



Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office Operations Directorate — Fact Sheet

ISSUE: DoD representation on the National Search and Rescue Committee (NSARC)¹

BACKGROUND: The NSARC, chaired by the United States Coast Guard, is a policy, procedures, and equipment coordinating body. It is composed of the following federal agencies: the Departments of Defense, Transportation, Interior, and Commerce; the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The NSARC is responsible for the National Search and Rescue Plan, coordination of interagency policies and positions concerning search and rescue matters, interfacing with other national agencies concerning emergency services, and for providing a forum for improving search and rescue effectiveness and standardization.

In 1990, the NSARC developed a comprehensive plan for National Search and Rescue that provides guidance to U.S. federal forces, military and civilian, for planning, coordinating, conducting, and otherwise supporting search and rescue operations. Since then, the NSARC has evolved into an organization primarily concerned with search and rescue policy, including coordination of international search and rescue agreements.

Originally, the U.S. Air Force was the primary representative of the Department of Defense to this forum. Until recently, the Air Force office of National Security Emergency Preparedness represented the Air Force in this role.

DISCUSSION: DoD Directive 2310.2, "Personnel Recovery," directed ASD(ISA) to represent the Department on all "personnel recovery related interagency fora." In light of that directive, and NSARC's expanding role in the search and rescue policy arena, DPMO, the Air Force, and the NSARC agreed that DPMO should assume the responsibilities as the primary DoD representative to the NSARC effective March 1, 1998. The Air Force agreed to continue sending a representative of the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center to the NSARC meetings as subject matter expert and operational advisor to the DPMO representative. This arrangement allows ASD(ISA) to represent the broad policy interests of the Department of Defense, while the Air Force provides an operational perspective for consideration. This realignment will facilitate interagency coordination and development of coordinated DoD positions on future ICSAR initiatives.

¹ Until recently the NSARC was called the Interagency Committee on Search and Rescue or ICSAR. For the sake of clarity, this fact sheet uses the acronym "NSARC" throughout, despite the fact that it may have been termed the ICSAR in the past.