

State of Alaska FY2025 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Public Safety Search and Rescue Component Budget Summary

Component: Search and Rescue

Contribution to Department's Mission

Preserve public peace; protect life, property, and resources.

Core Services

- Initiate search and rescue (SAR) action for the recovery of lost or missing persons.
- Coordinate rescue operations for injured persons; conduct recovery operations for deceased persons.
- Coordinate small and large-scale responses to search and rescue events including resource management, interagency coordination, and the use of private resources, various agencies, and private persons.
- Reimburse public and private organizations for resources spent during search and rescue operations.
- Coordinate aircraft for search and rescue missions.
- Provide logistical support and technical expertise to local law enforcement and volunteer organizations, including provision of equipment, search management, and planning operational support.
- Train and support volunteer resources through professional conferences, local seminars, and practical exercises.
- Review training plans submitted by volunteer organizations.
- Manage worker's compensation program for volunteer search and rescue participants while engaged in search and rescue activities.
- Coordinate resources with the rescue coordination components of the Alaska National Guard and U.S. Coast Guard to meet the requirements of the National Search and Rescue Plan.
- Manage preventative programs to educate the public on wilderness-related risk and methods to mitigate risk and reduce the loss of life or injury to persons.
- Provide tuition-free classes to target audiences, including high school students and young adults, in avalanche-prone areas of the state. Emphasis is given to areas having a history of avalanche-related emergencies.
- Maintain, repair, supply, and track portable Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) for Department of Public Safety commissioned personnel to include Alaska State Troopers, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, Fire Life and Safety and Court Service Officers.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2023

The department responded to 506 SAR related incidents in FY2023, in comparison to 511 incidents in FY2022. These incidents included overdue hunters, snowmobilers, hikers, boaters, and medical evacuations off the road system. More than 678 persons were assisted, located, or recovered, in comparison to 805 persons in FY2022.

The department issued seven Silver Alerts and three Amber Alerts.

The department and SAR partners statewide responded to more than 60 emergency beacon alerts (102 in FY2022) and 36 reported aircraft crashes (30 in FY2022); these incidents included six aircraft fatality crashes, six aircraft injury crashes, and 24 aircraft crashes involving property damage only.

The department partnered with the Alaska Avalanche Information Center under contract to provide backcountry safety training to the public in Anchorage, Mat-Su, Copper River Basin, Fairbanks, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, Mt. Edgecumbe, Skagway, Haines, Valdez, Thompson Pass, Kenai, and Summit Lake.

The department continues to support the Alaska Search and Rescue Association (ASARA), with training, coordination, and administrative support. ASARA's mission is to provide volunteer SAR teams with funding for training and equipment, advocacy at the local and state level, and liaison with the department.

Under ASARA, the Alaska Incident Management Team (AIMT-SAR) strives to provide AST with a well-trained team to manage SAR missions which are large scale, complex, or extend into multiple operational periods. The team is also trained to provide virtual search support and plans.

SAR operations are complex and challenging missions that require coordination and cooperation among different agencies and resources. One of the resources that has been increasingly utilized in SAR operations is the Tactical Flight Officer (TFO). A TFO is a trained law enforcement officer who assists the pilot in operating the aircraft and provides aerial support to ground units. The department is relying heavily on SAR operations. For example, TFOs can use advanced equipment such as infrared cameras, night vision goggles, and mapping systems to locate missing persons, track suspects, or assess hazards. TFOs can also communicate with ground units and other aircraft to relay information and coordinate actions. TFOs enhance the safety and effectiveness of SAR operations by providing a valuable perspective and assistance from the air.

Key Component Challenges

Environmental factors in Alaska are unpredictable, making every SAR an emergency. The department is statutorily required to provide SAR operations for lost, missing, and the recovery of deceased persons on land. The department is responsible for land-based services regardless of location. The department receives assistance from federal, state, local, and volunteer agencies to perform this function. SAR decisions are based upon the likelihood of mission success under acceptable search conditions. The safety of searchers when evaluating the conditions is the highest priority. The department provides technical expertise and support to local SAR teams, local police departments, and VPSO personnel.

As the civil authority for Alaska search and rescue, the department must exhaust all available resources prior to requesting military assistance through the 11th Air Force Rescue Coordination Center on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson during land search and rescue missions. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is responsible for SAR operations at sea, and frequently assists the department with searches along Alaska's coastline. The U.S. Air Force has responsibility for searches of downed or missing aircraft, and like the USCG, will frequently assist the department during searches. Volunteers in communities across the state are often used in searches. This reliance on local assets and the use of volunteer resources is the primary responsibility of the department on search and rescue missions. When local resources are unavailable or unable to make the most effective rescue, the department will turn to the military for assistance. Maritime and inland searches involving USCG, or Air Force assets are not traditionally billed to the department in accordance with joint Memorandums of Understanding.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2025

The department will continue to support volunteer organizations with training, coordination of activities, and increased participation in joint activities statewide. The department expects to assist new volunteer organizations within the state to become operationally ready to respond to SAR operations. The department continues to identify gaps in response capabilities and finds ways to correct these discrepancies with training, inter-agency cooperation or partnerships. The department will continue to build quality relationships with local, state, and federal partners statewide to make SAR responses more efficient and effective for the citizens of Alaska.

The department will continue to develop bench strength for the SAR Coordinator position to include the State Emergency Operations Center – Emergency Management section.

The department is committed to modernizing the radio inventory by upgrading more users to Time Division Multiple Access capable radios, which will be mandatory by December of 2026. This upgrade should include all aircraft and vessel borne radios. Moreover, the department will use the APX Next radio systems by Motorola in areas that are not covered by ALMR radio network. These systems will allow for seamless integration with cellular communications networks, enhancing officer safety and improving service to the public in underserved rural areas of the state.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

DPS-Powers and duties of department (AS 44.41.020)
State Troopers (AS 18.65.010 - AS 18.65.110)
Police Protection (AS 18.65.010 - AS 18.65.790)

Law enforcement duties (AS 18.65.010 - AS 18.65.086)
Search & Rescue (AS 18.60.115 - AS 18.60.175)
Department to assist other agencies (AS 18.65.090)
Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse (AS 18.65.600 – AS 18.65.660)
Law Enforcement Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (AS 18.65.900 – AS 18.65.909)
Search and Rescue of Person (13AAC 20.005 – 13AAC 20.035)

Contact Information
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Component Detail All Funds
Department of Public Safety

Component: Search and Rescue (513)
RDU: Alaska State Troopers (160)

Non-Formula Component

	FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Enrolled	FY2024 Authorized	FY2024 Management Plan	FY2025 Governor Adjusted Base	FY2025 Governor	FY2024 Management Plan vs FY2025 Governor		
1000 Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%	
2000 Travel	21.6	60.0	60.0	12.5	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0%	
3000 Services	106.1	180.0	180.0	227.5	227.5	227.5	0.0	0.0%	
4000 Commodities	25.8	77.0	77.0	77.0	77.0	77.0	0.0	0.0%	
5000 Capital Outlay	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%	
7000 Grants, Benefits	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%	
8000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%	
Totals	153.5	317.0	317.0	317.0	317.0	317.0	0.0	0.0%	
Fund Sources:									
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)	153.5	317.0	317.0	317.0	317.0	317.0	0.0	0.0%	
Unrestricted General (UGF)	153.5	317.0	317.0	317.0	317.0	317.0	0.0	0.0%	
Designated General (DGF)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%	
Other Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%	
Federal Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%	
Positions:									
Permanent Full Time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	
Permanent Part Time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	
Non Permanent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	

Change Record Detail - Multiple Scenarios with Descriptions
Department of Public Safety

Component: Search and Rescue (513)
RDU: Alaska State Troopers (160)

Scenario/Change Record Title	Trans Type	Totals	Personal Services	Travel	Services	Commodities	Capital Outlay	Grants, Benefits	Miscellaneous	Positions		NP
										PFT	PPT	
***** Changes From FY2024 Enrolled To FY2024 Authorized *****												
FY2024 Enrolled												
1004 Gen Fund	Enrolled	317.0	0.0	60.0	180.0	77.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
		317.0										
	Subtotal	317.0	0.0	60.0	180.0	77.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
***** Changes From FY2024 Authorized To FY2024 Management Plan *****												
Align Authority with Anticipated Expenditures												
	LIT	0.0	0.0	-47.5	47.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Transfer authority from travel for anticipated services costs. The remaining authority is sufficient to cover anticipated expenditures.												
	Subtotal	317.0	0.0	12.5	227.5	77.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
***** Changes From FY2025 Governor Adjusted Base To FY2025 Governor *****												
	Totals	317.0	0.0	12.5	227.5	77.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0

Line Item Detail (1676)
Department of Public Safety
Travel

Component: Search and Rescue (513)

Line Number	Line Name		FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Management Plan	FY2025 Governor
2000	Travel		21.6	12.5	12.5
Object Class	Servicing Agency	Explanation	FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Management Plan	FY2025 Governor
2000 Travel Detail Totals			21.6	12.5	12.5
2000	In-State Employee Travel	Travel for search and rescue missions or to attend specialized training.	9.5	2.5	2.5
2001	In-State Non-Employee Travel	Volunteer search and rescue mission travel.	12.1	10.0	10.0

Line Item Detail (1676)
Department of Public Safety
Services

Component: Search and Rescue (513)

Line Number	Line Name		FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Management Plan	FY2025 Governor
3000	Services		106.1	227.5	227.5
Object Class	Servicing Agency	Explanation	FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Management Plan	FY2025 Governor
3000 Services Detail Totals			106.1	227.5	227.5
3000	Education Services	Emergency response public education training courses, conferences, workshops and memberships.	12.0	45.0	45.0
3004	Telecommunications	Phone and cellular service.	0.6	2.0	2.0
3006	Delivery Services	Freight, postage or courier services.	0.3	2.0	2.0
3008	Utilities	Propane or other utility costs in support of SAR missions.	0.0	2.0	2.0
3009	Structure/Infrastructure/Land	Room and space rental for conferences or meetings.	0.1	3.0	3.0
3010	Equipment/Machinery	Equipment maintenance, improvement or repair costs.	31.1	64.5	64.5
3011	Other Services	Other services in support of public awareness, training or program manual printing costs.	-0.1	15.0	15.0
3020	Inter-Agency Building Maintenance	Trans - Department-wide	0.1	2.0	2.0
3033	Inter-Agency Aircraft	PubSaf - Aircraft Section (2537)	62.0	92.0	92.0

Line Item Detail (1676)
Department of Public Safety
Commodities

Component: Search and Rescue (513)

Line Number	Line Name		FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Management Plan	FY2025 Governor
4000	Commodities		25.8	77.0	77.0
Object Class	Servicing Agency	Explanation	FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Management Plan	FY2025 Governor
4000 Commodities Detail Totals			25.8	77.0	77.0
4000	Business	Consumable office supplies used for training materials or command post demonstrations.	1.6	5.0	5.0
4002	Household/Institutional	Field rations or food for search and rescue volunteers, special protective gear or other welfare items.	1.1	5.0	5.0
4004	Safety	Safety and first aid supplies.	4.6	8.0	8.0
4013	Lube Oils/Grease/Solvents	Maintenance supplies for emergency equipment.	0.3	2.0	2.0
4015	Parts and Supplies	Parts used for repairs and maintenance on emergency equipment.	1.0	7.0	7.0
4019	Small Tools/Minor Equipment	Small tools and minor equipment purchased for search and rescue missions.	1.3	3.0	3.0
4020	Equipment Fuel	Search and rescue vehicle fuel.	15.9	47.0	47.0

Inter-Agency Services (1682)
Department of Public Safety

Component: Search and Rescue (513)

				FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Management Plan	FY2025 Governor
Component Totals				62.1	94.0	94.0
With Department of Transportation and Public Facilities				0.1	2.0	2.0
With Department of Public Safety				62.0	92.0	92.0
Object Class	Servicing Agency	Explanation		FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Management Plan	FY2025 Governor
3020	Inter-Agency Building Maintenance	Trans - Department-wide	RSA with DOT for headquarters yard maintenance and snow removal.	0.1	2.0	2.0
3033	Inter-Agency Aircraft	PubSaf - Aircraft Section (2537)	RSA with AWT aircraft section for use of state aircraft during missions.	62.0	92.0	92.0