Remote Support Workflows - DRAFT

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1. Purpose

The potential functions performed through Remote Support are endless and thus a single workflow and procedures document could not cover every possibility. Two things to remember, first Remote support consist of a subset of the functions that could be performed on-scene the primary difference being the need to communicate data and information from a remote location. Secondly, as the procedure cannot possibly cover every possibility, in the event a Remote Support Unit member is unsure of the appropriate actions to take in receiving or completing an assignment, the Unit member is advised to contact the Remote Support Unit Leader or the On-Scene Remote Support Liaison.

At times, a discrete request for RS may be desired. In this case only select members of the ASRC RS Unit may be asked to participate at the discretion of the Search Manager (on-scene).

The workflow is broken into four logical steps: Notification, Mobilization, Operation and Demobilization. This document will outline the workflow in each phase of the operation with a focus on organization and the transfer of information. The workflow outlined below may at times reference certain products but it will not include procedures or processes for developing individual products."

1.1 Definitions:

1. Assignments - Tasks given to resources to perform within a given operational period, based upon tactical objectives in the Incident Action Plan.
2. Remote Support (RS) - Functional Unit within the Planning Section that offers services in support of the Incident Objectives from a location that does not permit direct, physically interact with members of the Command or General Staff.

3. Off-site - A location other than the Base, Incident Command Post, Camp, or other facility established to directly support the primary tactical-level Command or General Staff functions during an Operation.

4. On-site / On-Scene - The field location at which the primary tactical-level, on-scene incident command functions are performed. This will typically be the Incident Command Post, Incident Base or both if co-located.

5. Incident Commander (IC) - The individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and the release of resources. The IC has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site.

6. Search Manager (SM) - The individual designated by the IC to be responsible for all Search and rescue activities including assisting the IC in the development of strategies and tactics as t relates to SAR. Within the ICS structure the SM would full under the guidance of the Operations Section and may have their own Command and General Staff. On smaller incidents, the IC and SM may be fulfilled by a single person.

7. On-Site Liaison (OSL) - Person Designated by SM / IC to manage the on-scene presence of the remote support unit. This person and their reports are responsible for facilitating the flow of information between On- and Off-Scene personnel, and ensuring that necessary on-scene equipment is available and functional.

8. Remote Support Unit Leader (RSL)- A member of the Remote Support Unit that is responsible for its functionality. This individual meets the minimum requirements necessary for certification as a RS Unit Leader.

9. Remote Support Unit Member (RSM) - A person that meets the minimum requirements for the RS Unit that functions under the RS Unit Leader's direct supervision at an off-site location.

Essential technology: Every member of the RS Unit will have access to the Remote Support Google Drive in myasrc.org account.

2. Notification

1. Search Manager will designate an On-Scene Remote Support Liaison (OSL)
   a. This may be the Search manager until a more appropriate choice is available.
   b. The OSL will request Remote Support (RS) on behalf of the SM and Responsible Authority (RA)
   c. The OSL will determine the on-scene ability to receive and process products from the RS Unit (RSU). The OSL should not delay submitting a request for RS due to on-site limitations for receiving or utilizing RS products. The OSL will coordinate with the Logistics Section for additional equipment as needed.

2. The OSL will request Remote Support on behalf of the SM/IC or Authority Having Jurisdiction
   a. e-mail: remote-support@myasrc.org (preferred) or a member of the ASRC RSU (see Appendix A, B).
   b. Phone: A voice or text message may be sent directly to a member of the ASRC RSU (see Appendix A, B).
   c. If possible, the "Remote Support Request Form" will be submitted at the time of request even if much of the information on the form is unknown. Additional Request Forms can be submitted at a later time to supplement information and make additional product requests.
      i. RemoteSupportRequest.pdf – A copy of the Remote Support Request form is available on the RemoteSupport@myasrc.org Google drive.
      ii. If it is not possible to submit a form, the following minimum information is required:
         1. name of OSL
         2. contact information for OSL
         3. Product requested – this may include a request to assemble the RSU and stand-by for further instructions.
         4. Time requested products are needed

3. RSU Notification of Incident
   a. E-mail sent to the remote-support@myasrc.org will be automatically forwarded to members of the ASRC RSU. Upon receiving the request a member of the unit will respond to the OSL indicating that the request has been received. If responding by e-mail, the member will "CC" the remote-support@myasrc.org.
   b. If the request is received by a means other than the RS Mailing List, the recipient will notify the remaining members of the RSU, as required, using the RS Mailing List (remote-support@myasrc.org).

3. Mobilization

3.1 Remote Unit Mobilization

1. The initial RSU member will alert the remaining members as appropriate.
   a. Initial respondent will assume the role of Remote Support Leader (RSL) until a more senior member of the RSU is available
   b. The RSL will copy the Mission Template from the RemoteSupport@myasrc.org Google Drive.
      i. The template will be copied to the "Search" folder in the Remote-Support drive and renamed to mission number.
         1. If the actual mission number is unknown the following convention will be followed: XXYYYYMMDDA
            a. XX – two letter state abbreviation, YYYY – four digit year, MM – two letter month, DD – two digit day of the month, A – alphanumeric indicator representing number of instance in state XX that are occurring on the same day.
   c. Begin filling in availability on the Remote Support Status Worksheet
      i. RS_SignIn.pdf – A copy of this form is available in the root directory for the newly created mission folder on the RemoteSupport@myasrc.org Google drive.

2. The RSL will evaluate the request made by the OSL to determine staffing needs
   a. Based on the level of urgency as dictated by the OSL, the RSL will make a determination as to the ability of the available staff to provide the requested products and level of support.
   b. The RSL will begin tracking information and assignments in the RM_OpPeriodTaskLog which is located in the root folder for the new mission.

3. The RSL will communicate to the OSL the current RSU response capabilities and a time frame for delivering the requested products.

4. The RSL or assigned RS personnel will create (or confirm the creation of) the necessary mission folders on the RemoteSupport@myasrc.org account Google Drive.
   a. The RSL will send an e-mail with a link to the file sharing folder to the remote-support@myasrc.org e-mail address and to the OSL.
      i. Right click on Mission Folder created for this mission and select "Share"
      ii. Select the option for "Anyone with the link can edit". Then select Copy Link or Ctrl-C. Paste the link in the body of the e-mail.

3.2 On-Scene Mobilization

1. The OSL, or delegate, is responsible for establishing communication channels sufficient to accommodate the desired level of interaction with RS. The following forms of communication are required.
   a. Data – this will include the ability to send and receive e-mail messages. Optionally the OSL will need to be able to access the [Google Drive Mission Space](). If the OSL has difficulty with direct access to the ASRC RSU Google Drive, the RSL may elect to e-mail sharable links to the OSL for each product.
      i. Alternatively the OSL could receive product directly through e-mail attachments. If this is desired, the OSL will notify the RSL of this preferred transfer method. Kind in mind that many e-mail services limit the size of attachments so products files should be kept to a minimum. Any large file will need to be shared through the RSU Google Drive.
      ii. If reliable Internet access cannot be established, the OSL with notify the RSL of this difficulty. One option for managing this issue is for the OSL to identify a "close by" location that does have functional Internet connectivity. Product and data transfer as well as digital communication can be executed at this location with materials being then being delivered to the Incident Command Post.
   b. Voice – establishing voice communication capability through satellite, cellular, radio or land line is critical.
   c. Video (optional) – this is optional and only recommended in special circumstances as it consumes considerable bandwidth.
   d. The OSL, or delegate, must inform the RSL of any known limitations in data and information communication.

3.3 Remote Support Unit Mobilization

Under certain circumstances the SM may request a limited mobilization of the ASRC RSU. If this occurs the RSL may modify access functionality to the newly created mission folder in the ASRC RSU Google Drive.

1. RSU members will respond to alert notice with availability and contact information as defined on the [RS_SignIn.pdf]() form
   a. If at all possible, every RSU member should responds with their available even if unavailable as this ensures the alert systems is working properly.

2. Each responding RSU member is responsible for notifying their respective Group's Operations Officer that they are assisting in a search via Remote Support. This informs the respective RSU member group that they have members participating in RS functions.

3. The RSL is responsible for keep track of RSU member availability using the RS_ResourceLog (to be completed).

4. Responding RSU members can find and track RS assignments in the RM_OpPeriodTaskLog which is located in the root folder for the new mission. Additional details on RS tasking is describe in "Operations".

4. Operations

4.1 On-Scene

1. The OSL is responsible for continuing to monitor the status of on-scene efforts and communicating the status of RS efforts to on-scene personnel.

2. The OSL is responsible for monitoring tools and technologies available on-scene and notifying the RSU of any relevant changes.

3. The OSL is responsible for collecting and relaying data and information to the RSU.
   a. This may be performed by uploading data and information to the appropriate folder in the ASRC RS Google Drive or it may be uploading to common operating platform (e.g ArcGIS Online, SARTopo, etc), or e-mailing attachments.

   b. As necessary the OSL (or appointee) will submit new requests for products using the RemoteSupportRequest.pdf – A copy of the Remote Support Request form is available on the RemoteSupport@myasrc.org Google drive.

4.2 Communications Between OS and RS

1. As much as possible, communications between On-Scene and Remote Support will be conducted using remote-support@myasrc.org as the mailing list is used to archive communications during an incident. If necessary an alternative method of communication may be used as agreed upon by the OSL and RSL but every effort should be made to archive all communications. It is recommended that an alternative communication method be established in the event the primary method becomes unavailable. If necessary, the OSL and RSL are responsible for establishing alternative means of communication. Any communication outside of the remote-support@myasrc.org e-mail should be routed through the RSL to the OSL or OSL to RSL unless specified differently.

2. Any change in OSL staffing will be reported to the RSL and Search Manager. Any change in RSL will be reported to the OSL immediately.

3. The OSL will be responsible for scheduling periodic conference calls with the RSL. These calls should occur at least once per operational period, unless other arrangements have been made.

4. At least once per Operational Period (preferably during the conference call discussed above), the RSL and OSL shall review the priority of the each requested product.

5. The RSL and the OSL will continue to monitor the capabilities and the available technologies for on-site and off-site, respectively. As changes occur, the RSL and OSL will agree upon the appropriate tools and methods for relying data, information and products between on-site and off-site assets.

4.3 Task Assignment

The RSL is ultimately responsible for the completion of each task that is accepted from the OSL. If the RSL believes the requested products are beyond the ability of the responding RSU members, the RSL is responsible for timely notifying the OSL. This may result in re-prioritizing tasks, for example the OSL and RSL may agree to change the priority of a HIGH priority product to a MEDIUM or LOW priority in order for it to remain in the RM_OpPeriodTaskLog in case additional RSU members become available at a later time.

1. Tasks shall be tracked using the RM_OpPeriodTaskLog which is located in the root folder for the new mission.

2. RS Tasking will be based on the capability of the RSU members as not every member of the RSU will have the same abilities.

3. The RSL is responsible for managing the size of each task in order for it to be completed in the requested time. For example, the OSL may request for the search area to be segmented and tasks be written based on the segmentation. The RSL may elect to divide the Search Area into smaller sub-regions for segmenting and field tasking. The RSL will then list the smaller sub-regions as tasks in the RM_OpPeriodTaskLog.

4. The RSL is responsible for notify the OSL of products that will not be completed within the required timeframe as soon as possible so that other arrangements can be made by the OSL and on-site resources.

5. Based on a continual assessment of capabilities, the OSL and RSL will agree upon the appropriate means of sharing data, information and products.
   a. Completed products will be saved in the appropriate folder within the ASRC RSU Google Drive Searches Mission folder.
   b. In addition, data, information and products may be shared through other platforms agreed upon by the RSL and OSL (e.g. ArcGIS Online, SARTopo, etc).

4.4 All-Hands meetings

The RSL will determine the necessity of scheduling "All-Hands meetings" for the RSU members. Consideration should be given to variations in time zones and working schedules which may present challenges for scheduling conference calls in which all responding members of the RSU can participate.

1. At a minimum, the RSL will provide an Operational Period summary (ICS Form 202) detailing the mission progress as provided by the OSL.

2. If the RSL decides to convene a voice or video conference with the responding RSU members, the RSL (or appointee) is responsible for selecting the method of communication. Several options are listed below:
    a. Google Hangout
        i. Available through the RSU members Google Account (or Google Hangout)
    b. Skype
        i. Available through RSU member Skype account (or Skype). Limited to 25 people if using the free account.

4.5 Intra-Unit Communication

RSMs may contact the RSL and each other directly as needed to complete tasks.
1. If at all possible communication between RSU members should occur through remote-Support@myasrc.org.

2. Alternatively, RSU members can communicate through personnel e-mail, phone, radio, etc (any available method). If discussion is related to clarification or modification to a requested task or product, addition description should be added to the specific task in the RM_OpPeriodTaskLog. Efforts should be made to archive all communications that occurred over the course of the incident with regards to Remote Support of the incident.

4.6 Sign out/Transfer of duties

The following process is to be used when a member is signing out.
1. Notify RSL of the following
    a. Intent to sign out
    b. Time at which member intends to sign out.
    c. The RS Unit Leader (or their deputy) shall confirm sign-out request and request the following information.
        i. Status of assigned tasks
        ii. Location of all completed deliverable.
        iii. List of uncompleted tasks
        iv. Availability of member in the future.

> v. Other information as appropriate to the situation

2. Upon "signing-out", the RSU member will notify their respective Group's operation Officer.

3. In the event that duties are to be transferred to replacement RSU member, the departing RSU member will brief their replacement if possible, otherwise it will be the responsibility of the RSL to brief the replacement.

4. Once the requested information is supplied, the RSL will sign the member out (RS_ResourceLog (to be completed)) and appropriate adjustments will be made in the RS Task Log (RM_OpPeriodTaskLog).

5.0 Demobilization

5.1 Remote Unit Demobilization

5.1.1 Data Archiving

1. RSL shall make an archive of all deliverables by digitally compressing the folder / files in the RS Google Drive and deliver them to the search manager before demobilization is complete. Delivering the digital files may include e-mailing a link to file share applications.

2. Once the folders / files have been digitally compressed the uncompressed folders / files will be removed. The compressed folders/files will remain in the "Searches" folder unless specified otherwise by the SM.

5.1.2 Remote Unit Member and Unit Leader Sign-out

1. The RSL is responsible for notifying the OSL of the end of RS activities and providing an accurate account of the status of all requested tasks and products.

2. The RSL is responsible for ensuring all RSU members have been notified of the end of RS activities.

3. The RSL will note the sign-out time in the Resource Tracking Log (RS_ResourceLog (to be completed)) in order to track hours worked. This information will be provided to the SM.

5.3 On-Scene Demobilization

The OSL is responsible for notifying the SM of the status of all requested RS products and ensuring the SM has access to the archived mission data from RS activities. The OSL will sign-out through processes utilized on-site.