

CHAPTER 90 - SEARCH AND RESCUE

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90 - SEARCH AND RESCUE.

90.1 - USDI/USFS SEARCH AND RESCUE. Under Federal manual and Washington Office Directives, general guidelines have been established for Department of Interior and National Forests to develop their own individual Search and Rescue Plans. At this time, each will have plans to fit programs unique to their own units.

90.1.1 - USDA-FOREST SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES. Inside and outside the National Forests, as a humanitarian measure, the use of Forest Service personnel and equipment is authorized for the purpose of protecting life and property and for relieving suffering and distress arising from such causes as floods, fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, and snowstorms.

The Regional Forester should be notified promptly of any extraordinary use or obligation of funds, or use of manpower or equipment. Obligations incurred should be considered as payable out of currently available funds only, without expectation of reimbursement. Only in rare cases does Congress appropriate supplemental funds to reimburse agencies for each extraordinary expense, unless the expenditures were made under the major disaster law. (FSM 1522.61)

90.1.2 - DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES. Each agency head charged with the duty of providing fire protection for any property of the United States is authorized to enter into a reciprocal agreement, with any fire organization maintaining fire protection facilities in the vicinity of such property and for other property for which such organization normally provides fire protection.

In the absence of any agreement authorized or ratified, each agency head is authorized to render emergency assistance in extinguishing fires and in preserving life and property from fire, within the vicinity of any place at which such agency maintains fire protection facilities, when the rendition of such assistance is determined under regulations prescribed by the agency head to be in the best interest of the United States.

For search and rescue which is non-fire-related, obligations incurred should be considered as payable out of currently available funds only, without expectation of reimbursement.

90.2 - LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF STATE AGENCIES. The protection of life and property and the maintenance of law and order within the territorial jurisdiction of any state is primarily the responsibility of state and local authorities. In some states, the basic law places responsibility for protection of life and property and the search for lost persons on the sheriffs of the respective counties. In other states, the State Highway Patrol has the responsibility to assist during emergencies involving protection of life and property.

90.3 - MILITARY RESPONSIBILITIES. For the land area of the United States, the Air Rescue Service of the Air Force is charged with the responsibility of providing search, survival aid, and rescue of passengers and crew of missing and/or crashed aircraft in accidents which do not occur in the proximity of airports. This responsibility applies to all aircraft, civil as well as military.

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91 - AIRCRAFT EMERGENCY RESPONSE (CRASH-RESCUE) PLAN. The Crash/Rescue Plan outlines recommended actions to be taken whenever there is an overdue, missing, or crashed aircraft, or an aircraft search-and-rescue operation is necessary. Whenever such action must be taken, use the unit's Aircraft Emergency Response Plan to expedite emergency actions.

All personnel involved in Aviation and Dispatch should be familiar with the contents of the Unit plan. Those who do not deal with aviation on a regular basis should be able to use this guide to accomplish the purpose in the absence of more knowledgeable individuals.

91.1 - USDI AGENCIES. Interior Agencies/Units should refer to OAS Information Bulletin No. 91_1, Pre-Accident Plan.

91.2 - USDA-FOREST SERVICE. USDA-Forest Service units should refer to the Intermountain Region Aircraft Crash, Search, and Rescue Guide.

91.3 - INTERAGENCY CENTERS. Interagency Dispatch Centers should develop plans, guidance and instructions common to all agencies.

92 - HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.

92.1 - AVIATION TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Reference Department of Transportation's Extension for Exemption DOT-E-9198, which **extends the expiration date to September 30, 2002**, which applies to both the USDA and the USDI.

Note that the Hazardous Materials Transport references listed below for USDI and USDA-Forest Service contain, with the exception of agency references, the same language, guidance, and requirements.

92.1.1 - USDA-FOREST SERVICE. Forest Service personnel should refer to USDA-Forest Service Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials Guide, dated August 1989.

92.1.2 - USDI. USDI personnel should refer to USDI-Office of Aircraft Services Handbook Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials, 351 DM 1.

92.2 - HAZARDOUS MATERIALS LOCATION. If material that may be hazardous to the environment or to an individual's health is located on public lands, immediate and proper notification is essential. Any containers found or spills occurring with suspicious or unknown contents, which may contain hazardous waste materials, shall be reported immediately. The usual contacts will be made through the County Sheriff or the State Environmental Protection Agency. Refer to local unit hazardous materials plans for specific actions.

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93 - FEDERAL RESPONSE PLAN. The Federal Response Plan, through the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), assigns the USDA-Forest Service responsibility for emergency support for wildland fire suppression. Upon notification by FEMA, the Forest Service provides National Fire Suppression Liaison Officers, located either at FEMA Headquarters or in Fire and Aviation Management, Washington D.C., who serve as liaison between FEMA, primary and secondary Federal agencies, NIC, and Region Fire Suppression Support Coordinators.

Additionally, the Forest Service Regional Office provides a Fire Suppression Support Coordinator, who operates under the direction of the Presidential-appointed Federal Coordinating Officer. The Suppression Support Coordinator is responsible for coordinating Federal firefighting response at the Regional level and for providing assistance to other emergency support functions identified in the Federal Response Plan. Request for DOI or USFS resources will be placed through normal dispatch channels.

If a Great Basin Coordination Center is unable to provide assistance during non-fire disasters, the operating center will assume operating responsibility to expedite "closest forces" resources.

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