

## Emergency Support Function #9 – Search and Rescue Annex

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### ESF Coordinator:

Department of Homeland Security/  
Federal Emergency Management Agency

### Primary Agencies:

Department of Homeland Security/  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Department of Homeland Security/  
U.S. Coast Guard  
Department of the Interior/National Park  
Service  
Department of Defense

### Support Agencies:

Department of Agriculture  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Defense  
Department of Health and Human  
Services  
Department of Homeland Security  
Department of the Interior  
Department of Justice  
Department of Labor  
Department of Transportation  
National Aeronautics and Space  
Administration  
U.S. Agency for International  
Development

## INTRODUCTION

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### Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Search and Rescue (SAR) deploys Federal SAR resources to provide lifesaving assistance to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities, including local SAR Coordinators and Mission Coordinators, when there is an actual or anticipated request for Federal SAR assistance.

### Scope

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During incidents or potential incidents requiring a unified SAR response, Federal SAR responsibilities reside with ESF #9 primary agencies 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:

**Structural Collapse Urban Search and Rescue (US&R):** includes operations for natural and manmade disasters and catastrophic incidents, as well as other structural collapse operations that primarily require Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) US&R task force operations.

**Maritime/Coastal/Waterborne SAR:** includes operations for natural and manmade disasters that primarily require air, cutter, boat, and response team operations.

**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.

SAR services include distress monitoring; incident communications; locating distressed personnel; and coordinating and executing rescue operations, including extrication and/or evacuation as well as providing medical assistance and civilian services through the use of public and private resources to assist persons and property in potential or

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actual distress. No provision of this annex is to be construed as an obstruction to prompt and effective action by any agency to assist persons in distress.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO THE WHOLE COMMUNITY**

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This section describes how ESF #9 relates to other elements of the whole community.

#### **Local, State, Tribal, Territorial, and Insular Area Governments**

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Local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities are responsible for SAR within their respective jurisdictions and typically designate a SAR Coordinator to provide integration and coordination of all SAR services.

If an affected local, state, tribal, territorial, or insular area government publishes guidance or a plan for conducting unified SAR operations, that guidance or plan takes precedence.

The affected state requests state-to-state assistance through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Other local SAR resources are requested by the affected locality through other mutual aid and assistance agreements. Non-Federal SAR resources are, as appropriate, incorporated into any coordinated SAR operations.

Federal SAR responders assist and support local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area SAR capabilities for incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

#### **Federal Government**

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Specific information on Federal Government actions is described in the following sections.

### **CORE CAPABILITES AND ACTIONS**

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#### **ESF Roles Aligned to Core Capabilities**

The following table lists the response core capability that ESF #9 most directly supports along with the related ESF #9 actions. Though not listed in the table, all ESFs, including ESF #9, support the following core capabilities: Planning, Operational Coordination, and Public Information and Warning.

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Core Capability	ESF #9 – Search and Rescue
<p><b>Mass Search and Rescue Operations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activates when an incident is anticipated or occurs and may result in a request for a unified SAR response to an affected area.</li> <li>• Federal SAR responders assist and support local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area SAR capabilities in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response. No provision of this annex is to be construed as an obstruction to prompt and effective action by any agency to assist persons in distress.</li> <li>• Meets the specific needs of each incident and is scalable based upon the nature and magnitude of the event, the suddenness of onset, and the capability of local SAR resources. Response resources are drawn from ESF #9 primary and support agencies.</li> <li>• Conducts operations following the National Response Framework (NRF) and National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP), U.S. National SAR Supplement (NSS), Catastrophic Incident SAR (CISAR) Addendum, and other addenda that defines SAR responsibilities and provides guidance to the Federal departments and agencies with civil SAR mandates.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP):</b> The NSP is the policy guidance of the signatory Federal departments and agencies for coordinating SAR services to meet domestic needs and international commitments.</li> <li>– <b>National SAR Supplement (NSS):</b> This document provides implementation guidance on the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual and the NSP.</li> <li>– <b>Catastrophic Incident SAR (CISAR) Addendum to the NSS:</b> This document provides a description of the unified SAR response to catastrophic incidents, guides Federal authorities involved in the response, and informs local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities on what to expect of/from Federal SAR responders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Operates under the Economy Act<sup>1</sup> when there is no Stafford Act declaration.</li> <li>• Assesses the specific SAR requirements and assigns one of the four primary agencies as the overall primary agency for SAR for that particular incident. Designation is dependent upon incident circumstances and the type of response required.</li> <li>• Conducts the following actions when assigned as the overall primary agency for a particular incident:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coordinates planning and operations between primary and support agencies.</li> <li>– Coordinates resolution of conflicting operational demands for SAR response resources.</li> <li>– Provides representation to appropriate incident facilities (i.e., National Response Coordination Center [NRCC], Regional Response Coordination Center [RRCC], Joint Field Office [JFO], emergency operations centers [EOCs]).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All ESF #9 primary agencies provide support to the designated overall primary agency as required.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> 31 U.S.C. 1535-1536 (2007): This act authorizes Federal departments and agencies to provide goods or services on a reimbursable basis to other Federal departments and agencies.

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### Agency Actions

Primary Agency	Actions
<p><b>Department of Homeland Security (DHS)</b></p>	<p><b>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves as the overall primary agency to accomplish the ESF #9 mission during structural collapse SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.</li> <li>• Conducts the following actions when DHS/FEMA is designated the overall primary agency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Manages US&amp;R task force and Incident Support Team (IST) deployments in the affected area.</li> <li>– Coordinates logistical support for US&amp;R assets during field operations.</li> <li>– Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.</li> <li>– Provides representation, as required, at the NRCC, JFO, and local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area EOCs.</li> <li>– Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.</li> <li>– Coordinates with local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federally designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• US&amp;R includes operations for natural and manmade disasters and catastrophic incidents, as well as other structural collapse operations that primarily require DHS/FEMA US&amp;R task force operations.</li> <li>• The National US&amp;R Response System integrates DHS/FEMA US&amp;R task forces, Incident Support Teams (IST), and technical specialists.</li> <li>• The Federal US&amp;R response integrates DHS/FEMA task forces in support of unified SAR operations conducted following the NSP.</li> <li>• Develops national US&amp;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.</li> <li>• The National US&amp;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 who are trained and experienced in collapsed structure SAR operations and possess specialized expertise and equipment.</li> <li>• Upon activation under the NRF, DHS/FEMA US&amp;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.</li> </ul>

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Primary Agency	Actions
DHS (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISTs provide coordination and logistical support to US&amp;R task forces during emergency operations. They also conduct needs assessments and provide technical advice and assistance to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area government emergency managers.</li> <li>• Reimburses the parent sponsoring agencies for US&amp;R task forces for authorized US&amp;R deployments. DHS/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&amp;R deployments, the Federal department or agency requesting US&amp;R assistance reimburses DHS/FEMA following provisions contained in the Financial Management Support Annex. DHS/FEMA uses the funding provided by the requesting Federal department or agency to reimburse the sponsoring agency for the task forces.</li> <li>• Conducts ESF #9 SAR operations for incidents where DHS/FEMA is the overall primary agency and follows the National US&amp;R Response System manuals, NSP, NSS, and CISAR Addendum.</li> <li>• Works under the following authorities when performing US&amp;R: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as amended): 6 U.S.C. 722:</b> This section codified US&amp;R as a system within DHS/FEMA. “There is in the Agency a system known as the Urban Search and Rescue Response System.”</li> <li>– <b>Stafford Act: 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207:</b> This act authorizes the President (assisted by DHS/FEMA) to declare major disasters and emergencies in the United States and provide assistance to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments. The President may use the services of local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments for the purposes of the act, which includes addressing immediate threats to life and property (e.g., SAR operations).</li> <li>– <b>Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act: P.L. 109-295 (2006):</b> This act expands the scope of ESF #9 from only US&amp;R to include all types of SAR activities. Follow-on Congressional guidance established the organizational structure. It codified US&amp;R as a system within DHS/FEMA in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as amended). It also mandated DHS/FEMA to develop a Federal response capability to rapidly and effectively deliver assistance essential to saving lives; protecting property or public health and safety; and carrying out the mission of DHS/FEMA by conducting emergency operations to save lives and property.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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Primary Agency	Actions
DHS (continued)	<p><b>U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves as the overall primary agency to accomplish the ESF #9 mission during maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.</li> <li>• Conducts SAR operations for incidents where DHS/USCG is the overall primary agency and follows the SAR response structure as outlined in the NSP, NSS, CISAR Addendum, USCG SAR Addendum, and other DHS/USCG directives.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Uses staffing at Area, District, and local Sector Command Centers promotes interagency coordination with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area emergency managers during incidents requiring a unified SAR response in which maritime/coastal/waterborne SAR resources allocation are required.</li> <li>• Develops, establishes, maintains, and operates rescue facilities under and over the high seas and waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States consistent with 14 U.S.C. 2.</li> <li>• Performs any and all acts necessary to rescue and aid persons, as well as protect and save property in order to render aid to distressed persons, vessels, and aircraft on and under the high seas and on waters over which the United States has jurisdiction per 14 U.S.C. 88.</li> <li>• Performs any and all acts necessary to render aid to persons and protect and save property imperiled by flood, and may also render aid to persons and protect and save property at any time and at any place at which Coast Guard facilities and personnel are available and can be effectively utilized per 14 U.S.C. 88.</li> <li>• Conducts the following actions when USCG is designated the overall primary agency for incidents:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Manages DHS/USCG SAR resources in the affected area.</li> <li>– Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.</li> <li>– Coordinates with local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area and Federally designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.</li> <li>– Provides representation, as required, at the NRCC, JFO, and local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area EOCs.</li> <li>– Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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Primary Agency	Actions
<p><b>Department of Interior (DOI)</b></p>	<p><b>National Park Service (NPS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shares responsibility with the Department of Defense (DOD) as the overall primary agency for a particular incident to accomplish the ESF #9 mission during land SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.</li> <li>• Conducts ESF #9 SAR operations for incidents where DOI/NPS and/or DOD are the overall primary agency and follows the SAR response structure as outlined in the NSP, NSS, CISAR Addendum, and other relevant DOI/NPS and DOD SAR procedures, directives, and manuals.</li> <li>• Possesses 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.</li> <li>• Conducts the following actions when DOI/NPS is designated the overall primary agency for incidents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Manages DOI/NPS land SAR resources in the affected area.</li> <li>– Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.</li> <li>– Coordinates with local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federally designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.</li> <li>– Coordinates logistical support for DOI/NPS resources during field operations.</li> <li>– Provides representation, as required, at the NRCC, JFO, and local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area EOCs.</li> <li>– Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assumes authority to provide emergency rescue, firefighting, and cooperative assistance to public safety agencies for related purposes outside of the National Park System.</li> </ul>

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Primary Agency	Actions
<p><b>Department of Defense (DOD)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shares responsibility with DOI/NPS as the overall primary agency for accomplishing the ESF #9 mission during land SAR operations in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.</li> <li>• Conducts the following actions through U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) when DOD is designated the overall primary agency for incidents:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Manages DOD SAR resources in the affected area.</li> <li>– Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.</li> <li>– Coordinates with local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federally designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.</li> <li>– Provides representation, as required, at the NRCC, JFO, and local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area EOCs.</li> <li>– Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Considers specific actions for operations involving DOD:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coordinates facilities, resources, and special capabilities that conduct and support air, land, and maritime SAR operations according to applicable directives, plans, guidelines, and agreements, when requested by USNORTHCOM and/or USPACOM.</li> <li>– USNORTHCOM and USPACOM provide resources for the organization and coordination of civil SAR services and operations within their assigned SAR regions when requested to assist local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal authorities.</li> <li>– If DOD SAR capabilities deploy at the direction of the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center in support of the NSP, and subsequently if the Stafford Act is invoked, those capabilities are administered by the NRF and ESF #9. As soon as practical, a DHS/FEMA or other department/agency mission assignment is submitted to and approved by DOD for those capabilities' continued support.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provides DOD policy guidance on the following items:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>DOD Support to Civil Search and Rescue (DODI 3003.01):</b> States that DOD shall support domestic civil authorities by providing civil SAR service to the fullest extent practicable on a noninterference basis with primary military duties.</li> <li>– <b>Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DODD 3025.18):</b> Provides guidance on the provision of DOD and designated National Guard capabilities when requested by civil authorities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Support Agency	Actions
<p><b>Department of Agriculture</b></p>	<p><b>United States Forest Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops standby agreements to provide equipment and supplies from the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) Cache System at the time of deployment.</li> <li>• Develops contingency plans for use of NIFC contract aircraft during incidents.</li> <li>• If available, provides equipment and supplies from the NIFC Cache System and use of NIFC contract aircraft.</li> </ul>



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Support Agency	Actions
<b>Department of Commerce</b>	<p><b>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquires and disseminates weather data, forecasts, and emergency information.</li> <li>• Provides weather information essential for efficient SAR.</li> <li>• Predicts pollutant movement and dispersion over time (marine and atmospheric).</li> <li>• Assesses areas of greatest hazard following a marine or atmospheric release.</li> <li>• Provides satellite services for detecting and locating persons in potential or actual distress in the wilderness, maritime, and aeronautical environments.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Defense (DOD)</b>	<p><b>National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates and manages the timely tasking, acquisition, analysis, and delivery of satellite imagery or imagery-derived products as directed by the primary agency.</li> <li>• Provides expert analysis of imagery to determine damage levels and other elements of essential information as needed.</li> <li>• Provides technical expertise/analysis from other imagery sources, if such expertise resides within DOD/NGA.</li> <li>• Provides mobile geospatial intelligence, including technical experts (e.g., imagery analysts and geospatial analysts) and robust communications to support SAR field teams or other DHS/FEMA field teams, as requested by the primary agency.</li> <li>• Provides imagery-derived and geospatial intelligence analysis in preparation for potential disasters or emergencies.</li> <li>• Coordinates the release and dissemination of DOD/NGA products and/or data following applicable security classifications, licensing, copyright agreements, and limited distribution restrictions.</li> </ul> <p><b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deploys specially trained and equipped structural engineers to augment DHS/FEMA US&amp;R task forces, ISTs, military technical rescue organizations, and general purpose troops during structural collapse incidents and other disaster response missions.</li> <li>• Provides technical support for rescue engineering capability and advises task force leaders and commanders to assess damage, mitigate hazards, enable safe entry, and assure mobility throughout a disaster site to enable rescue and lifesaving operations.</li> <li>• Develops doctrine, training programs, and national standards for structural collapse response operations; conducts initial training courses, advanced coursework, exercises and continuing education for all DHS/FEMA US&amp;R Structures Specialists, and other organizations requiring this capability.</li> <li>• Maintains specialized, pre-positioned, deployable equipment caches to support US&amp;R/Disaster Response operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Health and Human Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides personnel for liaisons and support for medical field operations; medical equipment, supplies, and pharmaceuticals; and veterinary support.</li> </ul>

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Support Agency	Actions
<b>Department of Homeland Security</b>	<p><b>Customs and Border Protection (CBP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue (BORSTAR) teams, which are highly specialized units capable of responding to emergency SAR situations anywhere in the United States.</li> <li>• Maintains air and marine assets to support SAR transportation operations.</li> <li>• Manages DHS/CBP SAR resources in the affected area.</li> <li>• Coordinates the provisioning of additional support assets.</li> <li>• Coordinates with local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area and Federally designated SAR authorities to integrate Federal SAR resources.</li> <li>• Provides representation, as required, at the NRCC, JFO, and local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area EOCs.</li> <li>• Provides incident reports, assessments, and situation reports as required.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of the Interior</b>	<p><b>U.S. Geological Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides personnel with appropriate technical disciplines and specialized technology to support geospatial analysis and mapping products in support of ESF #9 primary agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates force protection as requested and approved pursuant to the ESF #13 mission.</li> <li>• Provides assistance with the development and maintenance of tort liability claims coverage for US&amp;R task force and IST personnel engaged in mobilization, deployment, and field operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Labor</b>	<p><b>The Mine Safety and Health Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides mine rescue teams, mobile command centers, seismic location systems, TV probe systems, gas sampling analysis, and robot explorers.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Department of Labor Office of Workers' Compensation Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through its Federal Employees' Compensation Program, provides workers compensation guidance, claims resolution, and coverage for US&amp;R task force and IST personnel while they are engaged in mobilization, deployment, and field operations.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Occupational Safety and Health Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements procedures contained in the Worker Safety and Health Support Annex to provide onsite technical assistance, including the evaluation of SAR team exposure to hazardous substances and the dangers of structural collapse.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Transportation</b>	<p><b>Federal Aviation Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumes sole authority to manage the National Airspace System (NAS), which includes operating a safe, secure, and efficient air traffic system; oversight and certification of aircraft and airmen; regulation of airspace; promotion of air commerce; and the support of America's national defense (49 U.S.C.).</li> <li>• Supports activities to protect and recover NAS operations.</li> </ul>

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Support Agency	Actions
<b>National Aeronautics and Space Administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides personnel in appropriate technical disciplines (e.g., Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team).</li><li>• Provides temporary use of facilities for mobilization centers and staging areas for SAR assets.</li></ul>
<b>U.S. Agency for International Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manages the support of international SAR teams to a domestic U.S. disaster following a Stafford Act Declaration under the International Assistance System Concept of Operations (IAS CONOPS) and in support of the NRF's International Coordination Support Annex.</li></ul>
<b>Department of State</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Designates the State Task Force (STF) as the sole entity within the Department of State responsible for coordinating formal offers of international assistance if DHS/FEMA does not activate the IAS CONOPS and proactive offers of assistance from foreign countries or international/multilateral organizations are received.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– If the STF has not been established, a lead bureau or the Operations Center's Crisis Management Support (CMS) office is designated.</li><li>– Requests all offers be forwarded to the STF (or the lead bureau or CMS office, as appropriate) for dispensation.</li></ul></li></ul>

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