

Illinois Emergency Operations Plan

ESF-9 Search and Rescue

Illinois Emergency Management Agency and
Office of Homeland Security

September 23, 2026



Illinois Emergency Management Agency
and Office of Homeland Security



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State of Illinois Managed Plan Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 Search and Rescue

Title	ESF-9 Search and Rescue	
Managing Division/Branch	Division of Operations	Strategic Planning – Inter-Agency Strategic Planning Cell (ISPC)
Drafted/Evaluated	The ISPC, in coordination with the ESF planning group.	September 2025
Evaluated Against	1. Prior version, if applicable. 2. Federal statutes and regulations. 3. State statutes and administrative codes. 4. Federal, state, and IEMA-OHS policies and directives. 5. National Preparedness Goal 6. National Response Framework 7. NRF Emergency Support Function 1 Annex 8. FEMA Community Lifelines 9. National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) 10. IEMA-OHS policies, plans, and common definitions list. 11. Corrective actions from After-Action Reports (AARs) and real-world events where this ESF was engaged.	
Plan Type	☐ New ☒ Revised	
Branch Manager Review and Approval	Scott Gauvin, Manager of Strategic Operations and Preparedness	July 7, 2026
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Supersedes	August 2021, Search and Rescue Annex 12	



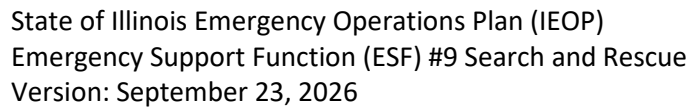
State of Illinois Emergency Operations Plan (IEOP)
Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 Search and Rescue
Version: September 23, 2026

State ESF - 9 Coordinator	Support Agencies & Organizations
Illinois Emergency Management Agency & Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS)	Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Illinois National Guard (ILNG) Illinois State Police (ISP) Office of the State Fire Marshal (OFSM)
Primary State Agencies & Organizations	
Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)	
Federal ESF – 9 Coordinator	
Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	



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When changes are made to this document, the following procedures will be followed:

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

- 1.1.1. Provide strategic and operational guidance on coordinated state-supported Search and Rescue (SAR) operations for air, surface, below-grade, elevated, water, urban, confined space, mass transportation, and contaminated environments.

1.2. Scope

- 1.2.1. This annex addresses parameters for the utilization of SAR capabilities and processes required to obtain resources in support of disaster operations.
- 1.2.2. State-supported operations are scalable and modular based on the scope and magnitude of the event, and the ability of an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to conduct SAR operations.
- 1.2.3. For this annex, the following definitions will apply to the operations required:
 - 1.2.3.1. Air: Utilization of fixed-wing, rotary-wing, or unmanned aerial system (UAS) assets to conduct coordinated SAR operations.
 - 1.2.3.2. Surface: Utilization of resources to conduct coordinated SAR in wide-area, wilderness, and urban environments.
 - 1.2.3.3. Below-grade: Utilization of resources to conduct coordinated SAR in trenches, caves, mines, tunnels, excavations, or sub-surface collapsed structures.
 - 1.2.3.4. Elevated: Utilization of resources to conduct coordinated SAR in high-angle or above-grade environments.
 - 1.2.3.5. Water: Utilization of resources to conduct coordinated SAR in surface, sub-surface, ice, and swift water environments.
 - 1.2.3.6. Urban: Utilization of resources to conduct coordinated SAR in damaged and collapsed structures.
 - 1.2.3.7. Confined space: Utilization of resources to conduct coordinated SAR in permit-required, non-mine and non-cave spaces.
 - 1.2.3.8. Mass transportation: Utilization of resources to conduct coordinated SAR in mass transportation resources, including subway, rail, bus, etc.



- 1.2.3.9. Contaminated environment: Utilization of resources to conduct coordinated SAR operations in impact areas having releases or potential releases of hazardous substances for control, stabilization, and effective rescue.
- 1.2.4. This annex does not address tactics, techniques, or procedures, formal and informal lines of communication, or local integration of SAR resources.
- 1.2.5. This annex does not address the priority of agency utilization.

1.3. Policy

- 1.3.1. Procedures for utilization, control, and use of SAR resources will incorporate and/or consider operational priorities that include but are not limited to:
 - 1.3.1.1. Protection of life.
 - 1.3.1.2. Public health and safety.
 - 1.3.1.3. Property protection.
 - 1.3.1.4. Environmental protection.
 - 1.3.1.5. Restoration of essential utilities.
 - 1.3.1.6. Restoration of essential program functions.
 - 1.3.1.7. Coordination as appropriate.
- 1.3.2. SAR personnel will be trained for assigned missions and made aware of potential risks involved.
- 1.3.3. Upon notification of the potential need for SAR operations, the SEOC will consult SAR subject matter experts on mission requirements and resources.
- 1.3.4. The SEOC Manager or designee will authorize the proactive deployment of SAR Agency Representatives from recognized mobile support teams (MST) appropriate to the event to designated state field locations and Areas of Operation (AO).

1.4. Situation

- 1.4.1. A human-caused, technological, or natural disaster has occurred requiring SAR resources.



- 1.4.2. State-supported SAR resources have been requested.

1.5. Assumptions

- 1.5.1. Survivors will need specialized assistance to be located and extricated.
- 1.5.2. Time to notify, activate, deploy, coordinate, and implement SAR operations is critical to survivor viability.
- 1.5.3. Rapid damage assessment of the disaster area will be required to enable the implementation of SAR operations.
- 1.5.4. Local jurisdiction SAR resources are fully engaged, and capability is exceeded.
- 1.5.5. Local and regional mutual aid SAR resources are fully engaged, and capability is exceeded.
- 1.5.6. State mutual aid SAR resource capabilities will be exceeded in catastrophic events, requiring assistance through emergency assistance compacts or agreements.
- 1.5.7. Federal SAR resources will be available for operations in the state and will operate under the direction of the SEOC and/or AHJ.
- 1.5.8. Impacts on critical infrastructure will directly affect overall SAR capabilities.
- 1.5.9. State SAR resources will be activated in advance of county and municipal requests for life safety missions and staging.

2. Concept of Operations

2.1. General

- 2.1.1. IEMA-OHS will develop agreements, memorandums of understanding, and procedures to support the conduct of search and rescue.
- 2.1.2. The SEOC will confirm mobilization center locations and develop initial SAR requirements.
- 2.1.3. MABAS will maintain a cadre of qualified personnel to assist in SAR operations.
- 2.1.4. Select state agencies will maintain a cadre of qualified personnel to assist in SAR operations.



2.2. Notification, Alert, and Warning (NAW)

- 2.2.1. SEOC NAW of SEOC Agency Representatives will be handled in accordance with ESF-2, Appendix X-1, Notification, Alert, and Warning.
- 2.2.2. Primary and support agencies are responsible for internal and external partner NAW.
- 2.2.3. Upon notification of an ongoing SAR mission, the SEOC Manager will verify the exact needs of the requesting local jurisdiction and contact the appropriate SEOC Liaison for the SAR operation.
- 2.2.4. Depending on the nature of the search, IEMA-OHS will contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Region V, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 9 representatives, or the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC).
- 2.2.5. Federal assets responding to a SAR mission in the state will notify the SEOC of their assets, capabilities, limitations, special requirements, and estimated time of arrival.

2.3. Activation

- 2.3.1. The SEOC will provide support for SAR coordination and management efforts through the activation of state agency personnel and Mobile Support Teams (MST).
- 2.3.2. Upon activation of the State Unified Area Command (SUAC), the SEOC Manager may assign coordination and management of SAR resources to the State Unified Area Commander for implementation of SAR requirements.
- 2.3.3. SEOC SOP Management and Coordination will be used to determine staffing levels necessary for SAR coordination.

2.4. Communications

- 2.4.1. Communications will be conducted in accordance with standard operating procedures and managed using established procedures, processes, and policies outlined in ESF 2, Communications.
- 2.4.2. Communications will be conducted in a National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliant manner utilizing clear-text and frequencies coordinated with the SEOC.



2.5. Resource Management

- 2.5.1. Resource management includes mutual aid and assistance agreements, the use of federal and state teams, and resource mobilization protocols.

2.6. Reporting Requirements

- 2.6.1. SEOC information, intelligence, and situation reporting will be conducted in accordance with SEOC Situation and Rapid Needs Assessment Standard Operating Guidelines.
- 2.6.2. Upon activation of the SEOC, all Agency Representatives having a role in SAR activities will compile and disseminate situational reports on SAR capabilities and services.

2.7. Organization

2.7.1 Direction and Control

- 2.7.1.1. State agencies and activated resources retain operational control of their resources.
- 2.7.1.2. The SEOC is the single point of coordination for state support of SAR operations.
- 2.7.1.3. The SEOC Manager or designee may coordinate the use of county or local jurisdiction resources assigned missions and tasking for SAR operations when so authorized or requested.
- 2.7.1.4. The SEOC will support the organizational structures and support assets and mission bases for SAR missions or operations approved by the SEOC Manager.

2.7.2 Coordinating Elements

- 2.7.2.1 State-deployed SAR resources will coordinate with the SEOC and on-scene incident commander.
 - 2.7.2.1.1 In support of local and state SAR operations, Agency Representatives may be assigned under the direct coordination and management of state-activated resources.



- 2.7.2.2 State Unified Area Command (SUAC) and State Area Command (SAC) elements may be deployed by the SEOC to coordinate information and resource requirements for SAR operations.
- 2.7.2.3 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Incident Support Teams (IST) may be deployed to support SUAC operations.
- 2.7.2.4 One or more Lines of Effort (LOE) Coordination Teams may be implemented by the SEOC for specific strategic action planning for SAR operations.
- 2.7.2.5 Coordination between private sector organizations and state-activated SAR organizations will be maintained through the SEOC and Business Emergency Operations Center (BEOC).

2.7.3 Federal Coordination

- 2.7.3.1. The SEOC will coordinate the inclusion of federal assets into state SAR operations.
- 2.7.3.2. SEOC Agency Representatives, state agencies, boards, and commissions will coordinate with federal counterparts in accordance with enabling authority to collect, receive, compile, and develop situational reports on SAR operations.
- 2.7.3.3. The SEOC will coordinate with and provide information to the US&R Program Manager at FEMA, including requests for the required number of Federally Sponsored US&R Task Forces and ISTs.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. State ESF Coordinator

3.1.1 Illinois Emergency Management Agency & Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS)

- 3.1.1.1. Coordinate the utilization of required ESF-9 support to execute missions presented by the SEOC Manager.
- 3.1.1.2. Coordinates, integrates, and manages overall State efforts involving the collecting, analyzing, planning, reporting, and displaying of information.



- 3.1.1.3. Manages and updates resources and availability for all agencies assigned to ESF-9.
- 3.1.1.4. Assist in planning during activations and updates to the overall ESF-9 plan.
- 3.1.1.5. Serve as a coordination point for state-activated SAR resources.
- 3.1.1.6. Coordinate with local jurisdictions and SEOC Agency Representatives on SAR requests.
- 3.1.1.7. Coordinate notification and activation of SAR resources for approved operations.
- 3.1.1.8. Identify the availability of external SAR resources.
- 3.1.1.9. Assist in providing technical SAR assistance and expertise to local jurisdictions.
- 3.1.1.10. Coordinate and manage SUAC/SAC staffing necessary to meet SAR operations.
- 3.1.1.11. Coordinate sustainment of state-activated SAR operations.
- 3.1.1.12. Assist in planning during activation and updates to the overall ESF plan.

3.2. Primary State Agency/Organization

3.2.1 Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)

- 3.2.1.1. Provide manpower and resources for USAR operations.
- 3.2.1.2. Assist in the coordination of SAR efforts.
- 3.2.1.3. Coordinate the use of MABAS and/or fire agency UAS to support SAR operations.
- 3.2.1.4. Coordinate and manage SAR mobile support teams.
- 3.2.1.5. Maintain and coordinate Illinois Task Force 1 in support of state SAR operations.



3.3. Support State Agencies/Organizations

3.3.1 Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

- 3.3.1.1. Assist with applicable state agencies in determining transportation requirements, routes, and available assets for the movement of SAR assets and US&R Task Forces in the impacted area.
- 3.3.1.2. Provide inspection and/or repair of critical transportation routes on state and federal highways. Provide air assets and personnel to conduct limited SAR operations and assessment missions, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments. Assist in the selection and coordination of identified airports for mobilization centers, assembly, or staging areas.

3.3.2 Illinois National Guard (ILNG)

- 3.3.2.1 Provide coordination support for logistical sustainment, transportation, and communications to enable SAR operations in affected areas.
- 3.3.2.2 Deploy and support aviation assets and qualified personnel to conduct search, rescue, reconnaissance, and transportation operations, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.2.3 Support the establishment and operation of disaster search bases, assembly areas, and staging areas in coordination with SAR mission requirements, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.2.4 Augment local response with equipment and personnel to conduct technical rescue support, including heavy rescue, shoring, and debris clearance, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.



- 3.3.2.5 Provide security forces and facilitate operational coordination within the SAR area of operations (AO), in support of unified command efforts.

3.3.3 Illinois State Police (ISP)

- 3.3.3.1 Coordinate with applicable SEOC Agency Representatives to identify the need for and, if needed, provide security to areas of SAR operations.
- 3.3.3.2 If available, provide aircraft and aircrews to conduct search and assessment operations and transport officials involved in SAR operations, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.3.3 If available, provide aircraft and/or unmanned aerial systems (UAS), in accordance with the Freedom from Drone Surveillance Act, for aerial surveillance, video, photography, video downlink, and forward infrared heat sensing devices, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.3.4 Coordinate with applicable SEOC Agency Representatives to provide law enforcement support for SAR efforts, including rural and urban locations.
- 3.3.3.5 Assist with mapping and analysis of buildings and property.

3.3.4 Office of the State Fire Marshal (OFSM)

- 3.3.4.4. Provide technical assistance in the field for USAR operations involving underground and above-ground storage tanks or elevators.

3.3.5. Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

- 3.3.5.5. Provide personnel, four-wheel drive trucks, boats, and special-purpose vehicles to support SAR operations, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.



- 3.3.5.6. Provide Mine Rescue Station personnel and equipment.
- 3.3.5.7. Provide manpower teams to utilize during SAR operations.

4. Authorities

- 1. IEMA Act, 20 ILCS 3305, as amended.
- 2. State of Illinois MST Agreements, as amended.
- 3. State of Illinois and MABAS Memorandum of Understanding, as amended.

5. References

- 1. EMAP USAR Standard, as amended.
- 2. National Urban SAR Response System Description Manual, as amended.
- 3. MABAS Staff Reference Field Operations Guide, as amended.
- 4. Urban SAR Response System Field Operations Guide, as amended.
- 5. National Urban SAR Response System Operational Systems Description and Mission Operational Procedures, as amended.
- 6. NIMS Resource Typing, SAR, as amended.
- 7. NFPA 1670 Standard on Operations and Training for Technical SAR Incidents, as amended.
- 8. NFPA 1006 Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications, as amended.
- 9. International SAR Advisory Group (INSARAG), as amended.
- 10. State Urban Search and Rescue Alliance (SUSAR) K9.

6. Acronyms & Definitions

- 1. For all definitions and acronyms addressed in this plan, please refer to the IEOP Base Plan, Appendix X-7 Glossary of Terms.