



## Update: S.C. State Fire's Emergency Response Task Force

Six Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) teams comprise the Emergency Response Task Force (ERTF), which is geographically located around the State. Each team, in 2023, received non-recurring funding for equipment and training. An ERTF working group was created, made up of the five regional teams and SC-Task Force 1. This forms the S.C. Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) System, within the Firefighter Mobilization Plan. The S.C. US&R System operates as one collective team, allowing for increased operational efficiency and effectiveness.



### Firefighter Mobilization

Firefighter Mobilization is able to assist any fire department in the state with resources if an event such as a fire, rescue, terrorism attack, hazardous materials event, or natural disaster occurs that overwhelms the resources of the local department. Firefighter Mobilization does not take the place of any local mutual aid agreements, but only enhances them by providing statewide aid. Firefighter Mobilization can be implemented at any time at the request of an incident commander or can be implemented by the State Fire Marshal as part of the South

Carolina Emergency Operations Plan and ESF 4 and 9 responses to possible conditions that could impact the state. Activation does not take a declaration of a State of Emergency by the Governor.

A new Firefighter Mobilization Notification System is currently in testing, with an expected release in the Spring of 2023. This system will be part of Palmetto EOC and will not require any additional passwords or inventory management.

### SC-Task Force 1 (SC-TF1)

SC-TF 1 is a multi-disciplinary, all-hazards, US&R team providing a coordinated response to disasters in urban and rural environments. Skilled in the location and extrication of victims in all environments, SC-TF1 is capable of responding to State and National disasters including earthquakes, hurricanes, widespread tornadoes, and man-made technological and terrorist events. SC-TF1 is comprised of personnel from fire departments and other emergency services organizations throughout the state.



SC-TF1 currently has 143 members, with projected growth to 210 in order to fulfill the goals outlined in the strategic plan. Recruiting by position will begin in the summer of 2023 while team managers visit each of the regions throughout the state.

SC-TF1 recently completed a strategic planning session to create and adopt a multi-year strategic plan. This plan incorporates recent legislative funding, the new equipment cache, and a focus on streamlined operations and services. Formal announcement of this plan will be presented in the *US&R 101: For Current and Potential Sponsoring Agencies* class during the upcoming South Carolina Fire-Rescue Conference June 15 in Myrtle Beach, S.C. This class will provide an overview of SC-TF1, the benefit to local agencies, membership and reimbursement, along with a Q&A session.



### South Carolina-Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (SC-HART):

SC-HART, created in 2009, is one of only a few states with a Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (HART) or Helicopter Search and Rescue Team (HSART) program of its kind. It is a collaborative effort between SC-TF1 and the Army National Guard Aviation Unit. SC-HART has all hazards capabilities, and its members are trained professional rescuers from SC-TF1, joined by highly-trained pilots and crew members from the Army National Guard. SC-HART is capable of performing helicopter rescue using the UH-60 Blackhawk and LUH 72 Lakota, and responds 24/7.

A SC-HART joint-training exercise will be in Charleston June 7-9, 2023. Local agencies and the U.S. Coast Guard are participating.

**For additional information on the Emergency Response Task Force, the strategic plan, or any upcoming events, contact [Ken Kerber](#), [Chad Beam](#) or [Shon Hamilton](#).**