



SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FIRE

a Division of South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

South Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team

141 Monticello Trail • Columbia, SC 29203

(803) 896-9800

www.statefire.llr.sc.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Amy Williamson, Public Information Officer
SC State Fire
amy.williamson@llr.sc.gov
803-429-4201

October 7, 2026

SC-HART CONDUCTS MULTI-COUNTY HELICOPTER RESCUE TRAINING IN UPSTATE



PICKENS, S.C. – The South Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (SC-HART) is conducting a training exercise this week in Greenville, Pickens and Oconee counties, bringing together military aviation crews, civilian rescue specialists and local emergency responders to strengthen South Carolina’s helicopter rescue capabilities. The exercise includes land and water-based helicopter rescue scenarios designed to strengthen rescue proficiency and coordination among state, regional and local responders.

SC-HART is a partnership among SC-Task Force 1, under the direction of SC State Fire; the South Carolina Emergency Management Division; the South Carolina Army National Guard; and the State Law Enforcement Division. The partnership combines highly trained rescue personnel with specialized military and law enforcement aviation capabilities to reach people in environments where traditional rescue methods may not be possible.

“SC-HART is built on partnerships, and those relationships have to be established long before an emergency occurs,” SC State Fire Marshal Jonathan Jones said. “Training together ensures our personnel, aviation crews and local responders are prepared to operate as one team when someone needs to be rescued.”

This week’s exercise extends that partnership with Greenville, Pickens and Oconee counties, where local emergency management and response agencies are supporting training scenarios within their jurisdictions. The exercise specifically focuses on improving interoperability, operational communications, and coordination among participating agencies.

“The counties are a critical part of this training because ultimately SC-HART exists to support local communities,” Jones said. “When a county requests this capability, we need to be ready to integrate quickly with the people already working on the ground. Exercises like this allow us to build those relationships and practice that coordination before lives depend on it.”

The three counties notified residents in advance of the exercise and are providing targeted public notifications in areas where training activity may be seen or heard. Residents may notice helicopters operating at lower altitudes, as well as emergency response personnel and vehicles. This activity is part of the planned training exercise.

SC-HART is available statewide when requested through the state’s emergency response system and maintains capabilities for helicopter hoist operations and land and water-based rescue. Team members train year-round to maintain the specialized skills and coordination needed to perform complex rescue missions.

“SC-HART is a capability we hope communities never need, but when they do, we have to be ready,” Jones said. “That readiness comes from training like this.”

[Click here for more information about SC-HART.](#)