

# Richland County Emergency Operations Plan

## ESF 9: SEARCH AND RESCUE

**Primary Agency:** Jurisdiction Having Authority

**Supporting Agencies:** Richland County EMA  
Jurisdiction Fire Departments  
Jurisdiction Law Enforcement Agencies  
Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)  
Ohio Special Response Team (OSRT)  
Ohio Search and Rescue Team (Ohio SAR)  
Civil Air Patrol

### 1. PURPOSE

This ESF establishes guidelines for Richland County’s response to incidents involving search and rescue (SAR). These incidents involve trapped or missing persons as a result of structural collapse, industrial accidents, or natural or human-caused disasters. Search and rescue operations include, but are not limited to, technical rescue operations including confined space, rope, and other specialized types of rescue that require advanced equipment and training beyond normal firefighting operations, water rescue, and wide-area search.

### 2. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

#### a. Situation

- i. SAR operations can be necessary following a variety of incidents, including industrial accidents, vehicle/transportation incidents, structural collapse, and others.
- ii. Richland County is home to multiple major transportation systems, including interstate and state highways, railroads, airports, and pipelines. These systems can be vulnerable to incidents that would require a SAR response.
- iii. Industrial facilities can be prone to accidents that involve heavy machinery and confined spaces, which can result in the entrapment of workers. Richland County has multiple facilities where these incidents could occur.

- iv. Critical infrastructure, such as utility systems, water/wastewater treatment systems, roadways, bridges, etc. require ongoing maintenance and repair to remain functional. This work can create risk for trench collapse, confined space incidents, and others requiring SAR operations.

b. Assumptions

- i. SAR incidents may occur in areas with limited access due to rough or remote terrain. Specialized resources, including all-terrain vehicles, water rescue equipment, canine search animals, air operations equipment, and others.
- ii. SAR operations may require responders to enter dangerous environments such as, but not limited to, trenches, confined spaces, remote areas, bodies of water, and disaster scenes.
- iii. SAR may be conducted during day or night hours or under extreme weather conditions. In some cases, operations may be suspended when environmental conditions create an unsafe environment for rescuers or otherwise impede the search operation.
- iv. SAR operations may attract volunteers and community members who wish to help. With coordination, these individuals can be utilized in roles appropriate to their capability. Incident Command will organize and utilize untrained or spontaneous volunteers to support SAR operations, as they are able.

### 3. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

a. General

- i. The Jurisdiction Having Authority (JHA) will serve as the primary agency for SAR and will work closely with the EMA and other supporting agencies to coordinate search and rescue operations. Depending on the specific type of SAR operation, fire departments or law enforcement agencies will be heavily involved and may serve as the primary agency on behalf of the JHA.
- ii. SAR operations include the following response areas:
  - 1. Collapse search and rescue
  - 2. Confined space rescue

3. Rope rescue
  4. Trench rescue
  5. Water rescue
  6. Wide area search
- iii. The need for SAR response may be first identified through an emergency call through the county's 9-1-1 system. Dispatchers will dispatch the most appropriate response agencies based on the information received on the call.
  - iv. If the need for SAR is not apparent from the initial call, the first responding agencies will request additional resources based upon their assessment of the scene.
  - v. Incident command should be established quickly; this can be a single command or a unified command. This decision should be based on the specific incident. If a criminal act is suspected, law enforcement should be included in the command structure. Fire officials should be part of command any time life safety or property conservation is a priority.
  - vi. The Incident Commander (IC) will establish incident priorities. The EMA Director and others may be consulted in the establishment of those priorities.
  - vii. The EOC can be opened to assist with obtaining and organizing resources.

b. Relationship Between Levels of Government

- i. SAR operations can involve significant numbers of responders and various levels of government. Local jurisdictions will assume command of the scene. Resources from outside the Jurisdiction Having Authority (JHA) will fill roles in the operation as requested and assigned.
- ii. The county has mutual aid agreements in place through the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, Ohio Chiefs of Police, Buckeye Sheriffs Association and others; these agreements may be utilized to request additional resources from agencies in the region or state.
- iii. If the situation warrants and by request of the county, the Ohio EMA may provide resources to support operation, such as communication and public information support and other resources.

- iv. Local, regional, and statewide agencies may have resources available to assist with operations. These resources can be requested through the local and state EOC.

- c. Phases of Emergency Management

- i. Mitigation

- 1. Maintain SAR policies and procedures, equipment, personnel rosters, and training.
    - 2. Improve public awareness of the proper care for populations prone to becoming lost or missing. This could include promoting placement of door alarms in long-term care facilities, day care facilities, and other places where vulnerable populations are present as a means of notification when individuals attempt to leave.

- ii. Preparedness

- 1. Conduct regular SAR training and exercises for responders.
    - 2. Procure and maintain appropriate equipment, such as thermal imaging, sonar, technical rescue equipment, and transportation vehicles that may be needed.
    - 3. Regularly assess Richland County's risk for SAR responses to ensure adequate and appropriate resource allocation.

- iii. Response

- 1. Develop and maintain a rapid and efficient process for deploying SAR resources to maximize efficiency.
    - 2. Respond to requests for SAR resources and coordination when requested by incident command.
    - 3. Engage in multi-agency coordination and provide staffing to the EOC when activated.

iv. Recovery

1. Provide critical incident stress management to all responders, departments, and volunteers involved.
2. Conduct remedial training and review all operations to identify best practices and lessons learned so that improvement can be achieved in the post-incident mitigation and preparedness phases.

**4. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY**

a. Jurisdiction Having Authority (JHA)

- i. Serve as ESF lead or appoint an alternate agency to fill that role, depending on the specific incident.
- ii. Respond to resource and coordination requests from on-scene command.
- iii. Coordinate preparedness for search and rescue capacity with local first responder agencies prior to any incident.
- iv. Coordinate the EOC communications during an incident and provide communications support to the responding agencies.

b. Richland County EMA

- i. Provide coordination support to JHA.

c. Fire Departments/Law Enforcement Agencies

- i. Provide a representative to the EOC to coordinate search and rescue efforts and serve as the liaison between on-scene operations and the EOC.
- ii. The highest-ranking initial responder will function as the Incident Commander (IC); if/when a higher-ranking department official is available, command can be transferred to that individual.
- iii. When the SAR incident is limited to locating a person for life safety reasons, the fire chief may assume single command. If there is a criminal or civil issue involved in the search, the local police chief or sheriff will participate as part of Unified Command with the fire chief.

d. Volunteer Organizations

- i. Provide personnel to support SAR operations as requested and commensurate with training.

**5. DIRECTION AND CONTROL**

- a. IC will be assumed by the most appropriate local fire or law enforcement official or a combination of those under a Unified Command (UC), as appropriate to the incident.
- b. A Safety Officer should be appointed to address and mitigate risk factors and protect responders from injury. The Safety Officer should advise responders of any risks or special requirements, including equipment, clothing, footwear, sun protection, and other safety items the workers will need.
- c. A Liaison Officer (LNO) should be appointed to coordinate with volunteer organizations (if utilized) from within and outside the county and ensure the appropriate and effective integration and communication of those forces into the overall operation.
- d. A Public Information Officer (PIO) should be appointed to work with the media, and organize the information released to the public in a rapid and effective manner. Mass and social media should be used as support for the operation through prompt notification and update of the general public in the search operation.
- e. Operations should be separated into functional areas and coordinated through the Operations Section Chief. Branches, groups, and divisions may be used to designate search and rescue operations under a single or unified command.
- f. A staging area should be established very early on to receive and assign first responders to the operation.
- g. Volunteer organizations such as OSRT, Ohio SAR, Civil Air Patrol, CERT, MRC, American Red Cross, and others can supply affiliated volunteers who can be utilized throughout the entire Incident Command organization based upon organization or individual capabilities.
- h. If spontaneous volunteers are utilized, a volunteer reception center should be established early on in the operation to provide coordination and organization for volunteers.

- i. A Planning Section should be rapidly implemented to identify and locate any technical specialists needed to advise the operation and plan for resource needs for the coming operational period.
- j. Technical experts should be utilized in the planning section to provide specialized advice when necessary. Any identified special considerations should be immediately conveyed to the Operations Section Chief.
- k. Logistics should consider support of the responders by providing food, hydration, respite care, and first aid or critical stress management services along with communications and equipment support and service.
- l. ARES and other radio emergency services can greatly enhance communication capabilities through full deployment at the various locations of the operation.
- m. The EMA will provide an open and functioning EOC for the dissemination of information, the planning of the operation in future operational periods, and for the purpose of coordinating multiagency response and mass media coverage.

## **6. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS**

- a. Supplies and equipment will be ordered through the EOC and single point ordering unless otherwise determined.
- b. All jurisdictional procurement policies and procedures will be maintained.
- c. Locally available resources are tracked and updated regularly in Richland County's Resource Manual.
- d. The EMA Director, Incident Commander and Command Staff will collaborate to prepare an After Action Report and will review it with all involved parties in a reasonable time frame after the incident closure.
- e. Mutual aid with the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, the Ohio Chiefs of Police, Buckeye State Sheriff's Association, health departments, emergency management agencies, and all other involved parties can be utilized and considered part of the resources for an incident of this type.
- f. Full documentation of resource use should be completed to accurately evaluate the operation for improvement and best practices.

## **7. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ESF**

- a. This ESF requires that SAR training be completed by fire departments, law enforcement, and appropriate volunteer agencies.
- b. Departments and agencies with SAR capabilities are expected to maintain operational procedures to support this function.
- c. Agreements should be established with entities and organizations that can provide specialized services and equipment, including but not limited to:
  - i. Air transport (fixed and rotor wing) equipment and personnel to provide air search capability.
  - ii. Water rescue organizations and departments to assist in water-based and equipment, such as side scan sonar, underwater video, night vision, and thermal imaging equipment.
  - iii. Canine search personnel and equipment.
  - iv. All-terrain vehicles for access to remote areas.
  - v. Specialized heavy rescue equipment.
- d. A mobile command unit will provide on-site physical facilities to aid in command and general staff briefings, planning activities, and communication.

## **8. ADDENDA**

There are no addenda for this ESF.

## **9. AUTHENTICATION**

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Date of Adoption

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Richland County EMA Director