

Illinois Emergency Operations Plan

ESF-9 Search and Rescue

Appendix X-1 Urban 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 Appendix X-1 Urban Search and Rescue		
Title	ESF-9 Search and Rescue Appendix X-1 Urban Search and Rescue	
Managing Division/Branch	Division of Operations	Strategic Planning – Inter-Agency Strategic Planning Cell (ISPC)
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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 # 9 Annex 8. FEMA Community Lifelines 9. National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDF) 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.	
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State ESF - 9 Coordinator	Support Agencies & Organizations
Illinois Emergency Management Agency & Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS)	Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) 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 (OSFM)
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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Record of Changes

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

1. Changes will be issued by the Inter-Agency Strategic Planning Cell at IEMA-OHS and transmitted to agencies, personnel, and other designees specified by the IEMA-OHS Director or designee via electronic means.
2. When a change is made, an entry will be made in the following log:

CHANGE NUMBER	DATE ENTERED	PAGES OR SECTIONS CHANGED	ENTERED BY
1	September 2025	Bi-annual Review	Glenn Smith



1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

- 1.1.1. Provide operational guidance, coordinating processes, and strategies for implementation of state-activated Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) resources.

1.2. Scope

- 1.2.1. This appendix addresses support for USAR resources activated through the utilization of mutual aid agreements and mobile support teams.
- 1.2.2. This appendix addresses urban search and rescue throughout response and short-, intermediate-, and long-term recovery.
- 1.2.3. This appendix does not address fire service, damage assessment, and disaster intelligence processes.

1.3. Policy

- 1.3.1. The governor or designee will authorize and direct the use of state resources and the activation of mutual aid agreements to provide support and assistance to response and recovery efforts after consideration of both priority and cost.
- 1.3.2. Local governments have primary responsibility for conducting and completing urban search and rescue operations.
- 1.3.3. The SEOC will approve and direct the use of USAR resources:
 - 1.3.3.1. USAR configurations will be determined by the SEOC based on the scope and magnitude of the event, state capability and capacity, and operational priorities.
 - 1.3.3.2. USAR may be augmented using state-recognized Mobile Support Teams (MSTs), the private sector, or other resources.

1.4. Situation

- 1.4.1. An emergency or disaster has occurred resulting in significant damage to critical infrastructure, private residences, or public property.



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- 1.4.2. Local AHJ and the private sector have requested assistance in conducting urban search and rescue missions.

1.5. Assumptions

- 1.5.1. Impacted areas are accessible.
- 1.5.2. Damage assessment information will be provided by a variety of sources and guide urban search and rescue operations.
- 1.5.3. Information provided through the local AHJ will require confirmation from USAR specialists.
- 1.5.4. Mutual aid assistance at all levels will be available.
- 1.5.5. Just-in-time training (JITT) will be required.
- 1.5.6. State urban search and rescue operations will not be dependent on federal response posture.

2. Concept of Operations

2.1. General

- 2.1.1. Requests for assistance in conducting urban search and rescue missions will be directed through the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).
- 2.1.2. Primary and support agency SEOC Agency Representatives will identify situational considerations affecting urban search and rescue operations.
- 2.1.3. USAR resources will follow recognized and identified standards, criteria, and practices.
- 2.1.4. Operations conducted by USAR are implemented and sustained through existing command, control, coordination, and communications processes.
- 2.1.5. Urban search and rescue support approved by the state is based on resource availability, capability, and prioritization of effort.
- 2.1.6. USAR resource shortfalls will be met through the activation of mutual aid and contractual agreements and utilization of available, trained, and certified resources approved by the SEOC or designee.



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- 2.1.7. USAR resource personnel will be trained for assigned missions and made aware of potential risks involved.
- 2.1.8. Implementation of urban search and rescue operations is contingent upon safe and secure access to impact areas.

2.2. Notification, Alert, and Warning (NAW)

- 2.2.1. SEOC NAW of SEOC Agency Representatives will be handled in accordance with IEOP 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 USAR mission, the SEOC Manager will verify the exact needs of the requesting local jurisdiction and contact the appropriate SEOC representative for the USAR 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 USAR 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 USAR coordination and management efforts through the activation of state agency personnel and Mobile Support Teams (MST).
 - 2.3.1.1. 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.
- 2.3.2. SEOC SOP Management and Coordination will be used to determine staffing levels necessary for USAR 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 IEOP 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 and logistics will be carried out in accordance with IEOP ESF 7, Logistics.
- 2.5.2. 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 USAR activities will compile and disseminate situational reports on SAR capabilities and services.

2.7. Organization

3.1.1. Direction and Control

- 2.7.1.1. Organizations retain operational control of their resources owned/obtained for use in response and recovery.
- 2.7.1.2. The Governor or designee has the authority to exercise overall coordination of resources belonging to or activated by the state.
- 2.7.1.3. The SEOC is the single point of coordination for state-supported urban search and rescue.



- 2.7.1.4. Implementation of urban search and rescue operations will be coordinated between the SEOC Manager, SEOC MABAS Agency Representative, and local AHJ based on the phase of operations.

3.1.2. Coordinating Elements

- 2.7.1.5. USAR will be activated at the direction of the SEOC Manager:
 - 2.7.1.5.1. Strategic and operational guidance on Lines of Effort (LOE) operations can be found in the IEOP Base Plan, Appendix 4, Lines of Effort (LOE).
- 2.7.1.6. For urban search and rescue operations and situational awareness, the SEOC will coordinate with local units of government, the private sector, and MABAS.

3.1.3. Federal Coordination

- 2.7.1.7. SEOC Agency Representatives, state agencies, boards, and commissions will coordinate with federal counterparts in accordance with enabling authorities to collect, receive, compile, and develop situational reports on urban search and rescue needs and operations.

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. Serve as a coordination point for state-activated USAR resources.
- 3.1.1.3. Coordinate with local jurisdictions and SEOC Agency Representatives on USAR requests.
- 3.1.1.4. Coordinate notification and activation of USAR resources for approved operations.



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- 3.1.1.5. Identify the availability of external USAR resources.
- 3.1.1.6. Assist in providing technical USAR assistance and expertise to local jurisdictions.
- 3.1.1.7. Coordinate and manage SUAC/SAC staffing necessary to meet USAR operations.
- 3.1.1.8. Coordinate sustainment of state-activated USAR operations.
- 3.1.1.9. Assist in planning during activations 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. Coordinate USAR operations with AHJs, SAC, SUAC, SEOC, and other state and federal agencies as appropriate.
- 3.2.1.2. Coordinate collection, receipt, compilation, and dissemination of situational reports, maps, visual aids, and displays on state and local USAR activities to the SEOC.
- 3.2.1.3. De-conflict USAR information with SEOC and other sources.
- 3.2.1.4. Maintain and coordinate Illinois Task Force 1 in support of state USAR operations.

3.3. Support State Agencies/Organizations

3.3.1. Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA)

- 3.3.1.1. Coordinate administrative processes and resources necessary for the use of county and state fairgrounds in support of USAR operations.
- 3.3.1.2. Coordinate with whole community partners to determine economic impacts on agricultural industries.

3.3.2. Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)



- 3.3.2.1. Coordinate administrative process and resources necessary for the use of state parks and lands in support of USAR operations.
- 3.3.2.2. Coordinate with whole community partners to determine economic impacts on natural resources.

3.3.3. Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

- 3.3.3.1. Assist with applicable state agencies in determining transportation requirements, routes, and available assets for the movement of USAR assets and USAR Task Forces in the impacted area.
- 3.3.3.2. Provide IDOT resources to support rescue, bridge, and roadway assessment, and debris removal, 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. Provide inspection and/or repair of critical transportation routes on state and federal highways.
- 3.3.3.4. Provide air assets and personnel to conduct limited USAR 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.
- 3.3.3.5. Assist in the selection and coordination of identified airports for mobilization centers, assembly, or staging areas.

3.3.4. Illinois State Police (ISP)

- 3.3.4.1. Coordinate with applicable SEOC Agency Representatives to identify the need for and, if needed, provide security to areas of SAR operations.
- 3.3.4.2. 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.



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- 3.3.4.3. If available, provide aircraft and/or unmanned aerial systems (UAS), in accordance with the Freedom from Drone Surveillance Act, for providing aerial surveillance, video, photography, video downlink, forward infrared heat sensing devices, or transportation of individuals, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.4.4. Coordinate with applicable SEOC Agency Representatives to provide law enforcement support for SAR efforts, including rural and urban locations, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.4.5. Assist with mapping and analysis of buildings and property.

3.3.5 Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)

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

3.3.6 Illinois National Guard (ILNG)

- 3.3.6.1. Coordinate and provide logistics, transportation, and communications support to enable sustained USAR operations in the impacted area, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.6.2. Deploy and support aviation assets and trained personnel to execute search, rescue, reconnaissance, and transportation operations in support of USAR, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.6.3. Establish and sustain facilities necessary to operate disaster search bases, assembly areas, and staging areas, in coordination with local, state, and federal partners, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.



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- 3.3.6.4. Provide personnel and equipment to help support heavy rescue, structural stabilizations, and debris clearance operations, ensuring equitable distribution strategies that prioritize accessibility for individuals with physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.6.5. Support site security operations and ensure interagency coordination within the USAR area of operations.

4. Authorities

1. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 5121 et seq, as amended.
2. Title 44, Chapter I of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Emergency Management and Assistance, as amended.

5. References

1. National Response Framework (NRF), as amended.
2. FEMA Damage Assessment Operations Manual, as amended.
3. Public Assistance Preliminary Damage Assessment Manual, as amended.
4. IS-559: Local Damage Assessment, as amended.
5. Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) USAR Standard, as amended.

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.