IST as soon as possible. The following information should be exchanged between the TFL, the IST, and the local IC:

- Reporting requirements (type/location/frequency/position)
- Task force objectives
- Location of work assignment
- Location or potential location of task force BoO
- Current situation report
- Tactical assignment
- Personnel/cache movement requirements
- On-site transportation requirements
- Communications plan
- Contact list
- Shelter and support facilities, if any
- Availability of maps
- Medical protocols and survivor transfer procedures
- Availability of local heavy equipment (cranes, bulldozers)

- Logistical re-supply procedures
- Security
- Political, environmental, or other special concerns
- Most current intelligence as identified by SARI

The TFL and the task force logistics specialists must also coordinate the restock/replenishment and security of all cache items as well as safety of personnel in the location where the task force BoO is or will be established.

7-5.2 Reporting Requirements

A variety of verbal and written reports are necessary during mission operations. The following provides an overview of various requirements:

A. Task Force Planning

Task force supervisory personnel must keep the local IC apprised of all aspects of their operation through the IST. The IST Operational/Incident Action Plan (IAP/OAP) includes the unit activity logs, and plans from each functional section. This plan is prepared for each operational period. Each task force will identify their areas of applicable information from the IAP/OAP and complete their own Tactical Worksheet (TWS). Unusual or safety-related situation reports should be made immediately to the IST.

B. Task Force Support

The task force should be totally self-sufficient for at least 72 hours. However, throughout the course of deployment, task force supervisory personnel must make continual assessments of the needs of the task force. Issues related to additional shelter requirements, food, water, and replacement of expendable cache items (i.e., batteries, fuel, oxygen, etc.) or additional equipment should be addressed. Requests for support should be directed to the IST Logistics Section — in accordance with the US&R Logistics Job Aids (document 430.1). All re-supply should be conducted through the IST. Normally, task forces will not individually purchase supplies while on a deployment. The IST will determine which resources can be obtained locally and which will be ordered through the ESF #9 Group with the IMAT/JFO. In general, local procurement may meet immediate needs if resources are available.

Upon notification of demobilization or reassignment, task forces are required to submit demobilization reporting requirements which often include the ICS 212 Vehicle Safety Inspection Form, Demobilization Plan, and Travel Plan. Task force supervisory personnel should clarify these requirements by incident with the IST, generally outlined on the ICS 221 – Demobilization Checkout form.

C. Significant Events

Task Forces and IST(s) may encounter emergency situations during their assignments such as secondary collapse, aircraft crash, extreme injury to personnel, vehicle accident, etc., generically labeled “Incident Within an Incident” or IWI. US&R Resources should follow reporting requirements and responsibilities listed within the current Annex F, Appendix A IWI protocol.

If an IWI occurs, task force supervisory personnel & the IST should consider the need to activate Behavioral Health support in accordance with US&R Program Directive 2025-011, and shall fulfill corresponding reporting requirements.

7-6. Agency-Specific Communications

The TFL should establish communications with their SA to keep them apprised of the task force's status. The TFL must ensure that all information intended for release to the public is approved by either the IST Public Information Officer (PIO) or a representative from FEMA's Office of External Affairs. Special considerations should be made to communicate emergency messages in either direction.

7-7. Agency Support to Families

Task forces should consider establishing a support system for spouses and families of the deployed task force members. The purpose of the support system is to address the needs of those left at home. It may include providing assistance with home repairs, emergency family matters, dealing with local media, etc.

7-8. Personnel Injuries

If a member suffers an injury, it must be reported to the IST (generally IST Safety Officer and IST Medical Officer) as soon as possible. The injured person should be treated on the scene and if necessary, transported to a medical facility. Task force supervisory personnel shall follow the Annex F, Appendix A IWI protocol for injured members.

Form CA-1, Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Compensation, must be completed by task force management (or IST management for an IST member). A FEMA US&R Section Chief or the US&R Branch Chief must complete the second page of the form. The CA-1 must be filed within 30 days from the date of the injury to ensure continuation of pay coverage. Refer to the agency MOA for the claims process. An occupational disease must be reported to task force or IST management as soon as the person first becomes aware of the condition. Form CA-2, Federal Employee's Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation, must be filed. All submissions must include original documents completed in their entirety. Documents should be forwarded to the Employees and Labor Relations Division, Worker's Compensation, FEMA. Any additional exposures encountered during a deployment must be documented on the Form 306-E (Incident Exposure Report), and Post Mission Medical guidance disseminated prior to demobilization must be followed.

CHAPTER 8: TASK FORCE REASSIGNMENT AND DEMOBILIZATION

8-1. Reassignment Considerations

A reassignment may be major undertaking as elements of the task force must be repacked, reloaded and transported to a new site. The change of assignment for a task force still in transit is considered a diversion and is easier to implement than issuing a reassignment once they have arrived, are performing operations, and have established a BoO.

FEMA, in coordination with appropriate state or local officials, will carefully assess the ability of a task force that is already established and in operation to accept a tactical reassignment requiring a location change. The following factors should be considered:

- Duration of operation already underway and forecast completion
- Physical and mental condition of task force personnel
- Rest period in response to safety concerns
- Capability of the remaining cache to support continued operation
- Availability of other task forces to handle an identified new assignment
- Availability of appropriate transportation

If a US&R Resource or the IST is reassigned or deemed excess, waypoints for the Base & Command Post shall be appropriately adjusted in the Search & Rescue Common Operating Platform. Resources may coordinate this through the IST Situation Unit as needed.

8-2. Reassignment/Demobilization

The TFL should receive a briefing from the IST regarding any determination of reassignment or subsequent demobilization. The following issues should be addressed:

- Official standdown time
- Reason for reassignment or demobilization
- Transportation requirements
- Departure itinerary
- Transfer of expendable cache supplies or equipment, if any, to the local jurisdiction that should be left to support local needs (as approved by FEMA)
- Permitted cache rehabilitation period
- Permitted personnel rehabilitation period

The TFL should communicate both reassignment or and related demobilization order information back to their SA. If communication channels are not available to the TFL, the TFL should request that this information be transmitted through the IST. Refer to FEMA US&R Program Directive 2005-020 – Demobilization Allowances & Reimbursement Guidance – 07-12-05 (or the latest or up to date directive) for detailed information on allowable personnel and cache rehabilitation time. Both the authorized personnel and cache rehabilitation time will be identified in the task force's Demobilization Order, FEMA form 18-002. In the absence of communication with the SA, the TFL should ensure that verbal or negotiated rehabilitation time matches the Demobilization Order.

Around the time of demobilization, Post Mission Medical Guidance will be provided to US&R resources based upon incident complexity, via a Program Directive. Implementation of this guidance typically requires coordination between deployed resource supervisory personnel & Sponsoring Agency leadership.

8-3. Equipment Cache Management

All elements of the equipment cache must be inventoried and properly packaged for transport prior to being deployed/demobilized by FEMA. During deployments, items expended, lost, damaged, or intentionally left for the local jurisdiction must be identified and documented. In some instances, the IST ESF #9 Group Supervisor, FEMA contracting officer (CO), or FEMA Accountable Property Officer (APO), with approval from FEMA, may authorize transfer of task force equipment to the local jurisdiction. The TFL should ensure that all task force cache items that were expended, damaged, lost, or left for the local jurisdiction are identified on the appropriate FEMA forms:

- FF119-7-1-1: FEMA Personal Property Policy and Oversight Program
- US&R 19-007 Form: US&R Damaged or Lost Equipment Reporting
- FF119-7-1-2: DHS FEMA Property Transfer Report
- US&R 19-006 Form: US&R Request to Purchase Supplies, Equipment and Services

8-4. Cessation of Base of Operations

Reasonable efforts should be made to leave the area where the BoO was located in the same condition in which it was found before the arrival of a task force, in accordance with any applicable Land Use Agreements. Necessary sanitation precautions must be taken when breaking down a BoO in preparation to leave an area. All trash (especially medical and food debris) should be disposed of appropriately.

8-5. Return to a Basecamp or Base of Operations

8-5.1 Rest and Rehabilitation

While demobilizing, a task force may return to a basecamp or BoO. The TFL, through the IST POA/Mob Specialist will attempt to find quarters for all task force personnel to provide rest and rehabilitation time. Personnel should be afforded a shower and change of clothes prior to their return to the original POD. If a mobilization center is not available, task force personnel may be required to stand down for a period of time in their BoO or nearby lodging facilities if they are available.

8-5.2 Equipment Review

Prior to demobilization at the task force BoO or at a basecamp, the TFL should schedule the time and designate an appropriate area for a review and general inventory of the cache. This inventory should account not only for the tracking and movement of the cache from the incident site to the mobilization center or home location, but also for collecting information regarding damaged and missing equipment. This information should be captured in written form (see Chapter 9) for the after-action report.

8-5.3 Equipment Loading

The equipment cache review should assist the Logistics Manager with managing the loading of the cache back on to task force vehicles or onto an aircraft for return transportation. All issues related to the original loading of equipment at the beginning of a deployment should be addressed for return to the home location by ground transport or by air. When traveling by air, coordination between the task force Logistics Manager, IST Logistics Section, and the military or commercial loadmaster is essential. Copies of all documentation created during an assignment deployment should be retained for use to develop the after-action report.

8-5.4 Task Force Debriefing

The TFL should ensure that a task force debriefing is conducted prior to leaving the BoO or the mobilization center while the focus is still deployed. The intent of this debriefing is to highlight issues and accomplishments of the mission. Lessons learned during the deployment should be noted and discussed. This information should be captured in written form for subsequent development of the after-action report (AAR). Additional lessons learned from the use of SARI should also be incorporated into the AAR.

Task force supervisory personnel should also assess the well-being of task force members and discuss issues related to incident stress management. All personnel should be afforded the opportunity to discuss issues that may cause discomfort or concern. This initial discussion must be followed up with a full incident stress management debriefing when the task force returns home. Refer to Program Directive 2025-011 Behavioral Health Integration Within the US&R System.

Finally, any injuries or illnesses associated with the mission should be reported to the Medical Team Manager to ensure that proper follow-up medical care is delivered. All documentation in accordance with Chapter 7-8 shall be completed.

CHAPTER 9: POST-MISSION ACTIVITIES

9-1. Return to Point of Departure

Upon return of a task force to its home base, the SA is responsible for coordinating all issues related to the return of the task force to its operational status. The Logistics/Cache Manager ensures coordination of the cache transfer from the POD to its place of storage.

Prior to the task force's return, the SA should also address other issues related to the return of the task force. These issues may include the following:

- Task force return itinerary
- Media coordination
- Implementation of rehabilitation periods prior to the member's return to normal duties
- Behavioral health follow-up for task force members following US&R Program Directive 2025-011
- Return and rehabilitation of cache equipment to a ready state
- Post Mission Medical Direction
- After Action Report (AAR)

9-2. Equipment Management and Rehabilitation

FEMA requires that task forces be prepared to deploy within 14 days of return from an assignment. All tools, equipment, and supplies in the task force cache should be evaluated, inventoried, serviced, repackaged and returned to service as soon as possible. In this regard, the activities described in the following paragraphs should be addressed.

9-2.1 Cache Rehabilitation

All tools, equipment, and supplies must be inventoried, inspected, and made operationally ready. Upon departure from an incident, in coordination with the IST, the NRCC ESF #9 SAR Unit will issue a written demobilization order for each task force, indicating the approved maximum number of hours the SA can submit for reimbursement purposes in regard to cache rehabilitation, as determined by the IST leader and ESF #9 Group Supervisor, the US&R Branch and accepted by the Task Force Representative or Program Manager. The number of hours allowed are determined based on the type of operations conducted and length of deployment, climate factors, and the extent of use of cache items while deployed. The initial allowances range from 240 to 400 hours. The number of allowable hours should be sufficient to return all tools, equipment, and supplies back a state of operational readiness for another assignment.

If a determination is made during the cache rehabilitation process that an insufficient number of hours were authorized in the Demobilization Order, a request for additional hours must be submitted by email to the US&R Branch Chief. The request should detail the number of additional hours being requested, justification for the request, and an anticipated date of completion.

9-2.2 Damage/Loss/Repair Assessment

The results of the post-deployment inventory will also be used to develop a damage/loss assessment report. This report will identify any tools, equipment, and supplies that were expended, damaged, or lost during the deployment. The report will also include narratives describing the reasons for any damage or loss that occurred. A cost summary for the replacement of cache items shall also be developed. Completed forms found in Chapter 8-3 should be filled out for damaged/lost equipment.

9-3. Behavioral Health Follow-up

The SA is responsible for scheduling and conducting all behavioral health-related follow-up, based on Program Directive 2025-011 Behavioral Health Integration Within the US&R System. Consideration may also be given to also following up with families and significant others of deployed task force personnel.

9-4. After Action Review

The SA should conduct a full AAR meeting of task force personnel, as soon as is practical following a deployment. All task force personnel should be actively involved in a critique at some level. Supervisory and other personnel from the SA involved in program management and mobilization should also attend.

The purpose of an AAR is to:

- Identify all accomplishments of the task force;
- Identify any problems encountered;
- Evaluate improvements for future mobilizations and operations;
- Identify the lessons learned; and
- Identify standards or procedures that should be altered or improved in the System.
- Provide input for the after-action report

The issues identified in the critique should be captured in writing. This information should be incorporated into the task force after-action report that is submitted to FEMA.

9-5. After-Action Report

A required after-action report is to be sent to the FEMA US&R Branch via email or hard copy to 500 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20472 within 30 days after returning to Sponsoring Agency. Task forces may elect to send, or be required to send, an after-action report to their state emergency management agency as well. Reports should be written in a professional manner and follow the format below:

- Executive summary
- Introduction, providing an overview of the assignment
- Chronology of events, including alert, activation, mobilization, on-site operations, reassignment/demobilization, and post-mission activities
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of task force organization, call-out procedures, operating procedures, operational checklists, position descriptions, equipment, and prior training

- Evaluation of mission operations, alert/activation procedures, logistical movement and resupply activities, liaison activities with the IST and other agencies, on-site coordination, and effective integration with the local incident management structure, etc.
- Recommendations for changes or correction within the individual task force
- Recommendations for changes or corrections within the System to enhance future response activities
- Identification of lessons learned

Each task force should employ effective methods to collect information during a deployment that is to be included in the critique and after-action report. Several technical information gathering and tracking systems are available for task force use. Systems employed during a mission should include computer personnel databases, medical records and injury reports, chronological recording of events from alert to return home, task force tactical planning, and completed ICS forms and logs. The information collected should be easily transferred to the after-action report using the format listed above.

9-6. Fiscal Accountability and Reimbursement

From an initial alert or activation, task force Sponsoring Agencies must have a procedure in place to track all costs associated with a deployment. This procedure includes all terms outlined in the task force's MOA with FEMA. Task force reimbursement shall be conducted in accordance with the rules set forth in 44 CFR Part 208, sub-part b, the current version of the US&R Reimbursement Procedures and any other relevant US&R policies or procedures.

9-7. Return to State of Readiness

US&R task forces are expected to return to a state of operational readiness within 14 days after the conclusion of an assignment to ensure the optimal readiness of the National US&R Response System. In cases where a task force may not meet that time frame, the task force shall notify the US&R Branch Chief of their status in writing.

CHAPTER 10: US&R RESPONSE SYSTEM PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

10-1. Mobilization Manual

It is essential that each SA develop and maintain a mobilization manual outlining all the procedures for deployment. This manual should be updated at least annually. At a minimum, this manual should include the following:

- 24-hour POC for task force
- Procedures for the authorization and acceptance of US&R Action Orders
- Team notification policy and procedures
- Notification and call-out procedure for personnel
- Team POA policy and procedures
- Team APOE with contact information
- Cache management policy and procedures
- Personnel in-processing policy and procedures
- Procedures for appropriating non-stocked items (e.g., medicines, batteries)
- Press and media relations
- Transportation methods for task force movement
- Alternate transportation options
- Procedures for relief and backfill of task force personnel
- Procedures to fill support positions
- Canine waiver and health certificates

10-2. Cache Maintenance

The SA must establish a program to maintain its cache readiness. This program should include the following:

- Annual cache inventories
- Periodic tool and exercising of equipment to ensure proper operation
- Rotation periods for items with an anticipated life (i.e., batteries, medicines, etc.)
- Procedures for checking out cache equipment for training, maintenance, etc.
- Procedures for post-deployment and post-training cache rehabilitation
- Procedures for computerized and hard copy inventory updates
- Files established for tools and equipment reference materials
- Regular maintenance schedule for cache items
- Documentation of the maintenance performed

10-3. Training and Exercises

An SA should establish a program to develop and conduct routine training to ensure the effectiveness of tactical operations and coordination within the task force. Separate maintenance skills training should be addressed to ensure the efficiency of the task force.

Periodic multi-task force training exercises should be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the National US&R Response System. The focus of these training

sessions should be to exercise activation and mobilization procedures and to evaluate the integration of the task forces into simulated disaster situations.

Appendix A: List of Acronyms

AFMAN – Air Force Manual
APOD – Aerial Point of Debarkation
APOE – Aerial Port of Embarkation
BoO – Base of Operations (Synonymous with Basecamp)
CDRAFNORTH – Commander, U.S. Air Force Northern
CDRALCOM – Commander, Alaska Command
CDRUSNORTHCOM – Commander, U.S. Northern Command
DEST – Domestic Energy Support Team
DMAT – Disaster Medical Assistance Team
DOA – U.S. Department of Agriculture
DOE – U.S. Department of Energy
DOI – U.S. Department of Interior
DOJ – U.S. Department of Justice
DOL – U.S. Department of Labor
DOT – U.S. Department of Transportation
DOW – U.S. Department of War (formerly U.S. Department of Defense)
DHS – U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EOC – Emergency Operations Center
ESBD - Emergency Services Branch Director
ESF – Emergency Support Function
FCO – Federal Coordinating Officer
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency
GSA – U.S. General Services Administration
HHS – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
ICP – Incident Command Post
IOF – Interim Operational Facility
IMAT – Incident Management Assistance Team
ISB – Incident Support Basecamp
JFO – Joint Field Office
NIMS – National Incident Management System
NIRT – Nuclear Incident Response Team
NRCC – National Response Coordination Center
NPS – National Park Service
OPA – Overall Primary Agency
OSHA – Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PA – Participating Agency (of a task force)
PAC – Participating Agency Chief
POA – Point of Arrival
PSMA - Prescripted Mission Assignment
RRCC – Regional Resource Coordination Center
SA – Sponsoring Agency (of a task force)
SAC – Sponsoring Agency Chief
SARCOP – Search and Rescue Common Operating Platform
SARI – Search and Rescue Intelligence
SARIG – Search and Rescue Intelligence Group
SEOC – State Emergency Operations Center
SLTT – State, Local, Tribal and Territorial
System – The National Urban Search & Rescue System

T&MCG – Transportation and Mobilization Coordination Group
TFR – Task Force Representative
US&R – Urban Search & Rescue
USACE – U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
USCG – U.S. Coast Guard
USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS – U.S. Forest Service
USNORTHCOM – U.S. Northern Command
USPACOM – U.S. Pacific Command