

## **Emergency Support Function 9 Search and Rescue**

### **ESF Coordinator:**

Grant County Search and Rescue

### **Primary Agencies:**

Grant County Search and Rescue  
Grant County Sheriff's Office

### **Support Agencies:**

Grant County Emergency Management

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Purpose**

This Emergency Support Function (ESF) is developed for the coordination of resources in conducting Search and Rescue (SAR) operations.

### **B. Scope**

This ESF is applicable to situations within the county when it will be necessary to provide Search and Rescue (SAR) missions for emergencies or disasters. Washington State law encompasses both wild land and disaster SAR within Revised Code of Washington Section 38.52.010. Urban Search and Rescue is a specialty performance for which Grant County is not organized at this time. This ESF serves as a guideline for those in command of SAR operations and should not be used as a prescribed action plan. SAR operates under the unique SAR standard operating procedures.

## **II. POLICIES**

**A.** Land SAR operations are initiated, coordinated and directed by the Grant County Sheriff's Office in accordance with local and state plans. The Grant County Search and Rescue team is comprised of volunteers and is an affiliate of the Grant County Sheriff's Office. The SAR team members should maintain current registration with the Washington Emergency Worker Program in order to be covered under the protections of Washington Administrative Code 118-04.

**B.** Air SAR for missing or downed aircraft is the responsibility of the Washington State Department of Transportation Aeronautics Division with the support of the Civil Air Patrol.

- C. The National Incident Management System principles, in conjunction with the Incident Command System principles, are the on-scene methods for SAR operations in the county.
- D. Requests for additional resources including special skills, expertise, or equipment are coordinated by the Grant County Department of Emergency Management and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), when activated.

### III. SITUATION

#### A. Emergency/Disaster Conditions and Hazards

Emergencies or disasters of many kinds can result in SAR operations. A mass casualty event may produce the need for large scale SAR response. There is a wide range of outdoor activities in Grant County, and for this reason, individual search and rescue missions not related to disasters, are fairly common. Outdoor recreational activities such as boating, hunting, camping, hiking, and fishing may result in people becoming lost, injured, or killed. A significant emergency or disaster may place much higher demands on these resources.

#### B. Planning Assumptions

1. Search and Rescue (SAR) operations will continue to increase as the population and recreational opportunities continue to grow.
2. Operations may be overwhelmed during emergencies and disasters. Local SAR efforts may require technical assistance from other agencies, counties, and the state. The Grant County Sheriff's Office maintains mutual aid with surrounding counties from which SAR support could be called.
3. Access to impacted locations may be limited due to steep or rocky terrain, water, or structural barriers. Some areas may only be accessible by aircraft or boat. The widely differing terrain in the county requires a locally-based SAR first response system.
4. Rapid assessment of impacted areas and lost individuals will assist in the determination of response priorities.

### IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

#### A. General

1. Search and Rescue missions in Grant County are conducted by trained volunteers equipped to perform many SAR functions. This volunteer work is conducted under the guidance and direction of the Grant County

Sheriff's Office, specializing in SAR operations. The following are examples of some of the capabilities of SAR in Grant County:

- Diving Operations – line tending, ice diving, submerged vehicle recovery, and canal searches.
  - Ice Rescue Operations – reach, throw, and go plans.
  - Helicopter Operations – provisions by contract with private critical care transport service; does not normally provide searches.
2. When a SAR mission is requested of the Sheriff's Office, the Multi-Agency Communications Center (MACC) may call out volunteers by phone, pager, or radio. Communications with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) from the rescue operations Incident Command Post will be through normal radio and telephone capabilities.
  3. Prior to deployment, essential information is gathered such as terrain, identification of the search area, and a detailed description of the victim and their circumstances, if available, to better prepare responders for the search. Necessary resources are identified such as K-9 units, horses, extrication equipment, vehicles, and maps.
  4. SAR deployments are coordinated through the Grant County Sheriff's SAR Coordinator and his or her staff, in conjunction with the Search and Rescue Incident Commander, and the individual SAR group leaders.
  5. After an SAR mission is completed, there is often a critique phase where the mission is analyzed to determine what improvements, if any, could be made for similar missions in the future.
  6. If a catastrophic event results in major SAR operations involving a multi-jurisdictional effort, requests may be made to the WA State EOC for extensive support.

## **B. Organization**

### **1. Grant County Sheriff's Office**

The Grant County Sheriff maintains an effective Search and Rescue Program. The Sheriff's Office will provide the SAR team with necessary equipment and materials, as allowed by budget. The Sheriff will ensure that each member is trained. The Sheriff will authorize each member to act under his or her direction and control with a commission.

### **2. Emergency Management**

Emergency Management will maintain coordination with the Sheriff and SAR group in all matters of training and registration of volunteers. Emergency Management will ensure compliance by the SAR group in

providing records of training and completed SAR missions to the Washington State Emergency Management Division.

### **3. Volunteer Organizations**

SAR volunteer units are organized under jurisdiction authority. Volunteers otherwise known as emergency workers are registered locally in accordance with RCW 38.52 and WAC Chapter 118-04. The Grant County SAR team members are able to respond to the spectrum of local emergencies and disasters.

## **C. Procedures**

1. A Presidential Declaration of Emergency is required to deploy the Urban Search and Rescue task force of Washington State. The issuance of this mission number authorizes the employment of volunteers under the provisions and protection of RCW 38.52.
2. The SAR Incident Commander will request an SAR mission number from WA State Emergency Operations Center Duty Officer before beginning a rescue mission. The issuance of this mission number authorizes the employment of volunteers under the provisions and protection of RCW 38.52.
3. The SAR Coordinator will maintain the organization at the direction of the Sheriff to develop or seek training for each member.
4. SAR training events require mission numbers to be covered under the protection of RCW 38.52. Training mission numbers will be requested from the WA State Emergency Management Division.
5. The Grant County SAR Coordinator keeps record of SAR missions and training missions with copies at the Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management, and the Washington State Emergency Management Division SAR Coordinator.

## **D. Mitigation Activities**

### **1. Primary Agency**

The Grant County Sheriff's Office with the Search and Rescue team reviews legislation to assure it is supportive of the county Search and Rescue activities. They provide public information on the safety of boating and other outdoor activities.

### **2. Support Agencies**

Emergency Management provides public education materials regarding basic life safety tools and actions to take in imminent emergencies and

disasters. The department provides pamphlets, films, magnets, and other media to the public at various fairs and public gatherings.

## **E. Preparedness Activities**

### **1. Primary Agency**

The Grant County Sheriff appoints a coordinator for SAR operations. The Grant County Sheriff's Office supports law enforcement personnel and SAR volunteers with related training. It maintains liaison with the local Emergency Management Department, the WA State Department of Transportation Aviation Division, and the SAR organizations of neighboring counties through mutual aid agreements.

### **2. Support Agencies**

Emergency Management works to ensure that the Emergency Operations Center is effectively maintained and in a state of readiness at all times. It coordinates with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to ensure the team is trained and equipped to provide support in responding to emergencies and disasters.

## **F. Response Activities**

### **1. Primary Agency**

The Grant County Search and Rescue team, under the guidance and direction of the Grant County Sheriff's Office, conducts the SAR missions within Grant County. These missions may occur during any day of the week, on holidays, during extreme weather conditions, and among many other hazards such as water, ice, steep terrain, loose rock, hazardous materials, or tumultuous debris.

### **2. Support Agencies**

Emergency Management remains on standby as requested to provide support in the coordination of resources for SAR missions. If necessary, it activates the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and provides available space, and the communication tools necessary for an SAR representative at the EOC. Emergency Management coordinates with state agencies for resources.

## **G. Recovery Activities**

### **1. Primary Agency**

Conducts debriefing and support for SAR first responders, and returns operations to normal, including a high state of preparedness to be ready to respond to other SAR requests.

**2. Support Agencies**

Emergency Management assists in the return of SAR organizations and personnel to a high state of preparedness. Processes pertinent information related to additional equipment used in the process of SAR missions.

**V. RESPONSIBILITIES****A. Primary Agencies**

It is within the Grant County Sheriff's Office responsibilities to:

1. Appoint a coordinator for SAR operations.
2. Maintain a 24 hour notification system using pagers and radios.
3. Provides training to SAR volunteers.
4. Submit registration of volunteers to Emergency Management.

**B. Support Agencies**

It is within Grant County Emergency Management's responsibilities to:

1. Provide registration of volunteers with the Emergency Workers Program.
2. Provide liaison for coordination with the state for resources.
3. Coordinate with the WA State Emergency Operations Center.

**VI. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

**A.** Equipment for debris removal, victim extrication and life safety.

**B.** SAR volunteers, K-9 units, vehicles, horses, boats, and trailers.

**VII. REFERENCES**

*see Appendix 2 of the Basic CEMP*