

# MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 8(E)(1)

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**TO:** Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**DATE:** March 17, 2026

**FROM:** Geri Bonzon-Keenan  
County Attorney

**SUBJECT:** Resolution authorizing Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) pay for employees of the Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department who are considered essential, full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, job-basis, and who are members of the Florida Task Force 1 (FL-TF1) USAR Team or an Incident Support Team (IST) established to manage and support the deployment of Usar Teams, when performing work in excess of the employee's normal work week related to the state or federal activation of the FL-TF1 USAR Team or IST, upon approval by the department director for such deployment, and until such time as the team is demobilized; directing the County Mayor to identify legally available funds in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 County budget, in future proposed budgets, and from other available sources to be used to fund USAR pay; authorizing and directing the County Mayor to execute and submit necessary documents to seek reimbursement for expense of usar pay

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The accompanying resolution was prepared by the Fire Rescue Department and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Roberto J. Gonzalez.

  
Geri Bonzon-Keenan  
County Attorney

GBK/uw

MDC001

# Memorandum



**Date:** March 17, 2026

**To:** Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**From:** Daniella Levine Cava *Daniella Levine Cava*  
Mayor

**Subject:** Resolution Authorizing Urban Search and Rescue Pay to Essential Exempt/Job Basis Miami-Dade Fire Rescue's Urban Search and Rescue Florida Task Force One

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## Summary

This item is to authorize Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) pay for Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR) Urban Search and Rescue Florida Task Force 1 (FL TF-1) essential, full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, job-basis personnel, who on occasion are called upon to respond to a State or Federal activation for deployment, subject to approval by the MDFR Director. These deployments include both FL TF-1 itself or as members of Incident Support Teams (IST) that are formed and deployed to manage and support the USAR teams. Lastly, deployments may occur as either a State or Federal asset and are funded accordingly.

This request will allow all FL TF-1 or IST, essential, full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, job-basis personnel designated for deployment to be eligible for USAR compensation. "Exempt" employees are employees who are classified as exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements under the Fair Labor Standards Act, and therefore do not receive overtime pay. Exempt, job-basis employees who work during a declared emergency will receive their usual salary for their regular scheduled workweek. Upon approval of the MDFR Director, exempt and job basis employees performing emergency work will be compensated at a rate equivalent to 150% of the rate applicable to such employee's salary rate, for the time such employee works in excess of their regular scheduled work week. This compensation applies only during State and Federal activation until the team is demobilized.

Compensating MDFR's essential, full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, job-basis personnel during disaster response is a necessary step to address inequities, maintain operational effectiveness, and support Miami-Dade County's leadership in disaster management. This would ensure MDFR continues to provide experienced personnel for disaster response, benefiting Miami-Dade County, the State of Florida, and the Nation.

## Recommendation

It is recommended that the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners (Board) approve the attached resolution authorizing the County Mayor to compensate FL-TF1, essential, full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, job-basis personnel who respond to state and federal activations. MDFR seeks to have FL TF-1, compensated at a rate equivalent to 150% of the rate applicable to such employee's salary rate, for the time such employee works in excess of their regular scheduled work week.

## Scope

The services provided will be determined by the State or Federal USAR programs in accordance with established agreements.

**Delegation of Authority**

The County Mayor or Mayor's designee is authorized to provide USAR pay to USAR FL TF-1 and IST essential, full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, job-basis personnel.

**Fiscal Impact/Funding Source**

The estimated fiscal impact of this resolution is \$100,933.12 per deployment and will be funded through the Fire District. Eligible personnel expenses incurred during the deployment of FL TF-1 as a State or Federal asset may be reimbursed by the State or Federal government as appropriate, pursuant to existing agreements between the County and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency, as well as the State of Florida Division of Emergency Management.

**Track Record/Monitor**

The Agreement will be monitored by Assistant Chief, Jason Fernandez, or other supervisory personnel.

**Background**

Personnel from MDFR's State of Florida's Urban Search and Rescue Task Florida Task Force One, are activated as essential employees of the State and National Urban Search and Rescue systems. Exempt and job basis employees who are activated as part of FL TF-1 are currently exempt from additional pay and overtime pay.

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR) plays a critical role in disaster response efforts at the local, state, and national levels. During declared disasters, senior-level fire service personnel frequently fill essential leadership positions locally, regionally, at the state and federal levels. These roles are pivotal for effective incident management and coordination. However, MDFR's inability to compensate full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, and job-basis employees exempt job-basis employees serving in these positions' risks limiting their participation, which could compromise operational effectiveness.

As the largest fire department in Florida, MDFR consistently provides personnel to support disaster response before, during, and after incidents. This includes filling senior-level positions crucial to managing complex operations. Despite this, many of these personnel cannot be compensated under the current policy, potentially reducing their availability to participate fully in disaster response activities. Allowing compensation for full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, and job-basis employees personnel during disaster response would yield multiple benefits such as:

- Enhance Miami-Dade County's ability to support disaster operations with experienced personnel.
- Ensure personnel gain valuable experience that can be applied to local incidents, improving preparedness and response within the county.



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Arnold Palmer  
Chief, Public Safety Officer

# Memorandum



**Date:** March 5, 2026  
**To:** Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator  
Miami-Dade County  
**From:** Raied S. Jadallah, Fire Chief  
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR)

**Subject:** Request to Process Late Departmental Agenda Item – USAR Pay

I am requesting that the following item be placed on the March 9, 2026, Safety and Health Committee Agenda and once heard at Committee forwarded to the May 5, 2026, Board Meeting.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE (USAR) PAY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT WHO ARE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL, FULL-TIME, EXEMPT, SALARIED, NON-BARGAINING, JOB-BASIS, AND WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA TASK FORCE 1 (FL-TF1) USAR TEAM OR AN INCIDENT SUPPORT TEAM (IST) ESTABLISHED TO MANAGE AND SUPPORT THE DEPLOYMENT OF USAR TEAMS, WHEN PERFORMING WORK IN EXCESS OF THE EMPLOYEE'S NORMAL WORK WEEK RELATED TO THE STATE OR FEDERAL ACTIVATION OF THE FL-TF1 USAR TEAM OR IST, UPON APPROVAL BY THE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR FOR SUCH DEPLOYMENT, AND UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE TEAM IS DEMOBILIZED; DIRECTING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR COUNTY MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO IDENTIFY LEGALLY AVAILABLE FUNDS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 COUNTY BUDGET, IN FUTURE PROPOSED BUDGETS, AND FROM OTHER AVAILABLE SOURCES TO BE USED TO FUND USAR PAY; AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR COUNTY MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE AND SUBMIT NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO SEEK REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSE OF USAR PAY

Although this item has not met the noticed deadline and has been provided to the Agenda Coordination Office late, it is critical to MDFR. Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) members perform highly specialized and mission-critical functions essential to the County's emergency response capabilities. Maintaining this level of operational readiness necessitates continuous training, certification, and preparedness for rapid deployment in accordance with federal and state standards. Approving compensation for USAR members ensures compliance with established requirements, supports the retention of specialized personnel, and upholds the County's ability to provide effective, timely, and life-safety-focused responses to high-risk incidents. This approval directly contributes to the overall safety, resilience, and continuity of services for the community.

I am aware that this item is subject to approval for placement on the agenda by the BCC Chairperson, and review by the Office of the County Attorney. Therefore, please process the item notwithstanding that the 4-day rule may be applicable to these items.

Approved by Mayor or Mayor's Designee Signature

Arnold Palmer, Chief of Public Safety

Print Name

Approved by Legislative Affairs Director Signature

Demetria Henderson

Print Name

c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney  
Jess McCarty, First Assistant County Attorney  
[CAOagenda@miamidadegov](mailto:CAOagenda@miamidadegov)



**MEMORANDUM**  
(Revised)

**TO:** Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**DATE:** March 17, 2026

**FROM:**   
Gen Bonzon-Keenan  
County Attorney

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item No. 8(E)(1)

Please note any items checked.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **“3-Day Rule” for committees applicable if raised**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Budget required**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Statement of fiscal impact required**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Statement of social equity required**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor’s report for public hearing**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **No committee review**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3’s present \_\_\_\_, 2/3 membership \_\_\_\_, 3/5’s \_\_\_\_, unanimous \_\_\_\_, majority plus one \_\_\_\_, CDMP 7 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) \_\_\_\_, CDMP 2/3 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3) (h) or (4)(c) \_\_\_\_, CDMP 9 vote requirement per 2-116.1(4)(c) (2) \_\_\_\_)** to approve
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Mayor  
Veto \_\_\_\_\_  
Override \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda Item No. 8(E)(1)  
3-17-26

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE (USAR) PAY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT WHO ARE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL, FULL-TIME, EXEMPT, SALARIED, NON-BARGAINING, JOB-BASIS, AND WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA TASK FORCE 1 (FL-TF1) USAR TEAM OR AN INCIDENT SUPPORT TEAM (IST) ESTABLISHED TO MANAGE AND SUPPORT THE DEPLOYMENT OF USAR TEAMS, WHEN PERFORMING WORK IN EXCESS OF THE EMPLOYEE'S NORMAL WORK WEEK RELATED TO THE STATE OR FEDERAL ACTIVATION OF THE FL-TF1 USAR TEAM OR IST, UPON APPROVAL BY THE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR FOR SUCH DEPLOYMENT, AND UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE TEAM IS DEMOBILIZED; DIRECTING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR COUNTY MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO IDENTIFY LEGALLY AVAILABLE FUNDS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 COUNTY BUDGET, IN FUTURE PROPOSED BUDGETS, AND FROM OTHER AVAILABLE SOURCES TO BE USED TO FUND USAR PAY; AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR COUNTY MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE AND SUBMIT NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO SEEK REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSE OF USAR PAY

**WHEREAS**, this Board desires to accomplish the purposes outlined in the accompanying memorandum, a copy of which is incorporated herein by reference; and

**WHEREAS**, FL-TF1 is an asset of both the State and Federal Urban Search and Rescue ("USAR") programs, and its members also serve as assets on both State and Federal Incident Support Teams ("IST"); and

**WHEREAS**, as set forth in the Miami-Dade County Leave Manual and Pay Plan, job-basis personnel are not eligible for overtime compensation; and

**WHEREAS**, as used herein, “exempt” refers to employees who are exempt from the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. 201 *et seq.*, pertaining to overtime compensation and other labor standards; and

**WHEREAS**, essential, full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, and job-basis County employees in the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department (“MDFR”) that are members of FL -TF1 USAR Team or an IST established to manage and support the deployment of USAR teams are often required to work in excess of their customary workweek during State or Federal activations when responding to disasters; and

**WHEREAS**, the County, through MDFR, has entered a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, acting through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”), and the State of Florida, regarding the County’s participation in the National USAR Response System; and

**WHEREAS**, the County has also entered a Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement with the State of Florida, Division of Emergency Management, which governs the provision and receipt of aid in a wide range of emergencies and disasters that could cause the disruption of essential services and the destruction of the infrastructure needed to deliver those services; and

**WHEREAS**, these agreements include procedures and deadlines for the County to seek reimbursement from the State or Federal government for eligible costs incurred by the County when rendering assistance, including personnel expenses of FL-TF1 USAR or IST team members who are deployed as State or Federal assets,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,** that this Board:

**Section 1.** Approves the foregoing recitals, which are incorporated herein by reference.

**Section 2.** Authorizes the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to compensate essential, full-time, exempt, salaried, non-bargaining, and job-basis FL-TF1 USAR or IST team member employees of MDFR, at a rate equivalent to 150% of the rate applicable to such employee's salary rate, for the time such employee works in excess of their regular scheduled work week during State or Federal activations of such teams for response to disasters when such employees are required to perform such work. Eligibility for such pay will occur upon the receipt of approved State or Federal mission orders and approval of the MDFR Director and will conclude upon the demobilization of the team or employee.

**Section 3.** Directs the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to identify available funds in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget and in future proposed budgets to fund the USAR pay authorized in this resolution.

**Section 4.** Authorizes and directs the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to execute and submit all necessary documents to seek reimbursement from the Florida Division of Emergency Management, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and any other appropriate State or Federal agencies for the personnel expenses incurred by the County as a result of this USAR pay.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Commissioner , who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

- |                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Anthony Rodriguez, Chairman     |                        |
| Kionne L. McGhee, Vice Chairman |                        |
| Marleine Bastien                | Juan Carlos Bermudez   |
| Sen. René García                | Oliver G. Gilbert, III |
| Roberto J. Gonzalez             | Keon Hardemon          |
| Danielle Cohen Higgins          | Vicki L. Lopez         |
| Natalie Milian Orbis            | Raquel A. Regalado     |
| Micky Steinberg                 |                        |

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 17<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
BY ITS BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JUAN FERNANDEZ-BARQUIN, CLERK

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as  
to form and legal sufficiency.



Marlon D. Moffett