

# **Shelter Operations Management Toolkit**

## **Operational Tips, Checklists and Best Practices for Shelter Managers**



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**Purpose**

The purpose of this Toolkit is to provide chapters and Shelter Managers with the resources to plan for, open, operate and close shelters. This kit should be considered the management companion to the [Shelter Operations Participant's Workbook](#) (ARC 3068-11) fact sheet.

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## Introduction

*“... (Disaster Relief) is not a time for hesitation over small questions but it requires judgment and firmness and allows little opportunity for discussion or the nice weighing of alternatives..... The chief object is food for all... and **shelter** for all.”<sup>1</sup>*

This quote, recorded in 1918 as a description of American Red Cross mass care service delivery, still rings true as a powerfully simple mandate for the Mass Care leader. Every disaster, while presenting unique challenges, holds the similar disruption of normal daily activities. Many of the resources and systems designed to meet our needs are simply not available. Our communities depend upon an extremely integrated system of government and community organizations. Our schools, stores, health facilities and places of worship all contribute to the sense of stability and order. Any significant disruption to this order only increases the confusion and disorganization immediately following a disaster.

These chaotic conditions, created by disaster, call for extreme measures designed to accommodate and care for disaster victims. It is the role of the Red Cross to prepare for and operate in this environment in order to feed and shelter those in need. Our duty is to quickly meet the immediate and common needs, without regard for differences clients may have had pre-disaster. Our success is not measured by the utilization of specific relief conventions or process, but by the effectiveness and quality of our service. To that end, we must continue to innovate in each aspect of our service delivery.

For many people across this country, the Red Cross has been there to provide a safe place to sleep and a warm meal to eat in their time of need. Through the continued support, hospitality and partnership of each facility owner, school district, place of worship and community organization that responds with us, we are able to provide an amazing service to the American public in times of great need. This toolkit is designed to give you the information and background that you need in order to effectively manage and facilitate an Red Cross shelter. However, the responsibility goes well beyond placements of cots and schedules of workers. Through our role in disaster relief, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to provide hope and stability to those who need it most in a time of seemingly great chaos. Your commitment and willingness to serve in this important role is to be commended. Thank you for all you do as a member of the Red Cross family.

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<sup>1</sup> Deacon, Janney Byron. 1918. *Disasters and the American Red Cross in Disaster Relief*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation: 168.

## Opening a Shelter

If you are not the first Red Cross representative to arrive at the shelter site, locate the worker in charge so that you can be briefed on what has already taken place. If you are the first Red Cross representative to arrive, locate the facility representative.

Verify that a [Shelter Agreement](#) and a [Shelter Facility Survey](#) (F6564) have been filled out. Review copies of the agreement and survey. It is important to discuss the financial responsibilities portion of the agreement with the facility representative in order to ensure that all parties understand it. Discuss the availability of the facility (how long the shelter will be able to remain open, what restrictions there are, etc.). If the agreement and survey have not been completed, complete them yourself or assign a shelter worker to do so.

Acquire the facility by signing the [Shelter Agreement](#). If the agreement is altered at all or if the owner wishes to use another form of contract, the entire contract must be reviewed by the Facility Lead at national headquarters. It should be faxed to 202-303-0052 or sent by overnight delivery to the Logistics Unit at the Disaster Operations Center (2025 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006) for review by Risk Management and the Office of General Counsel before the contract can be signed.

If the owner requires evidence of Red Cross insurability, an [Application for Insurance Certificate](#) must be completed. Both the application and the contract should be faxed or sent by overnight delivery to the Logistics Unit at the Disaster Operations Center (2025 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006) for Risk Management response. If the issue requires urgent attention (for example, when the shelter needs to be opened right away), please contact your service area for immediate response.

Conduct a walkthrough inspection for safety and liability using the [Shelter Opening and Closing Checklist](#) and –

- Look for and note the condition of the following (keeping in mind that the Red Cross may have to pay for damage that is not noted):
  - The parking lot and/or damage to landscaping.
  - Exterior damage including: roof, siding, windows and entrances.
  - Interior damage, including: flooring, carpeting, ceiling, walls and interior trim.
  - Appliances and bathroom fixtures.
  - Plumbing and electrical systems.
  - Heating and cooling systems.
  - Outside phone line trunk(s).
- Inventory the facility by briefly describing the building layout, including an analysis to determine whether any negative conditions exist. Remember that these could include –
  - Architectural barriers to persons with disabilities.

- Inadequate ceiling or wall lighting.
- Inadequate electrical service.
- Inadequate wall or floor electrical receptacles.
- Inadequate phone jacks.
- Itemize all furniture and accessories belonging to the facility. Present the [Shelter Opening and Closing Checklist](#) to the owner or authorized agent of the facility for signing. The same form should be used when doing the closing survey to identify changes.
- Address life safety and security issues for the facility during the pre-occupancy inspection/walkthrough.
  - If there are relevant life-safety or security issues regarding the facility, then the appropriate actions or repairs must be addressed and documented in order for the facility to be safely used as a shelter.

While the walk-through is being conducted, assign the following tasks to workers in the shelter:

- Set up for registration
- Post signs
- Set up for Health Services and Disaster Mental Health (with consideration of privacy issues)
- Set up for dormitory areas
- Assign someone to review the list of supplies found in the [shelter manager's kit](#) and verify that the items on the list are at the shelter. If any needed supplies are missing, order them by filling out a [Requisition Form](#) (F6409) and forward to appropriate person for ordering
- Coordinate with law enforcement or a private security company to establish security measures. See further information in the [Shelter Safety Issues](#) section.
- If there are non-English speakers in the shelter, identify someone to translate needed information and make posters / information sheets in the residents' language(s). Depending on the community, it might be necessary to recruit an interpreter or interpreters from a language bank or another resource. Other clients in the shelter can also be used as interpreters if they are willing to do so.

Remember that the Red Cross must allow individuals with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas where clients are normally allowed to go. However, pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters. See the section on [Animals in Shelters](#) for more information.

It is extremely important that an [Shelter Initial Intake Tool](#) be completed for each family unit when residents enter the shelter. This form has fourteen questions that help to determine the needs of shelter residents. These first fourteen questions can be asked by shelter staff. In cases where additional follow up is needed, the family or individual should be referred to Health Services or Disaster Mental Health for completion of the remainder of the form. Strict confidentiality should be maintained with regard to these

documents. These documents should be stored with Health Services and treated in the same manner that other health services documents are treated.

Once Health Services or Disaster Mental Health has consulted with the individual on their needs, a determination must be made as to the most appropriate setting for the individual to be able to receive appropriate mass care services. In many cases, individuals with disabilities or minor medical issues can be accommodated in general population shelters. In fact, there should be limited cases where clients are referred to other locations for shelter. For more complete guidance on these issues, please see the section on [Clients and Shelter Workers with Disabilities](#).



## Shelter Manager Activities

### Planning For and Managing Shelter Workers

Managing human resources is a key responsibility for shelter managers. Managers should develop a staffing plan that does the following:

- Defines the number of personnel required to manage and support the activities at the shelter site;
- Ensures adequate supervision, span of management control and individual support for all shelter workers;
- Organizes and resources adequately enough to cover management and services on a 24-hour basis.

How many workers will be needed depends on several factors. These could include:

- Safety of the facility,
- Number of shelter residents,
- Demographics of shelter residents (elderly, client resources, etc.),
- Length of shelter operation
- Lay-out of the dormitory
- Availability of volunteers.

On occasion, properties are deemed uninhabitable after a disaster. Generally, these properties have a red (or other bright color) tag placed on them to indicate that they are not habitable. “Red tagging” occurs if, after inspections of the property, the local government determines that the property is uninhabitable. If this occurs, the shelter population may increase. Anticipate a change in shelter population if “red tagging” of properties occurs. It is not advisable to staff a shelter shift with less than one shelter supervisor, two shelter staff and one health services worker even if the population is small and orderly.

### Keys to Success

In order for a shelter operation to be successful, every shelter staff member should understand the following:

- Job expectations
  - Staff members should know what is expected of them. Communication of changing expectations, if appropriate, is important.
- Operational perspective
  - Each operation, whether small or large, has factors other than the shelter open in a particular location. Having a sense of these other components (casework, other shelters, bulk distribution, etc.) will help make the entire job run more smoothly.
- Table of organization
  - A table of organization gives staff members a sense of their role in the operation. It also shows the reporting structure in case there are questions.
  - All staff members should know who their immediate supervisor is.
- Operating procedures

- Staff members should know which reports need to be made, to whom they should be disseminated and when they are required.
- Staff members should know how to request supplies.
- Staff members should know how to take care of problems that might arise.
- Affected population
  - Knowledge of the affected population and any special considerations will help staff members to better assist residents.

### **Planning Considerations for Staff**

Some of the following tasks can be delegated to an administrative assistant or other organized volunteer. When a shelter is expected to be open for longer than 10 days and shelter workers are available for the entire length of the shelter operation, arrange for days off.

- Give shelter personnel one day off every seven days counting from the first day on the job; include the shelter manager in this plan.

Establish a chart of shelter shifts and days off.

- In the event that the shelter is within a large operation, there will likely be a Sheltering activity manager at the operation headquarters.
- Submit a copy of the schedule to this manager and maintain one at the shelter(s).
- It is advisable to create a schedule that extends at least three days in advance.
  - If the shelter closes, people who have been scheduled can be called and their assignments cancelled.
  - Ensure that a supervisor stands in for the shelter manager on his/her day off or for any absence from the shelter for any length of time (staff meeting at headquarters, for example).
- It is advisable to use a system for charting these days off that can be easily changed. Post-it Notes or similar supplies could be used for this purpose.

Any worker can request a performance review. Performance evaluations are encouraged for staff that have worked at least three days. Performance evaluations must be completed for those who have worked seven days or longer.

- The shelter manager will review shelter personnel. Any shelter staff members who are supervising other staff should complete performance reviews for their own staff.

Handle any personnel issues, problems or concerns immediately between the individual and their supervisor.

- Document any personnel issues, problems or concerns.
- Submit documentation to the Mass Care contact at the chapter or operations headquarters.
- If assistance is required, contact the Sheltering activity manager as well as Staff Services/Staff Relations at the relief operation headquarters.

Ensure that adequate accommodations for visiting staff are provided.

- Coordinate accommodations with the Staff Services group at the relief operation headquarters.
- Plan for transportation to and from the staff shelter or hotel.
- Determine a feeding plan for staff.
  - It is generally appropriate to have a separate space available for off-duty staff at the shelter where they can take a break during their shift.

Anticipate and plan for how the shelter team will incorporate, train and utilize spontaneous and local volunteers as well as staff and volunteers affiliated with the facility owners (e.g. church members, union hall members). All personnel, even spontaneous volunteers, who go through Red Cross training and work under the *supervision and management of Red Cross supervisors in a Red Cross shelter* must register as a volunteer and submit for a Red Cross background check.

Determine how experienced shelter workers will mentor newer shelter workers through coaching activities.

Maintain a positive working relationship with co-workers and clients by projecting a positive attitude and maintaining a positive attitude in the shelter. Provide a compassionate presence to clients.

**Shelter Staffing Guidelines**

The following are **suggested** staffing guidelines for shelters opening on a 24-hour basis with three nine-hour shifts. Shelter managers are encouraged to use some of the shelter clients to cover some of the positions.

<b>Title</b>	<b>200 clients</b>	<b>500 clients</b>	<b>1,000 clients</b>
Shelter Manager	1	1	1
Shift Supervisors	3	3	3
Registrar	1	1	1
Dormitory Management Supervisor	1	1	1
Feeding Supervisor	1	1	1
Registration Associate	1	2	5
Dormitory Management Associate	2	5	10
Feeding Associate	4	10	20
Canteen/Dining Associate	2	4	8
Information Associate (Help Desk)	2	4	6
Administrative Assistant	1	1	1
Health Services Supervisor	1	1	1
Health Services Staff	1	2	5
Disaster Mental Health Staff	2	4	8
Material Support Supervisor	1	1	1
Material Support Associate	1	2	4
In-Kind Associate	1	1	1
Public Affairs Associate	1	2	4
Partner Services Associate	1	1	2
Client Caseworkers	2	3	6
Staff Services Associate	1	1	2
Information Management Associate	1	1	1
Spiritual Care Staff (usually non-ARC)	1	1	1
Security Staff (usually non-ARC)	1	2	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>97</b>

Circumstances may require two 12-hour shifts that would require less staff. The decision about shift duration will be made by the Shelter Manager and the Mass Care contact (either at the chapter or at headquarters), based on volunteer availability and the needs of the shelter. Increased communication is extremely important when running nine-hour shifts, as the staff will not see the same workers as they change shifts.

Many of these tasks have shifting levels of activity. For example, during opening and closing, registration may require higher staffing numbers to efficiently process clients. During slower times, registration personnel could be moved to work the help desk. Shifting personnel is appropriate and can help to cover different tasks when necessary.

Safety and security is an integral part of any shelter. However, physical presence of security is not required at all times.

- The number of security personnel listed in the guideline specifically relates to how many security personnel should be present.
- In some cases, contract security or law enforcement may be necessary.
- In such situations, personnel should be requested by the shelter manger via the chapter or the Sheltering Activity Manager at operational headquarters.
- Please see the [Shelter Safety Issues](#) section for further discussion.

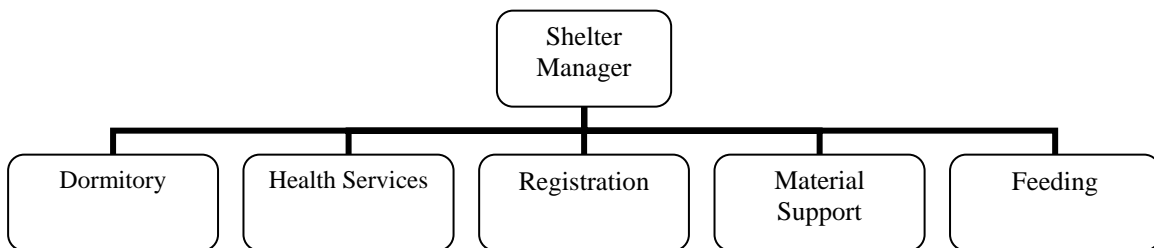
**Minimal Shelter Team**

In certain situations, a shelter might have to be opened with minimal staff. In these situations, at least four individuals should be available to open the shelter. These include the following:

- Shelter Manager
- Dormitory Worker
- Registration Worker
- Health Services Worker

Obviously, more individuals will be needed depending on the size of the shelter operation. However, in the initial stages of an event, this team could get things started until other staff arrives at the shelter location.

**Shelter Management Team Table of Organization**



**Shelter Shifts**

- Plan for future shift schedules and the associated staff requirements; two examples of popular and effective schedules are as follows:

Two shifts of twelve hours – (this requires less staff)

7:00 am to 7:30 pm

7:00 pm to 7:30 am

Three shifts of nine hours – (this requires more staff but is easier on volunteers)

7:00 am to 4:00 pm

3:00 pm to 12:00 am

11:00 pm to 8:00 am

### Recruiting Workers

Remember that workers can be recruited from the general shelter resident population.

- Recruiting shelter residents to participate in the operation of the shelter can increase the numbers of workers and can also allow the residents to contribute to their own recovery.
- Position Descriptions are included as part of this Toolkit and can be useful when talking to residents about different tasks.
- It should be noted that since clients have not had a Red Cross background check, it is not appropriate for them to work in certain areas, such as childcare or those areas that require the handling of confidential information. They could, however, assist with the cleaning of the shelter or at the help desk (depending on the tasks assigned).

To request additional staff, complete a [Staff Request](#) (F6512) and submit it to the Mass Care contact at the chapter or operations headquarters. It is important to request workers several days before you need them, as it can take some time to get people to the site. Although you might not be sure how long the shelter will be open, scheduled staff can be contacted if they are not needed.

### In-Processing Workers

- Welcome them and thank them for coming.
- Perform job induction, to include the following: registration of staff member, staff health interview, lodging information and job orientation, if applicable.
- Complete *Disaster Relief Operation Registration* (F1492) for each volunteer and submit it to the Mass Care contact at chapter or operations headquarters.
- Maintain a daily staff sign-in sheet of all workers. The following information should be included:
  - Time in
  - New or Returning
  - Name
  - Phone number (cell or other)
  - Anticipated last day
  - Time out

## Managing A Shelter

### Conduct Staff Meetings

It is important to:

- Conduct scheduled meetings throughout the duration of the operation.
- Conduct meetings using an agenda to maximize efficiency.
- Use staff meetings as a forum for sharing information and building the team.
- Use staff meetings to begin developing transition plans and closing the shelter.

Staff meetings are a necessary part of shelter communication.

- Initially, staff meetings should be held when important information needs to be communicated to the workers and should be held at the beginning of each shift change.
- As the shelter activity decreases, meetings should still be held at shift changes and then on an as needed basis.

Staff meetings should include updates on disaster response and shelter operations.

- The shelter manager should share new information from the chapter or disaster relief operation.
- Meeting participants can identify and discuss the needs of clients and workers. Material resources can also be discussed.
- This is also a good time to introduce new workers and to recognize workers who may not be returning to the shelter.
- The shelter manager should remind shelter workers to review the shelter log at the beginning of their shift.

Staff meetings can be used to address rumors and resolve conflicts. However, shelter managers should keep in mind that many issues are confidential and proceed with caution.

When decisions are being made to close a shelter, ensure that the chapter or Sheltering activity lead is a part of the discussion. Once the determination is made to close the shelter, communicate the expected closing plan with the workers. See the [Closing a Shelter](#) section for further discussion.

## Communications

### Communicating with Shelter Residents

- Open communication with the residents of the shelter is essential for all shelter workers. Effectively communicating with residents and shelter workers fosters two important behaviors to mental health: 1) instills a sense of predictability; 2) creates a sense of routine and normalcy needed by any involved in a disaster. It is important to communicate in several different ways (verbally, in writing, etc.) so that everyone is made aware of important information. Ensure that shelter rules are distributed or made available to clients. The “Shelter Rules” posters need to be placed in visible locations.
- It is common for visitors to check in on shelter residents and the conditions at the shelter. The shelter manager should plan for such visits and designate a visiting area away from the sleeping area.
- Maintain open lines of communication with the shelter residents in order to ensure that the physical and mental needs of the clients are being met. Develop plans to meet those needs and request assistance if necessary.
- Post and have available for distribution telephone numbers that the shelter residents may need in order to aid in their recovery.
  - If possible, provide access to the [Safe & Well website](#) so that individuals can let their family and friends know that they are safe.
  - Work with Client Casework and government partners in order to establish which numbers should be shared.
  - Give out only numbers that you are authorized to share.
- Keep the residents informed about the status of the disaster, the recovery process and other resources available to them.
  - Advise residents of the Red Cross services and partner resources that may be available to them.
  - In larger shelters, daily newsletters may be used to deliver information to both workers and clients.
- Communicate the confirmed shelter closing date to shelter residents. Only give out confirmed statements. Do not communicate speculative information, such as planning information.
- Do not assume that everyone can read posted notices. It is important to communicate in several different ways (verbally, in writing, etc.) so that everyone is made aware of important information.
- Ensure that shelter rules are distributed or made available to clients. The “Shelter Rules” posters need to be placed in visible locations.
- Communicate evacuation plans to shelter workers and clients. Shelter workers should be aware of those needing special assistance and assist them. A designated gathering point for clients and staff should be created. It should be outside of the building in an area away from where emergency vehicles will respond.



### **Communicating with Government Officials and Media**

Shelter locations are widely publicized. While Partner Services or Public Affairs staff will make efforts to notify the shelter manager when government officials, other high profile visitors or media are planning a visit to a shelter, this will not always be possible. If the shelter manager has not been notified, they should notify Partner Services if government officials arrive unannounced and Disaster Public Affairs if media or other high profile visitors arrive unannounced.

#### **Government Officials**

- Greet government officials who may come to the shelter to observe or check on the facility.
- Answer any questions the government officials may have.
- If there are concerns or questions that go beyond the manager's scope of responsibility, the chapter should be contacted for assistance.
- If Public Affairs or Partner Services did not notify the shelter manager prior to the visit, ensure that they are notified as soon as possible.

#### **Media**

- Meet news media who come to the shelter looking for information and answer any questions they may have.
- The shelter manager should be familiar with Red Cross policies regarding working with the media.
  - It is always important for chapters and shelter managers to develop a good relationship with the media. When disaster occurs, working with the media is especially important. The press can help get the story out by telling people where the Red Cross is located and what services are available, as well as where volunteers are needed and how the public can make financial contributions.
  - It is not the role of the workers at the shelter to actively seek out the media for interviews. In general, all media outreach should be coordinated by Public Affairs. However, shelter workers may encounter the media while at the shelter or while out in the field.
- As far as the media is concerned, anyone from the Red Cross may be perceived as a Red Cross spokesperson, so the media are apt to seek information from anyone wearing Red Cross identification.
- If a question is asked that goes beyond the scope of what the manager can answer, the manager can either offer to call the chapter or the disaster relief operation or refer the media to someone else at the chapter or disaster relief operation to answer the question.

#### **When Approached By The Media:**

- Respond courteously and cooperate if possible.
- Maintain a media log to allow the media representatives to sign in. Get the reporter's name, station or newspaper, phone number, their requests for information and their deadline. Give this information to the shelter manager and Public Affairs representative immediately.

- Respond to questions in a positive manner, commenting only on the activities related to the shelter and available services.
- Speak only to the facts you know. Refer questions about the overall operation to Public Affairs.
- Be clear. Use non-technical language that is easy to understand. If you use a term that may be unfamiliar to the reporter (e.g. “ERV”), explain it.
- Think carefully before you answer. Remember that any statement made may be used out of context.
- When asked about a specific disaster victim, relate the Red Cross policy about client confidentiality to the reporter.

### **Policy on Cameras in the Shelter**

Media crews may ask to take pictures inside the shelter. Our first obligation is to the privacy of shelter residents. However, it is usually possible to assist with the story.

Explain this to the crew and offer possible alternatives, such as the following:

- Ask one or two clients if they might be willing to talk to the media. If so, select an area for the interview that will not impose on the privacy of other clients.
- If the shelter only has a few residents, you could select a small area of the shelter, announce to all of the residents that the media is going to be conducting a short interview in that area. Ask anyone who does not want to be in the video to step away for just a few moments.
- Set up the media area in the facility away from the sleeping area.

### **Identifying Potential Human Interest Stories**

The shelter manager may be asked by Public Affairs to identify families as subjects of potential human interest stories. Shelter workers should be alert to such possibilities. In general, these families are –

- People who are willing to talk about their experience.
- People who will not be embarrassed or harmed by the publicity.
- People who are expressive about the assistance that they have received from the Red Cross.
- The Public Affairs representative looks for families that would make for an unusual story, such as families helping others despite their own losses. The story should also convey how the Red Cross has helped these families.

## Feeding Shelter Residents

The Red Cross has many resources for feeding operations. These include: [Disaster Kitchen Training](#) (ARC-3068-30) and [Disaster Kitchen Supervision](#) (ARC-3068-5) courses. In addition, the [Shelter Operations Workbook Fact Sheet](#) (3068-11) and the [Safe Food Handling Procedures](#) can be helpful in running a shelter feeding operation.

- Identify a Red Cross feeding supervisor for the shelter and ensure that canteen and meal food services are provided at the shelter.
- Ensure coordination with the feeding supervisor and Material Support Services workers at the shelter, chapter and/or operation headquarters to follow procurement procedures and identify local resources.
- Make sure that the financial procedures are clear.
- If the shelter is small and using catered or in-house meals, most of the resources will be handled at the shelter or chapter level.
- On larger operations, resources will come from the relief operation and food may come from large kitchen facilities or contracted caterers.
- Verify with the feeding supervisor that meal times are set and posted.
- Work with the facility representative and Material Support Services to ensure that equipment and services (utilities, trash removal, etc.) are adequate, available and provided at the shelter.
- If the shelter is also going to serve as a fixed feeding site for community clients
  - Develop guidelines for feeding procedures and schedules.
  - Develop plans for the community clients to be served either outside or in another room.

This can alleviate security issues of having non-residents in the shelter.

- Assist with staffing needs for the shelter feeding operation. Work with the feeding supervisor to establish schedules and to recruit workers for the shelter.
- Ensure that the feeding supervisor has determined whether shelter residents have any special dietary needs or if particular ethnic foods are required. Red Cross kitchens may not be able to meet the special dietary needs of all shelter residents. Work with the clients, feeding supervisor, chapter or partners to resolve those needs.
- Work closely with the feeding supervisor to ensure that the kitchen, feeding, serving, canteen, storage, loading and/or cleaning areas are kept clean and sanitary.
  - Determine if an inspection is required by the local health department. If necessary, arrange for the inspection.
  - Assist the feeding supervisor in resolving issues where needed.
  - It is always best to have feeding outside of the dormitory area to avoid pests.
  - Ensure residents are not storing extra food in the sleeping area.
- Collect statistics and information from the feeding supervisor for daily reports. The number of meals and snacks, as well as any special concerns, will

have to be reported to the chapter or headquarters at specified times determined by the responsible entity.

- Closing the feeding operation:
  - Consult with the chapter, feeding supervisor, shelter workers, shelter clients and the Sheltering and Feeding Activity Managers at the disaster relief operation headquarters, as appropriate, in order to determine when the last meal will be served and the canteen area will be closed (usually to correspond with the closing of the shelter).
  - Communicate the canteen closing information to important groups including Material Support Services and Public Affairs.
  - Work with the feeding supervisor and Material Support Services workers in order to determine what to do with excess food items and supplies.
  - Collect an inventory list and ensure that food supplies that may have been used from the facility are restocked.
  - Assist with returning unopened items to vendors, if possible.
  - Inspect the feeding area and kitchen in order to ensure that the areas were properly cleaned and that all equipment was returned to its original location.
  - Work with the feeding supervisor and Material Support Services facility workers in order to correct any damages that might have occurred to the equipment or facilities through Red Cross use.
  - Collect all records, invoices and other documents that may need to be submitted to the chapter or headquarters.
  - Ask the feeding supervisor to write a narrative report on the activities of the unit. It should note accomplishments, problems and how they were solved and recommendations for future operations.

### **Procuring Shelter Supplies**

- On smaller operations, chapter leadership will define the procurement process to be followed. Submit all requests for supplies that must be ordered or purchased through the chapter. Track using [\*Disaster Requisition\*](#) (6409).
- On larger operations, Material Support Services will assign a liaison to work directly with Mass Care as part of a support unit. Close coordination and frequent communication between Mass Care and Material Support Services is essential.

## Reporting Shelter Activities

Depending on the scale of the incident, several levels of the Red Cross organization may be involved in the response. The local chapter may request assistance or the size of the event may demand that resources outside the chapter be brought in. In this case the service area and/or a disaster relief operation (DRO) headquarters will become involved. The shelter manager, guided by the local chapter, will need to adjust the lines of communication and authority to and from the shelter, chapter and relief operation in order to maintain an effective working relationship with all parties. Cooperation and communication are priorities.

One way to help keep track of activities is to maintain a shelter log. Designate one notebook as the shelter log and keep it in the office or designated area. In the shelter log, document problems, solutions and other important information throughout the shelter operation. Be sure all workers are aware of the log and can contribute to it. Shift supervisors should read the entries from previous shifts upon arriving at the shelter each day.

In addition to other avenues of reporting, the National Shelter System (NSS) is used to record and track shelter information including daily populations. More information on the [National Shelter System](#) is included at the end of this section.

### From the Shelter Manager to the Chapter

- When the shelter team arrives at the shelter, contact the chapter. If the shelter location is not ready to accept clients immediately, the shelter manager must contact the chapter when the shelter is open and ready to accept clients.
- Maintain contact with the chapter or the operation leadership as often as necessary, depending on the status of the disaster.
  - If there are immediate needs for the shelter, communicate them in a timely manner.
  - If in doubt about whether information should be reported, go ahead and report it.
- Prepare and provide statistics on the number of shelter residents, as required by the chapter and/or operation leadership.
  - Requirements for reporting population could change over the course of a relief operation.
  - If a significant change in population takes place, notify the chapter or operation leadership.
  - During a disaster, reported shelter numbers need to be entered into the National Shelter System (NSS) so that the information can be shared with various Red Cross entities and partners including FEMA and the state and local governments. If a shelter has access to the internet, it is possible for the shelter manager to enter the population into the National Shelter System directly. This information should be updated at least daily.

- Communicate staffing needs to the chapter or operation. The anticipated duration and population of a shelter will determine staffing needs. More information on staffing patterns is included in the [Shelter Staffing Guidelines](#) section of this document. When discussing staffing needs, confirm reporting schedule and timelines with the chapter or operation.
- Before releasing workers from shelter duty, contact the chapter or operation for concurrence; workers may be needed elsewhere.

### **From the Chapter to the Service Area**

- Chapters and shelter managers should be familiar with the reporting procedures and tools developed by their service areas.
- The chapter must notify the service area when a shelter opens. The service area needs to know the reason that the shelter was needed, the location/address of the shelter, the time that the shelter was opened and the capacity of the shelter.
- Confirm the reporting requirements of the service area, as they differ from region to region.
  - Use the National Shelter System to track the status of all shelters during any level of disaster response. If the chapter is unable to enter the population numbers for a shelter, they should contact the service area with an explanation so that the numbers are accurately entered in a timely fashion.
- Inform the service area if there are special or unusual circumstances regarding the shelter facility or the needs of any of the residents of the shelter.
- Some disasters will develop over time, so it could be possible that more shelters will need to open. The chapter will notify the service area if they anticipate that more shelters will either need to open or be put on standby.
- Notify the service area when a shelter is closing. Chapters should be prepared to provide a report about the shelter operation, including statistics on the number of residents served and any other special concerns or issues that may have occurred.

### **The National Shelter System**

The National Shelter System (NSS) is a resource that chapters use in order to gauge readiness and plan for a disaster response. Operationally, the National Shelter System provides a uniform method for recording and reporting shelter figures. The system is web-based and can be accessed by a registered user from any computer with an internet connection.

During a disaster, reported shelter numbers need to be entered into the National Shelter System so that the information can be shared with various Red Cross entities and our partners including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state and local governments. If a shelter has access to the internet, it is possible for the Shelter Manager to enter the population into the National Shelter System directly.

### The System of Record

- The National Shelter System is the system of record for all Red Cross shelter activities. This means that every Red Cross-managed, partner and supported shelter that is opened, needs to be entered into the system. If for some reason the information from a shelter cannot be put into the system, a process must be initiated on the disaster relief operation to record, keep and communicate shelter information so that it can be entered.
- A shelter manager should always request that the reported numbers be entered into the National Shelter System. If a shelter has internet access, a shelter manager may enter the daily shelter population directly into the National Shelter System.

*Hint: Each shelter in the National Shelter System is given a unique system-generated number. For reporting purposes, it may be helpful to use this number when reporting shelter information.*

### Accessing the National Shelter System

The National Shelter System (NSS) is a web-based application that can be accessed at this URL:<https://nss.communityos.org>. The National Shelter System is a secure site and requires registration. Red Cross users can obtain access through Red Cross User Support and will be granted an access level based on their functional responsibility.

To request access to the National Shelter System you may call User Support at 1-888-778-7762 or complete the User Support form located at: <https://crossnet.redcross.org/support/CaseRequest.aspx>. Be prepared to share your name, phone number, email address and role in the organization. If you are a volunteer, please be prepared to share contact information for your supervisor.



## **Integrating Dshr Groups And Activities In Sheltering**

The shelter manager will provide overall supervision to all workers in the shelter regardless of their Disaster Services Human Resources (DSHR) group or activity. Staff will be directly responsible to their shift supervisor. Workers who are affiliated with groups other than Mass Care will receive technical support from their group and activity leadership either at the chapter, the service area or the disaster relief operation.

Below are a series of bulleted lists that the shelter manager can use in order to monitor the activities of staff who are working in disciplines other than Mass Care. In smaller shelters, not all of these groups will be represented by workers in the shelter. However, many of these tasks will still need to occur and shelter managers can use these lists to ensure that shelter workers undertake the appropriate actions while operating a shelter.

### **Individual Client Services**

#### Health Services

- Ensure that the nurses have a work area within the shelter that is both easily accessible and provides some privacy.
- Discuss with Health Services their need for material resources. There should be a complete disaster nurse's kit available as part of each shelter kit that was stocked prior to the disaster. In addition, there may be other supplies needed based on the population in the shelter.
- Health Services should confer with the shift supervisor on any significant issues within the shelter facility, particularly focusing on general health of the residents, cleanliness, sanitation and hazards.

#### Disaster Mental Health

- Ensure that the Disaster Mental Health workers have a work area within the shelter that is both easily accessible and provides some privacy.
- Discuss with Disaster Mental Health their need for material resources. Determine how supplies will be procured and who will keep track of the receipts and inventory.
- Disaster Mental Health should confer with the shift supervisor on any significant mental health and stress issues within the shelter. Support Disaster Mental Health efforts to work with both shelter residents and shelter workers in order to alleviate stress.

#### Client Casework

- Serve as the advocate for client casework within the shelter in order to ensure that client needs are addressed.
- Ensure that the caseworkers have a work area within the shelter that is both easily accessible and provides some privacy.
- Identify clients who need to talk to caseworkers. Provide their names and needs to Client Casework.

- Ask Client Casework staff for recovery information (Red Cross, federal, state and/or local resources) that can be shared with clients and post it for shelter resident use.

### Welfare Information

Determine if there is a Welfare Information Manager or Chapter Welfare Information Volunteer available to help coordinate and support Welfare Information activities.

There are many opportunities to encourage, remind and tangibly help clients inform their family members that they are “safe and well.” When the following questions are asked as a standard part of the shelter registration process, clients can and should address them while their cell phones are still working and before the communications infrastructure is compromised –

- Have you contacted your family?
- Do they know where you are?
- Do they know what your plans are?
- Can I help you contact your loved ones?
- Focus welfare information services on helping Red Cross clients to make contact with their loved ones in situations when compromised communications prevent them from doing so on their own. Examples include using cell phones, registration on the [Safe and Well Website](#) and use of the partner resources listed on the website, such as the [Contact Loved Ones](#) voice messaging service.

**Using the *Safe and Well Website*.** Utilize the following guidelines to help ensure that the website is used as effectively as possible:

- Before a disaster strikes, it is an appropriate strategy to make the [Safe and Well Website](#) accessible to shelter registrants who have evacuated their homes for safety reasons. All website registrations are date and time-stamped.
- If necessary, individuals can later create a new entry to update their information.
  - Notify the chapter and service area Response Manager, or designee, of the shelter’s intent to use the [Safe and Well Website](#) as part of a disaster relief operation. Notify the national headquarters Welfare Information activity lead via email of the intent to use the [Safe and Well Website](#). The activity lead monitors the overall website use, has the administrative rights to modify the list of “safe and well” messages. The activity lead has the administrative rights to add a specific event name in the Disaster Event list found on the registration page.
  - Provide information to shelter residents about how to use the [Safe and Well Website](#), including the direct link to the website: (<https://disastersafe.redcross.org/>).

An additional resource for using the [Safe and Well Website](#) is available [later in this document](#).

- During nationally-supported disasters, be aware that there will also be telephone-based assistance via the 866-GET-INFO hotline for people who live within the affected areas and do not have Internet access, but wish *to register* on the [Safe and Well Website](#).
- Consult any Welfare Information Bulletin(s) for additional guidance during nationally-supported disasters.

## Material Support Services

### Warehousing and Supply/Procurement

- Ensure that the Material Support Services workers have a secure area in which to work within the shelter. Ideally, the area should allow for easy access to delivery locations.
- Establish procurement procedures for shelter workers and communicate those procedures to the shelter workers. Determine who will keep track of the receipts and inventory.
- Arrange and plan with Material Support Services for the disposition of Red Cross supplies and equipment as the shelter prepares for closing.
  - As the shelter population decreases, begin plans to consolidate and return items that are no longer needed. For example, as the population declines, any cots that are no longer needed can be cleaned and returned to their appropriate location.
  - Ensure that borrowed/rented property is returned to its owner.

### Facility Management

- Discuss facility issues with Material Support Services (Facility Management activity) as they come up. These could include:
  - trash removal,
  - opening and closing times,
  - [returning the facility](#) to the owner in an appropriate manner.

### Life Safety and Asset Protection

- Consult with Life Safety and Asset Protection activity about life safety and security issues in the shelter. Please see the [Shelter Safety Issues](#) section for further information.

### In-Kind Donations

- Know how to handle offers of in-kind donations that may be offered to the shelter.
  - Consult the lead Material Support Services at the shelter or at the chapter.
  - Do not accept donations without approval.
  - Prepare a [Resource Record](#) (F6455) for any approved donations. Submit the form to the staff at the chapter or the disaster relief operations headquarters that are responsible for maintaining the completed forms.

### Communications and Technology

- Determine the need for communication devices for the shelter.

- This could include cell phones, two-way radios or other devices. In circumstances where there is limited communication, amateur radio operators can be requested from the disaster relief operation to provide necessary communication.
- Develop a tracking list for items and maintain a secure environment for the equipment.
- Collect and return communication equipment when it is no longer needed.
  - Maintain a record of what equipment was returned.
  - Report any problems that might have developed with the equipment.

## Staff Services

### Workforce Planning

- Coordinate and maintain a system for managing staff. Staff Services or chapter volunteer services staff can be utilized to facilitate paperwork, initial orientations and on-the-job training.
- Prepare and distribute contact numbers for after-hours staff who may be needed by the shelter management team for support (e.g. on-call Nurse, Disaster Mental Health, Public Affairs Associate).

### Training

- If necessary, set up training for staff. Red Cross-affiliated volunteers may need instruction on performance reviews, safe food handling, welfare information support and other issues.
- Utilize chapter disaster instructors to provide shelter training. Training new workers while the operation is underway may provide capacity-building opportunities for the future.

### Staff Health Services

- The primary role of Health Services is to assist shelter clients. Health Services workers in the shelter can handle minor worker health issues if Staff Health is not assigned to the shelter. However, if Health Services is busy with clients or if worker health needs exceed minor first aid, then Staff Health Services should be contacted for staff coverage.

## Organization Support

### Public Affairs

- Identify the person who will be responsible for public affairs for the shelter.
- Coordinate with Public Affairs on a press release regarding the opening of the shelter.
- Contact Public Affairs if a large number of media show up at the shelter. In a large shelter operation, having a representative on site is helpful in order to address the public affairs needs.
- Refer questions that go beyond the scope of the shelter operation to Public Affairs activity at the chapter or disaster relief operations headquarters. Guidance for interacting with the media is in the [Media Tips](#) section.

**Partner Services**

- **Government Liaison (GL):** Refer issues that involve interaction with government agencies or elected officials to the government liaison on site or at disaster relief operations headquarters.
- **Volunteer Agencies Liaison (LVA):** Refer issues that involve non-governmental disaster agencies (e.g., The Salvation Army, America’s Second Harvest) and coalitions (e.g. VOAD) involved in response or recovery to the volunteer agencies liaison on-site or at disaster relief operations headquarters.
- **Community Relations Liaison (LCR):** Refer sensitive issues involving minority, ethnic, immigrant and limited English proficient (LEP) communities, as well as individuals with disabilities, seniors and/or community organizations representing diverse and/or vulnerable populations to the community relations liaison on-site or at disaster relief operations headquarters.

## Closing a Shelter

Successful shelters create a sense of calm, security, routine and predictability. Closing the shelter may cause some negative feelings as it disrupts the routine and predictability residents have come to expect. Accurate, complete and consistent communication with shelter workers, residents and the community will mitigate the negative impacts of closing a shelter.

Prior to closing the shelter, keep the following items in mind.

- Developing plans to close the shelter is an ongoing responsibility.
  - Be conscious of the indicators of when the shelter might close.
  - Communicate all plans with the chapter, the sheltering activity manager at disaster relief operations headquarters, technical supervisors, emergency management and community partners well in advance of the actual closing.
- Identify other shelter facilities in case the current shelter has to be closed. In some cases, the shelter location may not be appropriate or may not be available for the length of time it is needed. Contact the Chapter or Material Support Services Facility Management for assistance with identifying other possible facilities.
- Throughout the duration of the shelter operation, shelter management should be in close contact with Client Casework in order to ensure that clients are receiving guidance on recovery options. Alternative housing plans should be identified for clients so that they can begin to recover.
- Determine, when possible and in conjunction with Client Casework, if special populations who are at the shelter have an alternate facility lined up.
  - If Red Cross shelter residents were living in another agency's shelter prior to the disaster and that shelter is open, the clients should be directed to the pre-disaster shelter.
- Notify the chapter in the event that someone from the local government either asks or dictates that the shelter cannot close, even if there is no shelter population.
  - The chapter can either contact the local government leadership or go through a Government Liaison in order to resolve the matter.
  - The shelter manager should not make any commitments about the shelter remaining open or closing without [consulting the chapter](#) or disaster relief operation leadership.
- Communicate the confirmed shelter closing date to shelter residents. Only give out confirmed statements. Do not communicate speculative information, such as planning information.

Once the shelter closes, complete the following tasks.

- Schedule and complete all performance reviews. See the section on [Out-processing of Shelter Workers](#) for more detailed information.
- Determine a plan for the transfer or release of workers.

- Check with Material Support Services to see if they need assistance in cleaning the shelter; Mass Care workers can be transferred to assist Material Support Services.
- Be sure to send a complete staff roster to the chapter or Staff Support Services and confirm that the workers will receive recognition.
- Prepare a list of other voluntary organizations, vendors and other partners to be thanked or recognized. Use the [Resource Record](#) (F6455) forms that were filled out throughout the operation of the shelter. Submit that list to the chapter.
- Work with Material Support Services to pack excess supplies as they become unnecessary.
  - Determine where the supplies need to go.
  - Begin the shipping process as soon as possible.
  - Maintain a complete inventory.
- Work with Material Support Services to clean and return the shelter to its original condition as the shelter size decreases.
  - Return moved furniture to its original position.
  - Remove all Red Cross posters and signage from the interior and exterior of the building.
- Prepare a narrative report and submit it to your supervisor.
  - The shelter log can be useful in achieving this task.
  - Provide summaries of services provided, problems and recommendations.
- If there were any financial commitments made at the shelter, forward these to the chapter or to the Material Support Services workers responsible for collecting the information.
- Forward all non-financial files, including any remaining shelter registration forms, to either the chapter or the Sheltering Activity Manager, depending on the guidance you are given.
- Once the shelter closes, remember to update the National Shelter System to reflect the change.

### **Out-processing of Shelter Workers**

- Ensure that a work performance evaluation has been conducted and that results of the evaluation are known and understood by the worker. Any item that is marked “needs improvement” should have been documented and discussed previously with the worker prior to the performance evaluation in order to allow for improvement. Ensure the final write-up matches earlier information. Each supervisor is responsible for completing an evaluation of any staff assigned to him or her who has been in place for seven days or longer; staff who have been assigned for less than seven days can request an evaluation.
- Discuss with the worker whether he or she is satisfied with his or her experience on the relief operation and with the working conditions the worker encountered. Encourage new staff to continue with training, follow up with the chapter and stay involved.

- Remind the worker that Disaster Mental Health staff members are available for debriefing if the worker would like to talk to them prior to leaving the relief operation.



## Unique Sheltering Situations

### Animals in Shelters

#### The Red Cross Role

The mission of the Red Cross in providing disaster sheltering is to provide a safe environment for as many people as possible. Due to health and safety concerns, the Red Cross does not allow animals other than service animals inside of its disaster or evacuation shelters. In addition, the Red Cross does not assume primary responsibility for providing alternative arrangements for pets. The Red Cross does, however, recognize and appreciate the importance of pets to their owners. We also appreciate the sense of responsibility and interdependence that pet owners feel toward their pets, especially in times of disaster. Our role, as the service provider to the general public, is to ensure that pet sheltering initiatives and plans developed at the local, county or state level are integrated to the greatest extent possible into our disaster service delivery. Although we cannot physically host pets within our shelters, we can support the proper local agencies that specialize in animal care in their role to shelter and ensure the safety of pets. We can do this through two key areas: communication and mass care.

#### Communications

When a disaster strikes, Red Cross shelters and chapters become central hubs for information. People will turn to the Red Cross for information on any kind of disaster relief. We must be prepared to provide the most accurate data possible. The Red Cross can provide information to bring peace of mind to stranded travelers and displaced families searching for a place to protect their family pet. The Red Cross can provide prearranged, simple resources in cooperation with local agencies and governments. Each chapter should develop (or utilize a partner information resource) and distribute comprehensive resource listings for animal welfare, animal boarding sites and/or local veterinarians in order to provide information or referrals to pet owners who contact the Red Cross for assistance. Chapters should also be prepared to provide referral information to those impacted by disaster that may need temporary care for their pets while staying at a Red Cross shelter. All Red Cross service delivery sites should have this and other referral information available.

#### Mass Care

The Red Cross provides mass care (sheltering and feeding) to those impacted by disaster and first responders. Our areas of expertise include caring for people during times of disaster. In situations where animal care organizations need support with feeding staff, volunteers or those impacted by disaster, Red Cross chapters or disaster relief operations should work with those organizations to provide mass care support for them. This could include providing mobile feeding for shelter residents, loaning cots for the duration of an event or providing comfort kits. In any case, this effort will require coordination with local humane societies, animal control and the emergency operations center to stay

abreast of those locations needing mass care support. Be proactive in your response and offer that support to our community partners.

### **Service Animals**

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service delivery sites (such as shelters) that serve the public must allow individuals with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the premises where clients are normally allowed to go. However, the care or supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of his or her owner.

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a service animal as any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually-trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. If they meet this definition, animals are considered service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act, regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government.

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with a disability cannot otherwise perform independently. Guide dogs are one type of service animal, used by some individuals who are blind. This is the type of service animal with which most people are familiar. There are other types of service animals, such as miniature horses, monkeys and cats, that assist persons with other kinds of disabilities in their day-to-day activities. Some examples include:

- Alerting persons with hearing impairments to sounds.
- Pulling wheelchairs or carrying and picking up things for persons with mobility impairments.
- Alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure.
- Assisting persons with mobility impairments with balance.

Some, but not all, service animals wear special collars and harnesses. Some, but not all, are licensed or certified and have identification papers. Although a number of states have programs to certify service animals, you cannot insist on proof of state certification before permitting the service animal to accompany the person with a disability.

If you are not certain that an animal is a service animal, you may ask the person who has the animal if it is a service animal or ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform. You cannot, however, require an identification card for the animal or ask about the person's disability.

Once in the service delivery site, the service animal must be permitted to accompany the individual with a disability to all areas of the facility where clients are normally allowed to go. An individual with a service animal cannot be segregated from other clients. The Red Cross is not required to provide care or food for a service animal in a shelter or a special location for the animal to relieve itself.

The Red Cross may exclude a service animal from a facility when the behavior of that animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. For example, any service

animal that displays vicious behavior towards other clients or staff may be excluded. You may not make assumptions, however, about how a particular animal is likely to behave based on your past experience with other animals. Additionally, allergies and fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals. Each situation must be considered individually.

### **Pet Sheltering: Building Community Response**

When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, a significant number of citizens put themselves in danger when they refused to evacuate their flooded and destroyed homes because they didn't want to abandon their pets. Many others were forced to leave without their pets, adding to the anguish for these hurricane victims who had already lost so much.

The Red Cross understands the importance of pets to their owners. We are working with public and private organizations, as well as individuals dedicated to animal care in local communities, to assist concerned pet owners during disasters. In addition to community-based organizations, there are national organizations that can be valuable resources to owners and communities in planning for pet care during disasters.

In 2006, Congress passed the [Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards \(PETS\) Act](#), requiring state and local governments to incorporate pets and service animals into disaster planning. This unique legislation provides a wonderful opportunity for Red Cross chapters to join local community partners in preparing for the full scope of a disaster response. The success of this initiative depends on both the proper coordination between agencies and a full understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

This section of the document, along with its tables, offers some general suggestions regarding our role in this important relief work. Disaster response is a local effort. As such, it should be designed locally in collaboration with regional and national entities. Chapters of the Red Cross should reach out to those agencies and personnel active in pet sheltering. As the leader in disaster work, the subject matter expert in sheltering and more importantly a concerned member of the community, we must be actively involved in developing, practicing and implementing disaster pet care initiatives.

### **Continued Red Cross Efforts**

Although the Red Cross does not admit pets into Red Cross shelters, the Red Cross is committed to an ongoing effort to assist pet owners in arranging for adequate shelter for their pets in time of disaster. Additionally, Red Cross chapters and other service delivery units should actively seek those local partnerships that will enhance the ability of the community to develop effective plans for the care and feeding of pets or companion animals. Clear guidelines about the role of each organization can help to mitigate future issues. Innovative solutions, such as co-located sheltering options, have proven successful; however, chapters must be clear of their boundaries in service delivery. Through a partnership with local animal and pet organizations, these pets can be sheltered in a facility co-located, but separate from the emergency shelter for people.

**Chapter Innovation**

Red Cross chapters, in collaboration with community partners, have been developing innovative solutions to support the care of pets. The following examples illustrate two effective programs.

***Example 1: A Coordinated Response—Parallel Shelters***

The Capital Area Chapter in Tallahassee, FL has a fantastic partnership with a local animal care organization allowing for a separately managed pet shelter that is located in proximity to and coordinated with a Red Cross Shelter.

Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team (DART), a partner of the Capital Area Chapter in Tallahassee that specializes in animal care, is responsible for establishing and operating the Pet Friendly Shelter at the request of the Red Cross. Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team has a representative located at the chapter emergency operation center during the initial activation of a disaster response and will deploy resources upon request. A Disaster Animal Response Team representative identifies the location for the Pet Friendly Shelter and acts as a liaison to the Red Cross chapter. The Disaster Animal Response Team representative and the Red Cross chapter then make the decision about opening a Pet Friendly Shelter. The Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team representative also regularly coordinates with the Red Cross Shelter Manager.

Persons being evacuated who have not made other arrangements for their pets may arrive at a Red Cross operated emergency shelters with their pets. The Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team, in turn, receives the pets in a co-located but separate facility and takes responsibility for their care.

***Example 2: Integrated Emergency Operations Plans Annex***

The Central Minnesota Chapter has assisted their community in the development of a pet sheltering annex. Through this effort, they outlined clearly defined roles and responsibilities for their chapter in cooperating with the animal care organizations in their community. The end result is the promotion of successful care of pets during disasters.

**General Annex Provisions****American Red Cross Central Minnesota Chapter Roles**

- Develop and maintain a resource list for animal welfare, boarding sites and/or local veterinarians in order to provide information or referrals to pet owners who contact the Red Cross for assistance.
- Provide referral information to shelter residents who may need temporary care for their pets while staying at the Red Cross shelter.
- Provide pet sheltering information to clients at the Red Cross shelter registration desk.
- Provide assistance with making food available to animal shelter workers through ongoing mass feeding efforts.

- Coordinate with local emergency management and animal control in disseminating information to the media regarding the availability and location of emergency animal sheltering.
- Offer pet first aid courses to the community to support preparedness of pet owners to care for their animals in emergencies and to augment training of potential volunteers.

## Clients and Shelter Workers with Disabilities

Red Cross Disaster Services values and promotes diversity and inclusiveness among its volunteers and employees. It recognizes its obligation to ensure, to the highest degree possible, that all individuals have access to the goods and services provided as part of the Disaster Services Program.

Different disabilities entail different needs. Be aware that disabilities may manifest themselves as physical, sensory, cognitive, behavioral, mental health and/or chronic conditions. Therefore, shelter managers must understand that there is no such thing as a “one size fits all” approach. There is no single definition for “special needs,” “special care” or “frail.” 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. Not all people with disabilities need to be referred to special needs shelters.

- Standardize registration procedures.
  - After registration, each family unit should be asked the first series of questions on the [Initial Intake and Assessment Tool](#). These questions are designed to identify individuals who need additional assistance or accommodations in order to reside in the shelter. Once the first series of questions is asked, any response that requires more follow up should be directed to Health Services or Disaster Mental Health for completion of the tool.
- Equipment for individuals with disabilities.
  - Whenever possible, it is critical that individuals with disabilities not be separated from equipment, people who care for them, service animals or other assistive technology that typically keeps them self-sufficient.
  - If an individual has been separated from his/her wheelchair or assistive devices, there may be community organizations that can assist in finding replacements. The local Public Health Department might be able to provide contact information for such organizations.
- Some individuals with disabilities may require more services than the Red Cross can provide. If this occurs, Health Services will assist in their transfer to an appropriate facility. Local public health officials should be contacted in consultation with chapter leadership.
- Information regarding clients in need of additional services, whether medical or otherwise, must be carefully protected.
- Service animals are entitled by law to accompany their owners.
  - Service animals are not pets and are allowed in Red Cross shelters.
  - The only exception to this policy is if, after admission to the shelter, the animal displays aggressive behavior and is considered to be a danger to other shelter residents. In such cases, the owner should be assisted in finding alternative shelter.
- It is the responsibility of the Red Cross to provide information to people with disabilities to the same degree as it is provided to those without disabilities. This includes –

- obtaining the assistance of qualified sign language interpreters,
- activating the caption function on all televisions in and around the shelters,
- providing volunteer readers,
- making allowances for people unable to stand in line due to reasons relating to their disabilities,
- making audio announcements available visually.
- Seek guidance and advice from the individuals who have disabilities. They are the best resource for information on how to assist them.
- Public health intervention is needed to open temporary infirmaries. The Red Cross will not open or operate these facilities.
- The Red Cross will not manage special needs shelters. Further guidance about special needs shelters will be available in a separate document.
- There are some cases when nursing homes or similar facilities must be evacuated. In these cases, the Red Cross cannot act as the primary or lead agency providing assistance, but can provide support to the lead agency.
  - The Disaster Operations Center should be contacted for consultation prior to entering into an agreement of this type.
  - The Red Cross may assume a supporting role and is not responsible for managing the section of the shelter that house clients of the evacuated facility.
  - The Red Cross will bear financial responsibility for those items that are part of a traditional Red Cross shelter response; however, the additional expense of specialized medical equipment and/or supplies needed by the patient is the responsibility of the facility or public health authority, not the Red Cross.
  - All legal risks and responsibilities remain with the nursing or care institution.
  - When a facility is co-located in a current Red Cross shelter, all Red Cross services which are provided to the rest of the shelter residents should also be made available to residents of the evacuated facility, including regular cots, blankets, comfort kits and food.
  - Health Services personnel can serve as the liaison between the shelter and the staff of the evacuated facility.
  - The separate spaces for the Red Cross shelter and other facility should be clearly identified with signage so there is no confusion regarding which group is operating which shelter.

### **Assisting Those With Disabilities**

Many people with disabilities lead lives similar to people without disabilities and are able to get around without assistance. Never assume just because a person has a disability that he or she will require assistance. Before you attempt to assist a person, **always** ask the person if help is needed. Below are some examples of ways to assist people with various disabilities. More information on assisting people with disabilities is available in [\*Assisting People with Disabilities\*](#).

- Persons who have mobility-related disabilities.

People who use wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes or other mobility assistance devices may have differing abilities to access and move about in the shelter. Note any shelter resident with such an impairment and attempt, where possible and practical, to make reasonable accommodations.

- Ensure that there is ample room for persons with mobility assistance devices to maneuver, by keeping aisles and passageways wide and clear.
- Ensure that restroom facilities are accessible to those who use mobility assistance devices.
- If needed (and possible) make accommodation for electric chair/cart recharging operations.
- Persons with visual disabilities.  
For a person who is blind or has a visual impairment, a shelter can pose several challenges. Cots, tables, chairs, bedding, etc. may easily become a hazard to such persons. Additionally, normal signage and bulletin boards may work well for those without a vision impairment – but the need for information is just as great for those who cannot take advantage of such devices. Note any persons with such impairments and take reasonable steps to accommodate them.
  - Provide verbal orientation to the facility.
  - Provide, when needed, assistance with equipment such as phones.
  - Offer assistance when going through food lines.
  - Offer to read notices, bulletins, etc. out loud.
  - Place such individuals in areas that allow for easy access to restroom and other facilities.
- Persons with hearing disabilities.  
Hearing impairments may also vary widely, from hard of hearing to profoundly deaf. However, as with the sight impaired, the same need for information exists. Note individuals with hearing impairments and make reasonable accommodations to assist.
  - If the resident is hard of hearing or reads lips, try to separate them from noisy and distracting areas of the shelter.
  - Offer the persons written versions of information or instructions given.
  - Post general information in numerous locations, particularly when announcements are made over a loudspeaker or other amplification device.



## Youth Services

When minors are residents of a shelter, they require special considerations and attention. Services often fall under three main categories: Recreation, Child Care and Education. Below are some considerations when youth are residents of a shelter:

### Recreation

- Assess available resources within the shelter for keeping clients entertained and occupied.
- Determine the availability of video, music and recreational items.
  - Ensure the appropriateness of the materials in terms of age range, language, etc.
  - Ensure that, when it is no longer needed, any equipment used for recreational purposes is returned to the facility or partner who provided it.
- Establish a schedule for recreational activities.
- Work with shelter workers to identify space that can be used as dedicated areas for recreation and childcare. Post signs for those areas.

### Childcare

- The shelter manager should let the chapter or the Sheltering Manager at the disaster relief operation headquarters know of the need for childcare services. They will have access to agreements with organizations which provide such services.
- Ensure that childcare workers are either qualified partner volunteers or registered and screened Red Cross shelter workers.
- Direct childcare staff to keep a log of clients served. The log should include the following:
  - The names of the children and their guardians,
  - The ages of the children,
  - The days and times that the services were utilized.
- Monitor the childcare program to ensure that activities are both appropriate and serve the interests of the clients.
- Evaluate the need to pack lunches for children returning to school.
- Support partner agencies in establishing regulations for client use of childcare services.
  - Partner agencies which specialize in disaster childcare will have their own procedures.
  - Verify that their procedures meet all safety requirements.

### Education

The shelter manager should coordinate with Partner Services, Government Liaison to initiate discussion regarding continuation of educational programs in cases where schools will not be reopened for a significant period of time.

## Shelter Safety Issues

Shelter managers are responsible for addressing the safety and security needs of Red Cross workers and clients within the shelter. Different shelter situations may require different levels of security, depending on the situation. Safety and security must remain a top priority for all shelter workers.

### General Shelter Safety Guidelines

- Enforce all shelter rules and policies regarding –
  - Prohibiting the possession of guns and other weapons,
  - Prohibiting the use of tobacco,
  - Prohibiting the possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs,
  - Prohibiting other unacceptable activities.
- Communicate the basic rules relating to –
  - Restricted areas of the shelter,
  - Noise levels and quiet hours,
  - Lights-out times,
  - Other rules that may be established.

Enforcing these rules is essential to maintaining a safe, secure and orderly environment for workers and clients.
- Monitor potential conflicts. In the event of verbal harassment, verbal altercations, verbal abuse or other verbal disturbances –
  - Issue a verbal warning to the involved individuals. Directly inform them that behavior of that type is not permitted in the facility or on the property.
  - Inform them that if the disturbance continues or occurs again, the next step will be to have law enforcement address the situation and that may result in the removal of the involved individuals from the facility and the property.
  - Document actions in the shelter log for other workers to reference.
  - If it is not possible to stop the altercation safely or if the disturbance does not stop after the verbal warning, call 9-1-1 or the local phone number for immediate law enforcement intervention.
- Call 9-1-1 or the local phone number for law enforcement intervention immediately in the event of any physical altercation, contact, fighting or violence.
  - If possible, issue verbal warnings to safely stop the incident immediately. Do not attempt any physical contact if there is an altercation.
  - Any incident where physical contact is made, and/or the life safety and security of the shelter workers or residents is at risk, should be reported immediately.
  - The chapter contact and/or the relief operation contact needs to be advised of any incident at the shelter.
- Clearly mark the locations of fire extinguishers. Ensure that each shelter worker knows where they are located. Current inspection tags and charge levels should be verified during the pre-occupancy inspection.

- Inform the shelter residents that Red Cross cannot take responsibility for lost or stolen items.
  - Shelter residents should be encouraged to keep their valuables in a safe location outside of the shelter setting.
  - Signs can be written and posted to inform residents.
  - Residents should be informed of this policy when they register.
- Maintain and communicate rules for the behavior of children. Be consistent in the enforcement of the rules.
  - Remind parents that they must be responsible for the actions and behaviors of their children.
  - The Red Cross cannot be responsible for unaccompanied or unsupervised children.
  - If available, the Life Safety and Asset Protection activity can be consulted when operating a shelter.
  - Depending on the reporting structure, requests for these services can be channeled through the chapter, service area or the relief operation leadership.
  - Not all operations will have the Life Safety and Asset Protection activity in place. In such situations, consultation should be made with chapter leadership for guidance.
- Make appropriate contacts if it becomes necessary to hire certified or licensed contract security personnel to work in the shelter.
  - The shelter manager must discuss the situation with the chapter, service area, Mass Care Sheltering Manager or the appropriate operation leadership personnel before proceeding with any contract commitments.
- Address life safety and security issues for the facility during the pre-occupancy inspection/walkthrough.
  - If there are relevant life-safety or security issues regarding the facility, then the appropriate actions or repairs must be addressed and documented in order for the facility to be safely used as a shelter.
- Limit the number of entrances and exits in order to help control who enters and exits the facility.
  - Unused doors should be secured.
  - Residents and workers should be reminded that they are not allowed to use restricted entrances to enter or exit the building during non-emergency situations.
  - This may need to be done in cooperation with the fire marshal.
  - Under no circumstances can emergency exits be blocked or locked in a way that would prevent exiting from them.
- Provide guidance for both workers and residents regarding the parking of personal vehicles at the shelter site.
  - Communicate that the Red Cross cannot be held liable for damages to vehicles at the shelter site.
  - Depending on the size and availability of parking, the shelter manager may have to allocate parking for clients and workers.

- Report to local law enforcement, as well as to the chapter and/or operations headquarters, any suspicious activity that may occur either inside or outside of the shelter facility.
  - These could be actions of groups or individuals that could cause a threat to the shelter or to the community in general.
- In the case of a hurricane or tornado, make sure that doors and windows remain closed.
  - Building codes are created with the presumption that doors and windows are closed; failure to follow these procedures can cause a building to fail and suffer structural damage, even if it is built to storm shelter standards.
  - At all times during the actual storm, residents and staff must remain inside the building.
- Ensure an emergency evacuation plan is in place to safely remove people from the building. Also, be aware of which government entity is responsible for issuing mandatory evacuation orders for the city, county and/or state.

**Essential Tools and Resources****Shelter Manager Kit List**

- Red Cross materials
- 2 pk/50 Disaster Shelter Registration forms (F5972)
- 2 pk Disaster Field ID Kit (A4123 and/or A4123 for Spanish)
- Red Cross Worker ID
- 20 Temporary Name Badges (F6712 shipped in pk/150) and holders
- 
- Office Supplies
- 12 ballpoint pens
- 1 package of 3"x5"cards
- 2 clipboards
- 4 paper tablets
- 2 staplers
- 1 box of staples
- 2 boxes of paper clips
- 1 manual hole punch
- 2 large permanent markers
- 1 box of thumbtacks
- 2 rolls of masking tape
- 1 role of scotch tape
- 1 package of rubber bans
- 1 pair of scissors
- 1 box of file folders
- 1 pad of easel paper
- 1 3-ring binder with tab dividers
- 1 whistle
- 1 roll of orange or yellow traffic control tape
- 1 box of trash bags
- 2 rolls of paper towels
- 1 bottle of all-purpose cleaner
- 1 flashlight
- 1 electric lantern
- flashlight batteries
- lantern batteries
- 1 battery-operated radio
- 1 pkg. of disposable diapers
- 1 box of sanitary napkins
- 2 boxes of facial tissue
- 6 rolls of toilet tissue
- 1 package of antiseptic pre-moistened towelettes (40)

**Basic Sheltering Forms**

[Shelter Agreement, Standard](#) (revised 05/06)

[Shelter Opening/Closing Checklist](#) (revised 02/07)

[Shelter Log](#) (revised 02/07)

F5972 [Shelter Registration Form](#) (revised 02/07)

F6454 [Mass Care Daily Operations Report](#) (revised 02/03)

F6564 [Shelter Facility Survey](#) (revised 02/07)

<b>Position Descriptions for Shelter Workers</b>
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**Position:** Shelter Manager

Supervisory Level

**Activity:** Sheltering

**Possible Work Site(s):** Shelter Site(s)

**Job Summary:**

The Shelter Manager is responsible for providing supervision and administrative support for Red Cross actions within the shelter. This person ensures that the needs of shelter occupants are being met. They supervise a work unit composed of service associates by assuming accountability for the assigned workers within the activity as well as being able to answer common questions on a day-to-day basis.

**Major Tasks**

- Establish contact with facility representatives and activate the building when ready.
- Ensure [facility agreement](#) (Form 6621) is completed, the [Self-Inspection Worksheet Off-premises Liability Checklist](#) (Form 6505) is complete, the general condition of the facility has been assessed and any pre-existing damage is noted.
- Establish and maintain contact with supervisory unit.
- Project staffing and other support requirements for the next 48 hours.
- Coordinate recruitment of additional personnel. Encourage the involvement of shelter residents as workers.
- Organize and brief staff. Ensure that all positions are staffed.
- Ensure local affiliated and non-affiliated workers are used to the fullest extent by providing support, training, evaluation and inclusion with the visiting workforce.
- Evaluate and provide for appropriate developmental/mentoring opportunities for assigned staff.
- Complete work performance evaluations for all staff in work unit, as appropriate. Obtain technical review from the appropriate reviewer.
- Order start-up supplies and equipment and request any support needed through Material Support Services or other designated representative.
- Assess feeding options and discuss recommended solution with supervisor and Food Services supervisor.
- Establish a shelter log.
- Ensure proper shelter identification both inside and outside of the shelter.
- Ensure that the Welfare Information and Individual Client Services copies of shelter registration forms are forwarded to headquarters or other designated location.

- Ensure Health Services has staff at shelter.
- Develop a schedule for feeding, lights out, shelter rules and information board for all residents to view.
- Promote an environment that eliminates discrimination, harassment or favoritism of any sort and adheres to the zero tolerance policy.
- Resolve staff conflicts and/or recognize when a conflict must be referred to a higher level.
- Model appropriate behavior and treat all workers with respect and dignity at all times.
- Organize and facilitate staff meetings as appropriate.
- Seek guidance from supervisor as necessary and appropriate.
- Maintain a professional appearance and attitude.
- Follow and implement requests and direction received from supervisor.
- Support and implement decisions made by disaster operations management.
- Monitor and support the quality of service delivery and morale of the Red Cross workforce in order to achieve the mission statement of disaster services.
- Ensure clear and concise communication flow between the manager and the relief operation workforce.

### **Specific Qualifications**

- Good analytical skills and strong communication (written and verbal) skills including effective listening skills.
- Strong leadership in a team environment.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities and tasks simultaneously.
- Adapt to change, negotiate compromise and tolerate ambiguity.
- Organize work activities, delegate work and directly supervise a diverse work unit, including volunteers and employees.
- Ability to objectively evaluate and appropriately document workers' performance.
- Competently use computer resources to support work unit.
- Ability to professionally interface and negotiate with external organizations and internal colleagues.
- Strong team building skills.
- Ability to conduct staff meetings and delegate tasks.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities and tasks simultaneously.
- Ability to promote, develop and maintain productive and amicable working relationships with diverse individuals and groups, including peers and supervisors.
- Sensitivity in human interactions to diversity and inclusiveness.
- Must be flexible and adaptable in various situations and work settings, including weather conditions, cultures and geographic areas for extended periods of time.

### **Life Experience Examples**

- Customer Service Supervisor.



- Hotel Supervisor.
- College Dormitory Supervisor.

**Physical Requirements**

- Ability to sit or stand for long periods of time.
- Ability to adapt to long, irregular hours and frequent schedule changes.

**Position:** Shift Supervisor

Supervisory Level

**Activity:** Sheltering

**Possible Work Site(s):** Shelter Site.

**Job Summary:** The shift supervisor oversees the shelter staff and guides their work in the absence of or as the designee of the shelter manager. The shift supervisor ensures that the needs of clients are met in the shelter setting.

**Major Tasks**

- Supervise shelter staff; conduct staff meetings.
- Serve as the Red Cross representative to the facility.
- Work with other constituency groups, such as Material Support Services and Staff Support Services, in order to ensure smooth operations.
- Maintain contact with supervisory unit or relief operation headquarters.
- Ensure that major events are recorded in shelter log.
- Ensure that feeding operations are running smoothly by interacting with feeding personnel (supervisor, if appropriate).
- Ensure that proper shelter identification is posted inside and outside shelter.

**Specific Qualifications**

- Ability to handle multiple demands at once.
- Ability to supervise diverse staff.
- Ability to work independently in order to resolve issues.
- Must have strong team building skills.
- Ability to delegate tasks and conduct staff meetings.

**Life Experience Examples**

- Supervisor in residential facility, university housing.

**Physical Requirements**

- Ability to stand and/or sit for long periods.
- Ability to get around shelter sites.

**Position:** Registrar

Non-Supervisory Level

**Activity:** Sheltering**Possible Work Site(s):** Shelter Site.**Job Summary:** The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that all clients entering or leaving the shelter go through the registration process.**Major Tasks**

- Create registration area, allowing enough space for a waiting area.
- Use the Disaster Shelter Registration Form (Form 5972) to record information about clients entering the shelter.
- Send copy of Registration Form to both Welfare Information and Health Services.
- Maintain log for those residents entering and leaving the shelter.
- Maintain a shelter census and report this information to the shelter manager at appropriate intervals.
- Recruit shelter residents to assist with registration if needed.
- Refer persons with illness or injury or those with special medication or diets to Health Services.
- Interact with clients to determine needs and refer appropriately.
- Seek guidance from supervisor as necessary and appropriate.
- Maintain a professional appearance and attitude.
- Follow and implement requests and direction received from supervisor.
- Exhibit good stress reduction skills. Strive to encourage an environment for the unit that minimizes the stress level as much as possible under the disaster conditions.

**Specific Qualifications**

- Ability to organize processes in the midst of chaos or uncertainty.
- Ability to gather information from individuals in difficult circumstances.
- Ability to read; communicates effectively verbally and writes legibly.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities and tasks simultaneously.
- Proficiency using computers.
- Ability to promote, develop and maintain productive and amicable working relationships with diverse individuals and groups, including peers and supervisors.
- Sensitivity in human interactions to diversity and inclusiveness.
- Must be flexible and adaptable in various situations and work settings, including weather conditions, cultures and geographic areas for extended periods of time.

**Life Experience Examples**

- College registrar.

- Administrative assistant.
- Event Planner.

**Physical Requirements**

- Ability to sit or stand for long periods of time.
- Ability to adapt to long, irregular hours and frequent schedule changes.

**Position:** Dormitory Management Associate

Non-Supervisory Level

**Activity:** Sheltering

**Possible Work Site(s):** Shelter site.

**Job Summary:** The dormitory management associate ensures that sleeping areas are appropriately chosen, set up and equipped with all necessary items.

### Major Tasks

- Designate space for sleeping areas that is appropriate, considering separate areas for families with children, the elderly or other unique situations.
- Set up cots and, if possible, place two blankets on each cot.
- Ensure that set up allows for those individuals with disabilities or those who need other forms of support.
- Ensure space is available to distribute comfort kits and other appropriate items.
- Seek guidance from your supervisor as necessary and appropriate.
- Maintain a professional appearance and attitude.
- Follow and implement requests and direction received from your supervisor.
- Exhibit good stress reduction skills. Strive to encourage an environment for the unit that minimizes the stress level as much as possible under the disaster conditions.

### Specific Qualifications

- Ability to plan use of space while considering various possibilities.
- Ability to read, communicate effectively verbally and write legibly.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities and tasks simultaneously.
- Proficiency in using computers.
- Ability to promote, develop and maintain productive and amicable working relationships with diverse individuals and groups, including peers and supervisors.
- Sensitivity in human interactions to diversity and inclusiveness.
- Must be flexible and adaptable in various situations and work settings, including weather conditions, cultures and geographic areas for extended periods of time.

### Life Experience Examples

- College dormitory assistant.
- Hotel worker.

### Physical Requirements

- Ability to lift 50 lbs.
- Ability to sit or stand for long periods of time.

- Ability to adapt to long, irregular hours and frequent schedule changes.

**Position:** Feeding Associate

Non-Supervisory Level

**Activity:** Sheltering**Possible Work Site(s):** Shelter Site(s)**Job Summary:** The feeding associate prepares and serves food for clients in the shelter environment.**Major Tasks**

- Establish a beverage and snack canteen service as soon as possible after shelter opens.
- Prepare and/or serve food following safe food handling procedures.
- Ensure that the canteen and feeding preparation area are kept clean and sanitary at all times.
- Keep accurate count of meals and snacks served and submit to Supervisor at established reporting times.
- Seek guidance from supervisor as necessary and appropriate.
- Maintain a professional appearance and attitude.
- Follow and implement requests and direction received from supervisor.
- Exhibit good stress reduction skills. Strive to encourage an environment for the unit that minimizes the stress level as much as possible under the disaster conditions.

**Specific Qualifications**

- Knowledge of or ability to learn safe food handling procedures.
- Ability to read; communicate effectively verbally and write legibly.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities and tasks simultaneously.
- Ability to promote, develop and maintain productive and amicable working relationships with diverse individuals and groups, including peers and supervisors.
- Sensitivity in human interactions to diversity and inclusiveness.
- Must be flexible and adaptable in various situations and work settings, including weather conditions, cultures and geographic areas for extended periods of time.

**Life Experience Examples**

- Food service industry worker.

**Physical Requirements**

- Ability to move around kitchen sites.
- Ability to lift 50 lbs repeatedly.
- Ability to sit or stand for long periods of time.
- Ability to adapt to long, irregular hours and frequent schedule changes.

**Position:** Information Associate

Non-Supervisory Level

**Activity:** Sheltering

**Possible Work Site(s):** Shelter Site.

**Job Summary:** The Information Associate keeps shelter clients and staff informed and aware of recovery matters.

**Major Tasks**

- Post directional signs from main roads so that clients can locate shelter.
- Post shelter identification and information outside and inside the shelter, as appropriate.
- Ensure that signs are replaced as they deteriorate.
- Brief other shelter staff so that they are prepared to answer client questions.
- Arrange for a television or radio and a daily newspaper, if possible, so residents can get information about current disaster conditions.
- Work to dispel rumors.
- Remove all interior and exterior signage when the shelter closes.

**Specific Qualifications**

- Ability to convey information in a clear, concise manner.
- Ability to verify information in an efficient manner.

**Life Experience Examples**

- Communications.

**Physical Requirements**

- Ability to communicate with clients.
- Ability to maneuver through the shelter and around the shelter location to post signs.



## APPENDIX A

**Information on Using the *Safe and Well Website***

The *Safe and Well Website* is a public website that allows those affected by a disaster to post standard messages about their well-being. Concerned family members and loved ones anywhere can search for the messages posted by those who self-register.

- The [Safe and Well Website](https://disastersafe.redcross.org/) is publicly available via the internet at <https://disastersafe.redcross.org/>.
- When using the [Safe and Well Website](https://disastersafe.redcross.org/), clients must read and agree to the Privacy Statement.
  - Clients must accept and agree to the Privacy Statement terms in order to complete the “Register” or “Search” functions on the website.
  - Children under the age of 13 should not enter personal information into this website without adult supervision.
- In order to register on the [Safe and Well Website](https://disastersafe.redcross.org/):
  - The client must complete the “List Myself as Safe and Well” form, ensuring that the information provided is complete and accurate.
  - The client should check that at a minimum the required fields are completed, including choosing at least one “Safe and Well” Message.
  - The client must click the button indicating that they agree to the Privacy Statement terms.
  - A registration may be “updated” by creating a new entry at a later time.
  - Additional referrals can be found on the “Service Partners” page, such as [Contact Loved Ones](http://www.contactlovedones.com) voice messaging service ([www.contactlovedones.com](http://www.contactlovedones.com)).
- Searching the website for other family members who may have been displaced/affected by the disaster:
  - The user completes the “Search” template, by entering a last name and *EITHER* a phone number *OR* an address for the person they are seeking.
  - The user ensures that the required information is entered completely and accurately.
  - The user must click the button indicating that they agree to the Privacy Statement terms.
  - Any matching result(s) will be displayed with the name, date and time that the registration was created and the “Safe and Well” messages were posted.