

American Red Cross Role in Disaster Response

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October 11, 2006

The American Red Cross Mission

The American Red Cross, a humanitarian organization led by volunteers and guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement, will provide relief to victims of disasters and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

The Fundamental Principles

- **Humanity**
- **Impartiality**
- **Neutrality**
- **Independence**
- **Voluntary Service**
- **Unity**
- **Universality**

Who is the American Red Cross?

- Chartered by Congress in 1905 to provide assistance in the time of disaster and to mitigate suffering caused by disasters.
- Nationwide network of 804 community-based chapters.
- Eight Service Areas.
- 35 blood services regions.
- 1 million volunteers and 30,000 employees.



Key Services

- **Armed Forces Emergency Services**
- **Biomedical Services**
- **Disaster Services**
- **Health & Safety Services**
- **International Services**

Introduction to Disaster Services

- The American Red Cross responds to more than 70,000 disasters every year.
- Red Cross chapters form the cornerstone of the organization's response to disaster, initiating a response whenever a disaster occurs within their jurisdiction.
- When a disaster is so large that it exceeds the capacity of a chapter and its community to respond, the broader Red Cross network of people and resources is activated.
- Services are provided to disaster victims no matter what the size or scope of the disaster.

Introduction to Disaster Services

- Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting people's immediate emergency disaster-caused needs.
- In addition to immediate services, Red Cross response also includes needed referrals, materials and financial assistance.
- Assistance is provided to individuals and families to enable them to resume their normal daily activities as quickly as possible in order to get them back to normalcy or until further long-term assistance becomes available.

Expectations of the American Red Cross

- Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting the emergency disaster-caused needs of individuals and families.
 - shelter, food, and health and mental health services, which address basic human needs.
- Red Cross helps individuals and families to resume their normal daily activities independently. This may include a referral or a way to pay for what is needed most:
 - groceries, new clothes, rent, emergency home repairs, transportation, household items, medicines, and occupational tools.
- The Red Cross may also help those needing long-term recovery assistance when all other available resources, including insurance, government, private, and community assistance, are either unavailable or inadequate to meet the needs.
- All assistance is based on verified disaster-caused needs and all assistance is free — a gift as a result of the generous support of the American people.

Authority and Legal Status of Red Cross Disaster Services

- In providing disaster relief, the American Red Cross has both a legal and a moral mandate that it has neither the authority nor the right to surrender.
- The Red Cross has both the power and the duty to act in disaster, and prompt action is clearly expected and supported by the public.
- The Red Cross authority to perform disaster services was formalized when the organization was chartered by the Congress of the United States in 1905.
- Among other provisions, this charter charged the Red Cross —
...to continue and carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace and apply the same in mitigating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry on measures for preventing the same. — U.S. Congress, Act of January 5, 1905, as amended, 36 U.S.C

The Stafford Act and FEMA

- Red Cross authority to provide disaster services was reaffirmed in Federal law in Sec. 302(b)(3) of the 1988 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (P.L. 93-288 as amended), which states —
... nothing contained in this Act shall limit or in any way affect the responsibilities of the American National Red Cross under the Act of January 5, 1905...
- This law defines the role of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and makes it responsible for coordinating the federal response to situations for which the President of the United States issues a disaster declaration.
- The Red Cross and FEMA cooperate under a *Statement of Understanding between the Federal Emergency Management Agency and The American National Red Cross*, which outlines the respective roles and describes how the two agencies work together.

Red Cross Role in the National Response Plan

- “Primary” agency for Mass Care under ESF #6 / Mass Care, Housing and Human Services
- Red Cross will still provide services to include —
 - Shelter
 - Feeding
 - Basic first aid and referral
 - Disaster Welfare Information
 - Bulk distribution of emergency relief items
- FEMA is co-Primary Agency responsible for Housing and Human Services; FEMA is also the ESF Coordinator for ESF #6

Red Cross Role in the National Response Plan

- Red Cross is also a “Support” agency to the following —
 - ESF #3 — Public Works & Engineering
 - ESF #5 — Emergency Management
 - ESF #8 — Public Health & Medical Services
 - ESF #11 — Agriculture & Natural Resources
 - ESF #14 — Long Term Community Recovery and Mitigation
 - ESF #15 — External Affairs

Red Cross Role in the National Response Plan

- Red Cross is listed as a “Cooperating” agency to the following “Support” Annexes —
 - Financial Management
 - International Coordination
 - Private Sector Coordination
 - Public Affairs
 - Tribal Relations
- Red Cross is listed as a “Cooperating” agency to the following “Incident” Annexes —
 - Biological
 - Catastrophic
 - Nuclear/Radiological



**Mass Care
Shelters
Feeding
First Aid
Family Links**



**Casework Services
Recovery Information
Financial Assistance
Mental Health**

State / Local Governments

Overall Coordination of Relief Effort

Safety and Evacuation Measures

Public Health Services/Special Needs Shelters and Support

Fire and Police Protection

Repairs Public Buildings and Infrastructure

**Disaster
Incident/
Victims**

Federal Government—National Response Plan Department of Homeland Security—FEMA

**Temporary Housing and Repairs
Loans to Business
Disaster Unemployment
Veteran's Assistance**

**Grants and Loans to Individual Families
Crisis Counseling and Referral
Tax Relief
Medical and Health Services (HHS)**

The American Red Cross Disaster Response System

- The American Red Cross, through its network of chapters, service delivery units and national headquarter operations, provides disaster relief services to people affected by disasters 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.
- Through this network of well-trained volunteers and generous donations from people throughout the country, the Red Cross is able to provide the immediate basic needs of disaster victims.
- Each chapter has a direct and interconnected responsibility for ensuring response to disasters.
- The chapter in whose jurisdiction a disaster occurs is responsible for the initial response to that disaster.
- That chapter quickly assesses the situation, determines if the disaster-caused needs can be met using only its resources, and initiates a disaster response. If the resources of the chapter are inadequate or unavailable, they immediately expand the search for resources.
- The affected chapter contacts adjacent chapters with which it has mutual aid agreements and requests those chapters provide the needed support.



The American Red Cross Disaster Services Program

The Disaster Services Program ensures quality services are delivered in a uniform, consistent, and responsive manner throughout the United States and its territories.

Services provided include —

- **Disaster Planning**
- **Preparedness**
- **Community Disaster Education**
- **Mitigation**
- **Response**

Special Provision of Response Related to Wisconsin and Home Rule

The authority vested in the Red Cross makes unnecessary the issuance of special permission or license by state or local governments for the Red Cross to activate and carry out its relief program; nor can any state, territorial or local government deny the right of the Red Cross to render its services in accordance with the congressional mandate and its own policies and under its own administration.

American Red Cross in Wisconsin

- + Badger Chapter, Madison
- + ARC of Southeast Wisconsin, Milwaukee
- + South Central Wisconsin, Janesville
- + Scenic Bluffs Chapter, La Crosse
- + West Bend Chapter, West Bend
- + Sheboygan Co. Chapter, Sheboygan
- + Outagamie County Chapter, Appleton
- + Neenah-Menasha Chapter, Neenah
- + Portage Co. Chapter, Stevens Point
- + Marathon Co. Chapter, Wausau
- + Fond du Lac Co. Chapter, Fond du Lac
- + Lakeland Chapter, Green Bay
- + Chippewa Valley Chapter, Eau Claire
- + East Central Wisconsin, Oshkosh
- + Wood County Chapter, Wisconsin Rapids
- + Manitowac-Calumet Counties Chapter, Manitowac

16 chapters

American Red Cross in Wisconsin

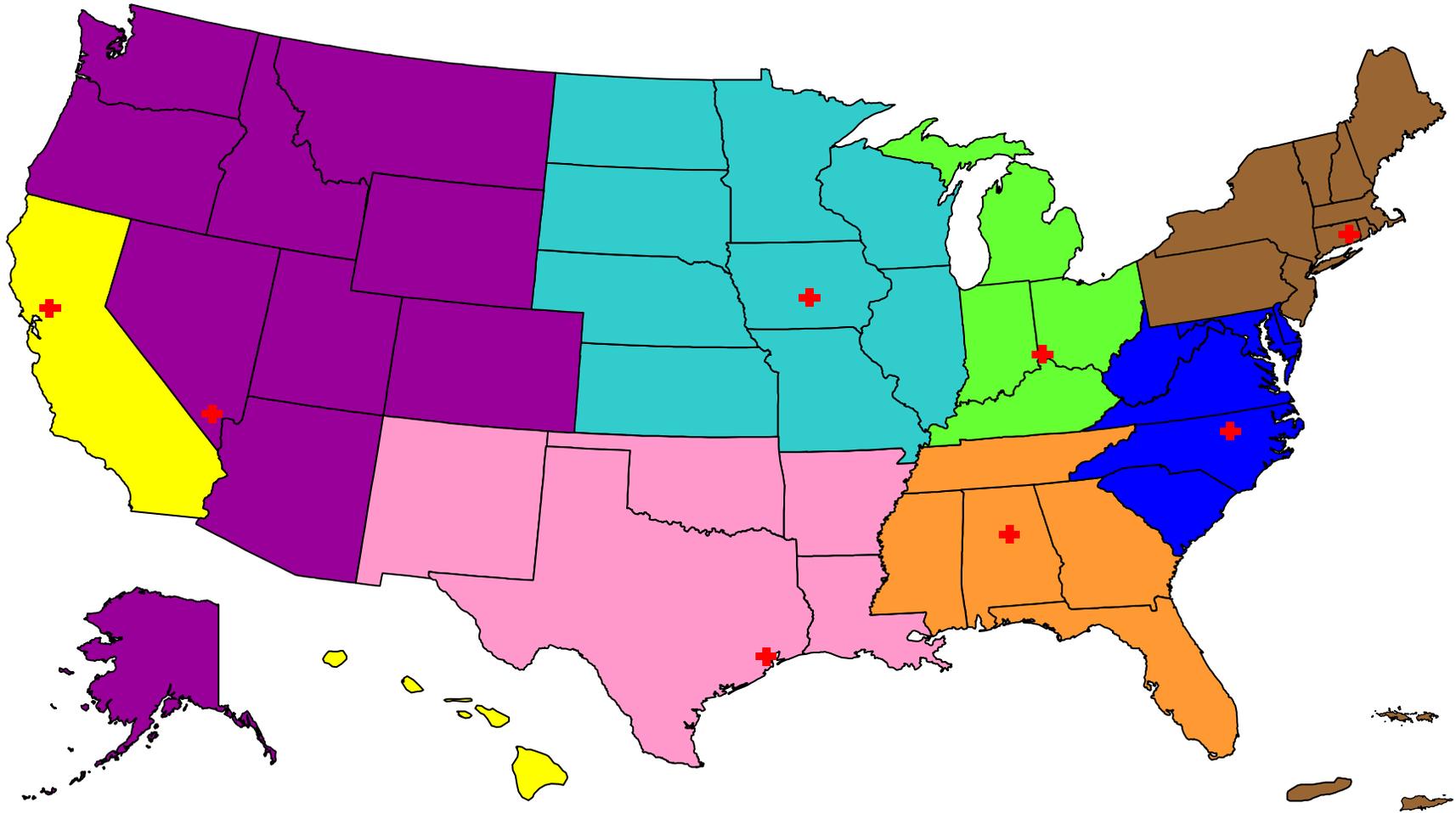


Service Areas

- The Preparedness and Response unit of the Red Cross Service Area is responsible for ensuring both the effectiveness of the initial response and for deploying resources from other Red Cross chapters within the defined jurisdiction to support, supplement, and expand the response to the disaster.
- The Service Area notifies the Disaster Operations Center at national headquarters whenever a Major Disaster occurs within the jurisdiction or there is an anticipation of the need for human, material, or financial resources from the national organization.



Service Areas



National Coordination

- The Disaster Operation Center (DOC) at national headquarters is the 24-hour operational unit of Disaster Services at the national level.
- The DOC receives the information from the Service Area about the disaster incident. If the incident affects more than one Red Cross chapter, the Service Area provides a consolidated report to the DOC.
- Staff at the DOC provide guidance, direction, and support to aid in the response.
- In conjunction with those units and based upon information about the structure, resources, capacity, and capability of the units involved, a determination is made as to the national resources that may be required to ensure the delivery of the full range of disaster services.

National Coordination (cont.)

- The DOC then makes immediate arrangement for the deployment of whatever additional human, material, or financial support may be required.
- The Staff Deployment Center, using the Disaster Services Human Resources (DSHR) System, locates, assigns, and deploys paid and volunteer staff from Red Cross units nationwide to the scene of the disaster.
- If the disaster is beyond the capability of local staff, leadership staff for the operation may also be assigned.
- Material resources such as Emergency Response Vehicles, communication equipment, cots, blankets, and other relief supplies can be and are dispatched to the disaster area from around the country from pre-established warehouses and distribution centers.



Impact on State and Local Government

- Clarification of the respective roles of the Red Cross and state and local governments has long been recognized as essential to the conduct of disaster relief operations.
- Such clarification is achieved by means of state and local laws and ordinances, executive proclamations, and formal and informal understandings negotiated between the state and local governments and appropriate Red Cross units.

Partnering



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The American Red Cross as a Coordinator

- The Red Cross seeks and welcomes cooperation from other organizations in carrying out its responsibilities and seeks to serve as a channel for the generosity of the American people.
 - e.g. - The North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention prepared more than half of all meals provided by the American Red Cross in the 2006 Hurricane Season.
- In preparing for and responding to disasters, the Red Cross works with government agencies and civil authorities at all levels, other voluntary and nonprofit agencies, business and labor, and individuals and small groups.
 - e.g. - Lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina partnerships help Red Cross better prepare to respond more effectively and efficiently before the next disaster.
- In addition to directly assisting disaster victims, the Red Cross serves in both coordination and referral roles to match needs with resources.

How The Red Cross Interacts With Non-Governmental Agencies

- Building Community Response
- Partner Agency Shelter Training
- Formalized agreements (SOU/MOU)
- Southern Baptist Disaster Relief
- Mental Health and Health Associations
- Local collaborative agreements

Sheltering



Who Will The Red Cross Shelter?

- The terms "special care", "special needs" and "special needs population" have become catchall phrases used to describe both a segment of the population and the objects or services which they require to meet the demands of daily living over and above those needed by the population as a whole.
- No single definition exists for these terms, and the "needs" are often defined by the environment and the availability of family members, friends, or health care agency personnel to provide assistance, or "special care", for tasks which the individual cannot perform alone.

Who Will The Red Cross Shelter?

- All persons evacuating to a shelter fall into a "special needs" category as they are unable to meet the demands created by displacement from their homes without the assistance provided by the opening of the shelter.
- The use of catchall phrases to cover everything from the need for transportation to evacuate or obtain post-disaster assistance to the need for qualified, specially trained personnel to provide skilled medical services has weakened our organizational ability to address disparate requirements for assistance.

Sheltering

- The Red Cross recognizes that primary responsibility for the general health of a community in a disaster rests with the local public health authorities and medical, nursing, and health resources.
- We do not turn anyone away. Red Cross workers do a general health and well-being assessment when clients arrive at a shelter. If we believe that someone cannot get the care they need in a general population, if the client poses a risk to the population as a whole, or if there are state or federal laws that restrict the client's presence in that shelter, we will work with them to find an alternative safe location.

Who Cares for Disabled Individuals, Pets, and Other Special Needs Populations?

- There is not one answer for any of these populations. We accept many individuals with disabilities; however, it could be the case that the needs of that person cannot be met in a general population shelter.
- In such cases, a determination is made as to where the least restrictive environment is where the person can get the care they need.
- Often, special needs facilities are run by public health or hospital personnel.
- The care of pets often falls to the local humane society or animal control in the jurisdiction. Red Cross chapters are encouraged to work together with their local animal welfare agencies to develop partnerships and begin a dialogue for meeting the needs in this area.

Providing Assistance To Shelters of Other Agencies

- Shelters where a community agency wishes to extend their services to their community as a part of their own mission while maintaining administrative control of their facilities and the services provided (meaning the community agency assumes responsibility for planning, organizing, directing and controlling every aspect of the shelter and the relief services provided).
- Along with administrative control comes the assumption of some of the liability and fiduciary responsibility for their operations. In this case, negotiated levels of financial, logistical, material or technical support by each party to the shelter will be provided based on previous negotiations, or negotiations at the time of the event.

Red Cross Support of Non - Red Cross Shelters

Support to non-Red Cross shelters MAY include —

- Training in shelter operations and partner agency shelter operations
- Feeding support for shelter populations *(we do not have dieticians for specialized menus)*
- Material support *(we do not have the capability for specialized beds)*
 - Cots
 - Blankets

Preparedness Education



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Preparedness: An Everyday Task For Everyday Life

- Being prepared for emergencies is crucial at home, school, work and in your community.
- Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood, workplace or school or can confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services — water, gas, electricity or telephones — were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away. Therefore, the best way to make you and your family safer is to be prepared before disaster strikes.

We encourage everyone to —

- **Get a Kit** *(prepare a ready-to-go disaster kit that includes enough food and supplies to last each family member three days.)*
- **Make a Plan** *(this plan includes where individuals and loved ones go in the event of a disaster, how to communicate if phone lines are down etc.)*
- **Be Informed** *(local Red Cross chapters can train individuals and families in making a disaster plan, communications plan and first aid/ CPR training.)*



In Conclusion

- Disasters, by their very nature, do not respect geographic, political, or organizational boundaries, nor do they occur at dates and times convenient to the schedules of disaster victims or responders.
- While the effects of some disasters can be predicted based on experience, others can create an impact for which no single community could be entirely prepared.
- The impact of any disaster can strain or exceed the resources of any single agency or organization — government or voluntary — and create needs that can be met only by consolidating and concentrating resources and by establishing and implementing a unified and focused response.

QUESTIONS ??



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THANK YOU

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