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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
Headquarters US Air Force
Washington DC 20330

AF REGULATION 55-18

14 April 1971

Operations

LOCAL BASE RESCUE

This regulation states the policy, responsibilities, and procedures for employing Local Base Rescue (LBR) helicopter detachments and other related crash-rescue resources in support thereof.

1. Organization of LBR Detachments. An LBR detachment consists of Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) personnel and equipment, supported and augmented, as required, by appropriate host-base personnel.

2. LBR Detachment Mission. The LBR detachment's primary mission is to provide rescue capability for the host-base flying operations by response to emergencies/occurrences on or in the vicinity of that installation. LBR detachments will also provide assistance under the National SAR Plan and will deploy to support other contingency operations in both combat and peacetime environments as directed by competent authority.

3. Air Force Policy:

a. This regulation will not be construed as restricting prompt and effective search and rescue (SAR) actions by other agencies or individuals.

b. The primary alert LBR helicopter will not be used for support missions that would degrade the rescue alert capability. Use of the remaining LBR helicopter(s) is authorized for support missions as stated in AFR 23-19; however, this use must not jeopardize the fulfillment of the primary SAR mission.

c. To prevent duplication of SAR efforts and coverage, the host wing/base commander, with assistance from the LBR detachment commander, will establish local procedures to provide LBR support for other agencies. Direct communication is authorized between major commands, bases, and units to ensure proper application of all rescue efforts.

d. The simultaneous use of an LBR helicopter and ground firefighting vehicles in fire suppression operations at an actual fire, under certain circumstances, hinders fire suppression and impedes effective aircrew recovery. Hence, helicopters will not participate in actual joint fire suppression operations with the fire department vehicles, except as directed by the senior fire department representative in command at the crash scene.

e. LBR helicopters will not be used routinely for patient transfer or medical evacuation missions. This restriction does not preclude emergency medical evacuation.

f. LBR helicopters will not be used for salvage operations unless approved by the Commander, ARRS.

4. Responsibility of the Commander, ARRS. This commander:

a. Exercises command, administrative, and technical control over all LBR forces.

Supersedes AFR 55-18, 18 August 1965. For summary of revised, deleted, or added material, see signature page.)

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b. Prepares directives for LBR helicopter operations to ensure uniformity of operations, policies, procedures, and techniques.

5. Responsibility of the Host Wing/Base Commander. This commander:

a. Supports the LBR detachment as stated in AFR 11-4.

b. Provides adequate facilities under AFM 86-1. The helicopter alert pad will be in close proximity to the LBR alert crew facility to ensure scramble response.

c. Provides compatible two-way radio communications between the LBR helicopters and controlling emergency ground element(s). Communication frequency assignment will be as prescribed in AFM 100-31.

d. Ensures that base medical and fire-fighter personnel are trained and available as necessary to support the LBR alert posture.

e. Ensures that the LBR detachment is included in appropriate annexes to the base disaster preparedness plan.

f. Ensures that the fire department and LBR detachment conduct joint training, at least semiannually, to provide for effective coordination in the assumption/transfer of command control at the crash scene as prescribed in attachment 1.

6. Alert Posture. The host wing/base commander will establish an alert posture based on the operational requirements of the local flying mission and within the limitations of available LBR resources. A scramble capability will be established when the frequency, volume, and type of flying warrant. A less stringent response capability may be maintained at other selected times. If alert requirements exceed the capability of the authorized LBR force, the host wing/base commander may initiate requests for additional LBR resources through command channels to HQ USAF.

7. Selective Response. A selective response system will be established to provide the optimum rescue response to all emergencies. The host wing/base commander, with assistant from the LBR detachment commander, will categorize emergencies according to types and severity. The LBR detachment will respond as follows:

a. Category I—Scramble with fire suppression agent.

b. Category II—Scramble without fire suppression agent.

c. Category III—Maintain cockpit alert with rotors engaged.

d. Category IV—Standby as required.

8. Operational Control. In the prosecution of SAR incidents on or in the vicinity of the installation to which assigned, operational control is vested in the host wing/base commander. The senior fire department representative has operational control once he has assumed on-scene commander responsibility at the crash scene. At all other times, the Commander, ARRS, as executive agent of the Air Force for SAR, will retain operational control. The LBR detachment commander makes the final decision to dispatch a helicopter if there is doubt that the helicopter or crew is capable of successfully accomplishing the mission. Ultimately, however, safe operation of the LBR aircraft remains the responsibility of the aircraft commander. The LBR detachment commander maintains operational control of attached personnel when they are performing scramble alert with the LBR detachment.

9. SAR Support. The controlling Rescue Coordination Center (RCC), in coordination with the host wing/base commander, may divert LBR resources as required to prosecute SAR missions. When diversion is required, the RCC will insure that the host wing/base commander concerned is briefed on the situation, including the estimated length of the diversion.