



Standard Guide for Using the Incident Command System Framework in Managing Search and Rescue Operations ¹

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1. Scope*

1.1 This guide covers the *use* of the Incident Command System (ICS), as developed in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in 2004, as the management framework for search and rescue (SAR) operations.

1.2 Except as otherwise specified herein, the methods and requirements of this standard also include NIMS, ICS, and National Response Framework (NRF) requirements, when required, for search and rescue personnel that deploy within the United States of America.

1.3 The ICS may be used outside of the United States for managing SAR operations, users of this standard need to be aware of other incident management requirements, guidelines, policies, procedures, and protocols within the area of ICS SAR operations.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety problems, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

[F1767 Guide for Forms Used for Search and Rescue](#) (Withdrawn 2014)³

[F1846 Practice for Symbols and Markings for Use With Land Search Maps](#)

[F1848 Classification for Search and Rescue Dog Crew/Teams](#)

[F1993 Classification System of Human Search and Rescue](#)

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F32 on Search and Rescue and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F32.02 on Management and Operations.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

[Resources](#) (Withdrawn 2014)³

[F2099 Guide for Use of Universal Transverse Mercator \(UTM\) Grids When Preparing and Using a Field Map for Land Search](#)

[2.2 U.S. Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\):⁴](#)

[National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](#)

[National Response Framework \(NRF\)](#)

[NIMS Basic - The Incident Command System, FEMA 501-8](#)

3. Significance and Use

3.1 The ICS framework is designed to be used for all emergencies and is applicable to small day-to-day situations as well as very large and complex incidents.

3.2 The ICS framework, operating requirements, components, and procedures are designed for organizing and operating an on-scene management structure only.

3.3 Users of this guide are expected to be familiar with the ICS.

3.4 Neither this guide nor any of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved ICS courses or documents provide a specific plan for managing an SAR operation, but rather they outline a process for developing a management and coordination framework.

3.5 It is not intended for this standard to conflict in any way with civil SAR responsibilities agreed to by the National Search and Rescue Plan of the United States, the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR), or other appropriate international instruments.

4. Procedure

4.1 SAR management personnel should develop the management structure in a top down manner similar to that outlined in NIMS Appendix A.⁵

⁴ Available from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Integration Center (NIC) Incident Management Systems Integration Division, 500 C Street S.W., Washington, D.C. 2047.

⁵ NIMS Basic - The Incident Command System, FEMA 501-8 is a stand-alone, condensed version of Appendix A without the ICS forms. <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtml>

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard

4.2 SAR management personnel should utilize the flexibility allowed by the ICS to modify the framework and fill only those functional positions necessary to conduct the operation.

4.3 SAR management personnel should document the SAR operation for planning, analytical, legal, and historical purposes.

4.3.1 Forms such as those in Guide F1767, NIMS Appendix A, at the FEMA ICS, Resource Center and similar ICS forms from other sources or combinations thereof, may be used for documenting the operation.

4.4 SAR management personnel should utilize Guides F1767 and F2099, Practice F1846, Classifications F1848 and F1993, appropriate FEMA Resource Typing and Credentialing documents, and other ICS documents from FEMA and other agencies available at the FEMA website and ICS Resource Center when managing an incident using the ICS.

5. Keywords

5.1 Search and Rescue; Search and Rescue Management

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Committee F32 has identified the location of selected changes to this guide since the last issue, F1422 – 92(1999), that may impact the use of this guide. (Approved November 1, 2008)

(I) The standard was heavily revised throughout.

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