



FEMA

FOR: National Urban Search & Rescue Response System
Task Force Leaders / Program Managers

FROM: David Webb, Acting Chief
US&R Branch

DATE: 6 July 2009

RE: US&R Program Directive – 2009-009 – Search Terminology Standards

ISSUE STATEMENT

- The approval and adoption of the inter-agency *National Search & Rescue Plan* and the *Catastrophic Incident SAR Addendum* precipitates the need to bring standard search terminology used by the National US&R Response System into alignment with the referenced documents.

REQUIRED ACTIONS

- Review and implement the standard search terminology detailed in Operations Group Recommendation SEA-08-04 (attached).

APPROVAL

Issue is approved for FEMA National US&R Response System implementation:

Signed:



Dave Webb, Acting Chief, US&R Branch

6 July 2009
Date

Implementation Date: 6 July 2009

Completion Date: N/A

FOR: Dave Webb, Acting Branch Chief
US&R Branch

FROM: Tim Gallagher
Operations Group Chair

SUBJECT: Operations Group Recommendation # SEA08-04

DATE: Nov. 10, 2008

The following recommendation was brought to the Operations Group for approval. The Operations Group voted unanimously to approve the recommendation and move it forward for approval and implementation.

ISSUE STATEMENT

- Current search definitions do not provide needed terminology for tasking search concept of operations.
- Changes have been implemented in the National SAR Plan in regards to search definition (see Catastrophic Incident SAR Addendum)

GENERAL BACKGROUND

- After 2005 Hurricane season the National SAR plan was revisited and new documentation was added to cover catastrophic incidents.
- FEMA US&R System has expanded its scope of operations to include wide area searches and needs to conform to the new search terminology as defined in the CIS addendum of the National SAR Plan.
- Current definitions do not allow for expanded missions
- Unclear tasking orders due to vague search definitions
- Unclear search results, inaccurate debriefing and reporting

RECOMMENDATION(s)

- Approval for the acceptance of the new terminology for tasking search operations.

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A Search Definitions

PROGRAM IMPACTS / DOCUMENTATION CHANGES

- Positive impact due to productive search management and operations
- Improve documentation and communication
- Provides clear tasking orders
- All system documents that contain search definitions.

FINANCIAL IMPACT TO TASK FORCES

- None

ALLIED WORK GROUP COORDINATION REQUIRED

- None

TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Immediate upon approval

Appendix A

Search Definitions

Special Response Team (SRT) Search is a search employed when the IC has identified specific evacuation requirements necessary to limit loss of life for special needs victims. Prior to an event such as a hurricane, emergency managers should be able to identify and prioritize facilities that sheltered in place. These facilities will likely have a significant number of survivors who may not be capable of providing for themselves if the event causes a complete disruption of services because of partial or complete collapse or rapid inundation of water. Search resources should be deployed to investigate these pre-identified facilities that are likely to require evacuation assistance. These facilities include but are not limited to;

- Hospitals
- Nursing Homes
- Evacuation Shelters
- Critical Infrastructure Facilities
- Areas of last refuge such as fire stations and police precincts

Recon is the preliminary survey of the affected area and/or assigned area of operation for the purpose of determining the scope and magnitude of the incident and identifying the resources needed to manage the incident. Other considerations for Recon include;

- Initial and fast visual check of the damaged area and/or assigned area of operation
- For single structure collapse incidents the primary purpose of this action is structural assessment and hazardous materials assessment
- This can be accomplished by air, water craft, vehicles or walking
- Known locations of live or deceased victims will be recorded and appropriate evacuation/rescue resources will be called up
- Size and make up of recon teams are incident driven and flexible
- Recon teams should not engage in extrication/rescue operations
- Timely reporting of information is critical to the health and safety of responders, survivability of victims and effective management of the incident

Rapid Search (Hasty Search) is a fast paced and methodical search of the assigned area of operation in an attempt to **locate victims that are in immediate need of evacuation from harm.** Other considerations for Hasty Search include;

- Can be accomplished by air, water craft or vehicles
- Size and make up of Hasty Search teams are incident driven and flexible
- If live victims are located and can be easily evacuated they will be immediately removed and moved to the identified casualty collection point
- If live victims are located and cannot be easily evacuated, additional resources will be called up to conduct extrication and or evacuation
- Documentation of areas searched must be recorded and reported
- This may be accomplished simultaneously with Recon.

Primary Search is a quick search of the structures likely to contain survivors. These searches are ground or waterborne operations conducted by walking or boating around every structure in the assigned area of operations looking for victims. This is accomplished by looking into every window/opening, knocking on doors and hailing for live victims. If there are signs of victims (dead or alive) appropriate action will be taken based on the rules of engagement identified by the local Incident Commander. Other considerations for Primary Searches are;

- Primary Search is a well established fire ground/incident benchmark and as such is the stated objective until accomplished
- Fast paced, quick scan of surface debris in and around structures and selected voids.
- Size and makeup of the search team is incident specific driven and flexible
- Detection resources may include physical, canine and technical
- If live victims are located, additional resources are called up to extricate the victim while the search team continues the identified objective to complete the Primary Search in the assigned area
- Actions necessary to immediately correct life threatening injuries may be performed by this team
- Victim locations will be marked with standard victim identification marking systems unless otherwise required by the local IC

Secondary Search is the systematic search of every room of every structure in the assigned area of operation. Forced entry of structures may need to occur in order to accomplish this objective but will only be done with the authority of the local Incident Commander. This may involve extensive debris removal of building materials depending on the desired level of coverage and thoroughness. Secondary search can be divided in to two levels of coverage;

a) Low Coverage Secondary Search

- 1) Systematic search of every room in every structure in the assigned area of operation
- 2) Systematic search in and around every void space in the assigned area of operation
- 3) Size and make up of search teams is incident driven and flexible
- 4) Location/detection resources may include physical, canine and technical
- 5) If live victims are located, additional resources may be called up to extricate the victim while the search team continues with the identified objective to complete the Secondary Search in the assigned area
- 6) Victim locations will be marked with standard victim identification marking systems unless otherwise required by the local IC

Secondary Search (cont.)

b) High Coverage Secondary Search

- 1) Systematic and thorough search of every room in every structure in the assigned area of operation
- 2) Systematic and thorough search in and around every void space in the assigned area of operation. This will include complete de-layering and removal of collapsed debris to ensure thoroughness. This may include use of heavy equipment
- 3) Size and make up of search and extrication teams is incident driven and flexible
- 4) Location/detection resources may include physical, canine and technical
- 5) If live victims are located, additional resources may be called up to extricate the victim while the search team continues with the identified objective to complete a Secondary Search in the assigned area
- 6) If deceased victims are located, additional resources may be called up to extricate the victim(s) while the search team continues with the identified objective to complete the Secondary Search
- 7) Victim locations will be marked with standard victim identification marking systems unless otherwise required by the local IC

Note: These definitions may be modified by the AHJ and/or may be incident driven. Modifications must be clearly stated. Search definitions along with any modifications and Rules of Engagement must be made available to all team members assigned to the incident.

Search Modes

DETECTION MODE – A search mode to determine if victims are present.

LOCATION MODE – Following detection, a search mode to confirm victim's location and pinpoint for rescue.

Search Phases and Modalities

There are generally five phases of organized search and rescue operations during Disaster Operations.

PHASE ONE – Assessment of the disaster area (Recon).

PHASE TWO – Removal of surface victims (Rapid/Hasty).

PHASE THREE – Search and rescue of victims from accessible voids (Primary and/or Secondary).

PHASE FOUR – Selected debris removal to locate and rescue victims/Human Remains Detection (HRD)* (Secondary).

PHASE FIVE – General debris removal, usually conducted after all known victims have been removed, and Human Remains Detection (HRD) has been completed* (Secondary).

- Use of Human Remains Detection (HRD) resources is under discussion.

US&R OPERATIONS GROUP VOTE			
VOTE TAKING DATE(s)	June 25, 2008		
ISSUE	Operations Group Recommendation # SEA 08-04		
Work Group Chair Vote	Y/N	Work Group Chair Vote	Y/N
C&GS	Y	Training	Y
Communications	Y	WMD	Y
IST	Y	Technical S/G	
Legal Issues	Y	Canine S/G	
Logistics	Y	TFL Rep	
Medical	Y	East TFL Rep	Y
Public Affairs	Y	Central TFL Rep	Y
Rescue	Y	West TFL Rep	
Search	Y	Operations	Y
Grants	Y		