

STATE RESPONSE and EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The State of Florida must be prepared to respond quickly and effectively on a 24-hour basis to developing events. When an event or potential event is first detected, the State Emergency Operations Center is activated to a level appropriate to the magnitude of the threat. The State's response effort is then initiated through the State Emergency Response Team (SERT), which is comprised of Governor-appointed Emergency Coordination Officers (ECO) from State Agencies and volunteer organizations. These Emergency Coordination Officers are authorized to use the resources of their respective agency or organization to carry out response and recovery missions that are assigned by functions.

All State agencies and volunteer organizations, that comprise the State Emergency Response Team, are grouped into 17 Emergency Support Functions (ESF) to carry out coordination and completion of assigned missions. These functions represent specific response activities that are common to all disasters. Each Emergency Support Function is comprised of one or more Primary agency (ies) serving as the lead and several other agencies and organizations providing support.

The ESF is a mechanism that consolidates multiple agencies that perform similar or like functions into a single, cohesive unit to allow for the better management of emergency response functions (for example, many different state and local agencies have sworn law enforcement officers. Under the ESF concept, these law enforcement agencies all function as one under ESF 16). The ESF concept was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the late 1980s to address the potential management concerns that would be necessary to coordinate a federal response to a catastrophic earthquake in California. FEMA subsequently implemented the ESF concept in the development of its Federal Response Plan. In Florida, 15 of the 17 ESFs fall under one of four branches in the Operations Section: Emergency Services, Human Services, Infrastructure Support and Operations Support

(You will find detailed information on ESF branch assignments in the individual ESF annexes).

In Review: Emergency Support Functions (ESFs)

- Staffed by support professionals from identified state agencies
- Identifies critical areas of State Assistance needed to augment local response efforts
- Groups related Agency activities -capabilities into major function areas
- Facilitate a coordinated response