

## CHAPTER V: EMERGENCY RESPONSE READINESS

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### CHAPTER V Emergency Response Readiness

Adventure tourism is designed to bring people into the area to do fun and exciting activities. The type of activities that will come with the addition of the trails will require emergency responders to be trained and equipped for more technical types of rescue. The area that these activities will take place is somewhat remote and often very rugged. There is a likelihood people may become lost or injured in locations where it may be difficult for an emergency team to both locate and access.

The geography of the proposed trail area has steep slopes along the sides of the trail, lots of rock out crops or cliffs and the chance one might run into dangerous wildlife. To the adventure seekers, these are the very attributes that will draw people to come and experience these trails. These same attributes also have a tendency to increase the chance of accidents. With the vertical drops and general steepness of the terrain, there is also the real possibility that a person or horse could fall down an incline or over a cliff and the local emergency response team needs to be prepared to handle these situations.



The physical location of Kingdom Come State Park is in close proximity to the City of Cumberland and within minutes of three hospitals. The hospitals include the Tri Cities Medical Center in Cumberland (9 miles and 13 minutes from Park), Harlan Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH) in Harlan (28.7 miles and 36 minutes from Park), and Whitesburg ARH Hospital in Whitesburg (23 miles and 37 minutes from Park). This close proximity to medical facilities reduces the response time for emergency teams and equipment to arrive and the time that it will take to extricate a patient and get them to definitive care.

Ambulance Service Operations is provided by Life Care Ambulance Service out of Harlan. There is also a helicopter landing zone established in the City of Cumberland. It is recommended that a second landing zone be established at the ranger station at the top of Pine Mountain. Emergency radio communication within both Letcher and Harlan Counties is adequate with no upgrades needed at this time. Cell phone coverage is also adequate and is important for rescuers and trail users alike. Trail users may need to use cell phones to request assistance in the event of an emergency and, with the growing popularity of smart phones, can often provide much needed GPS coordinates to better direct rescuers to their location. Rescuers, in turn, may need to use cell phones to calm those in distress until help can arrive or transfer vital information that should not necessarily be aired over radios.

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Law Enforcement in the area is provided by Harlan County Sheriff's Department, and Kentucky State Police. Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife also has jurisdiction in that area. None of these departments provide any type of rescue services. When it comes to emergency response, local rescue squads are usually the first to respond to an emergency in the woods. Their responsibilities include locating the subject, treating any injuries and extrication of the subject if needed. Given the terrain, the squads in this area should be trained and equipped for Search & Rescue and High Angle Rescue. Search and Rescue (SAR) operations are overseen by the Kentucky Department of Emergency Management (KyEM) under KRS 39F.

Despite the recommendations listed below, this region is actually more advanced in their emergency response readiness than the majority of neighboring counties. The Tri-City Rescue Squad services the area of the proposed trails. It is strategically located within the City of Cumberland just minutes from the proposed connector trail access point. Harlan County Rescue Squad, based out of Harlan, is the secondary squad for this region. Both of these squads are classified as general rescue squad and recognized by the Kentucky Department of Emergency Management.

The equipment and training standards for a rescue squad specializing in search for lost, trapped or missing person fall under 106 KAR 1:350 section 8 and 106 KAR 1:390 section 4 respectfully. *See Appendix I for a complete list of required and recommended equipment and training for this and the other specialties noted below.*



According to Harlan County Emergency Management Director David McGill, both rescue squads have the adequate equipment for Search and Rescue, however, neither squad have the required training to classify as a squad specializing in Search and Rescue. And although both squads do have members certified in Basic Search and Rescue, they lack training in Search Management and Incident Command System. It is recommended that both squads expand their training to include Intermediate Search and Rescue, Search Management, Lost Person Behavior and Man Tracking.

The equipment and training for rescue squads specializing in High Angle Rescue fall under 106 KAR 1:350 section 6 and 160 KAR 1:390 section 8 respectfully. The Harlan County Rescue Squad currently satisfies the equipment requirements for High Angle Rescue and has four members certified in High Angle Rescue but the Tri-City Rescue Squad has neither the training nor the equipment for this type of rescue.

It is recommended that for every technician on a line, there needs to be five people to support the rescuer. All six of these personnel need to be trained to at least the operations level certification of High Angle Rescue. The rescuer going on the rope needs to be trained to a technician level certification.

The Tri City Rescue Squad should, at a minimum, have all its members trained to the operations level so they can support the operations of Harlan County Rescue with the intent to eventually have the entire

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squad obtain both the equipment and training to be prepared as the initial responding squad. Harlan County Rescue Squad should also train additional personnel in High Angle Rescue to at least the operations level.

While there are no current regulations or statutes within the KRS or KAR concerning Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue, this training teaches responders how to handle the unique emergencies involving livestock. There is training available and a suggested equipment list for this type of rescue available at [www.tlaer.org](http://www.tlaer.org).

A copy of the emergency pre-plan already in place for search and rescue (Emergency Support Function-9) was provided by Director McGill and is available in Appendix J. This plan is general and broad in nature and does not specify what entities are responsible for what duties in specific locations. It is recommended that the plan be revised to further define the roles, responsibilities and jurisdictions of the agencies involved within this ESF.