

I. PURPOSE

To describe how the congregate care (emergency housing, feeding, clothing, disaster health services, and counseling) needs of Mower County residents, (as well as potential incoming evacuees from other communities) will be met in the event of a disaster.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

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A. Primary Needs. The following primary congregate care needs of disaster victims will be met by the government departments, Austin Medical Center or voluntary organizations indicated:

1. Registration of victims
2. Emergency housing – Social Services; Red Cross
3. Emergency feeding – Social Services; Red Cross
4. Emergency clothing – Social Services; Red Cross
5. Crisis counseling – Social Services
6. Family Assistance Center
7. Disaster Health Services
8. Animal/Pet shelter
9. Waste Management
10. Tracking Disaster Victims

B. Additional Needs. The following additional congregate care needs of disaster victims will be met by the agencies/organizations indicated:

1. Reception and registration center teams – Social Services; Community Health Services; Nursing Staff; Red Cross

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2. Family Assistance Center- Inquiry and referral (regarding disaster victims)– Social Services; Red Cross; Public Health; MRC of Mower County
3. Chemical or radiological decontamination – Community Health Services
4. Management of fallout shelters (nuclear attack) – Sheriff; County EM Director
5. Crisis upgrade of shelters and crisis shelter stocking plan (nuclear attack) – Sheriff; County EM Director
6. Crisis marking of unmarked shelters and congregate care facilities (nuclear attack) – Sheriff; Human Services

7. Law enforcement in reception and registration centers and lodging facilities – Sheriff; Chief Deputy
8. No person shall be denied services nor use of facilities on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or handicap.

III. COORDINATION OF CONGREGATE CARE

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Mower County Public Health Director will be responsible for providing overall coordination of the congregate care function. Public Health will maintain a listing of suppliers locally and who offer overnight shipping.

To facilitate this coordination, Mower County Public Health will provide a representative for the Mower County Emergency Operating Center (EOC).

IV. AVAILABLE RESOURCES/FACILITIES

These congregate care resources/facilities are described in the health and medical annex, congregate care annex, evacuation, traffic control and security annex, and the County Resource Manual.

- A. (Potential) Reception and Registration Centers (for incoming evacuees from other areas)
- B. Congregate Care Facilities (schools, churches, armories, motels, etc.)
- C. Mass Feeding Providers
- D. Fallout Shelters
- E. Bulk Food Suppliers

V. Mower County Public Health along with the assistance of the American Red Cross will organize, if needed, out-county congregate care. Public Health

VI. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A. [Attachment A](#): Red Cross Contact Information
- B. [Attachment B](#): American Red Cross in Minnesota: What we do in Disaster Response
- C. Standard Operating guidelines will be developed when the agreements are completed.

Attachment B:

**American Red Cross Chapters in Minnesota
What we do in Disaster Response**

Notification:

A community's first responders usually notify the American Red Cross. These responders (fire service, police, EMS, etc) work with the Red Cross on smaller incidents such as single family fires. For larger incidents, the local Red Cross provides for such things as emergency sheltering, mass feeding, and other services that help meet the immediate, emergency needs of a community impacted by a disaster. In instances where the scope of the disaster is immediately recognized and Emergency Management becomes involved from the beginning, our notification may be through Emergency Management. Every Red Cross chapter has a 24x7 notification path - typically via telephone. Backup is the MN State Red Cross Disaster Duty Officer (also 24x7) at 1-888-404-2236.

However the Red Cross is notified, we begin (within two hours) to set up a disaster response operation to provide the Red Cross services needed. The size and scope of the operation depends, of course, on the disaster.

Note: The Red Cross will not knowingly put any of our personnel in harm's way. The Red Cross operates only in the Green Zone, outside any hazardous area.

Services Typically Provided:

- For small incidents (single-family fire) the Red Cross will provide for the family's immediate needs for food, shelter, and clothing using a voucher system. In incidents larger than one to five families, the Red Cross typically provides emergency sheltering (*Mass Care*) in the form of communal or mass shelters (often set up in schools, churches, community buildings, etc) and ensures that mass feeding for the shelter population is in place. Note that the Red Cross does not accept or distribute used clothing or home-cooked food.
- In addition to feeding in the shelter, the American Red Cross also provides food (hot, cold, and snack) from feeding vehicles on mobile routes and at other fixed sites in and around the affected area. This feeding effort provides needed food for victims of the disaster, emergency responders, utility crews and other workers attempting to quickly bring the community back to a functional basis.
- At Red Cross Shelter sites, Red Cross Service Center sites, Red Cross Distribution sites, mobile aid stations and other locations, Red Cross *Disaster Health Service* (DHS) volunteer professionals provide first aid, replacement of lost medical items such as glasses, prescription medications, etc, and counseling on available health care related disaster resources. DHS also

ensures that all Red Cross paid and volunteer staff health needs are recognized and met appropriately.

- At Red Cross Shelter sites, Red Cross Service Center sites, Red Cross Distribution sites, mobile aid stations and other locations throughout the affected area, American Red Cross *Disaster Mental Health Service* volunteer professionals provide crisis intervention and counseling, coping methods, stress debriefing, literature on dealing with children in disaster situation, etc. These services are provided to victims of the disaster, to community members, and to individuals responding to the disaster needs.
- The American Red Cross provides, at Red Cross Service Center sites, in community outreach teams, mobile aid stations, and other locations, *Family Service* emergency assistance. This is an individual/family casework approach to determining the disaster-related needs of the family and assisting the family to determine the best resources to utilize to meet those needs. These resources often include American Red Cross financial assistance for such items as food, clothing, and longer-term shelter (such as hotel/motel in certain situations and/or first month's rent and/or deposit). They also include items such as cleanup and comfort kits.
- The American Red Cross can also assist families, separated by disaster, to reestablish contact. The *Disaster Welfare Information* function assists individuals to reconnect with their families out of the disaster area or families at a distance to reconnect with individuals within a disaster affected area who may no longer be at the home address and/or phone number.

To enable each of the above functions to focus their energies and abilities on providing direct services to our clients, underlying support functions are provided, especially in larger disasters. Some of these are:

- Administration: a Red Cross Relief Operation Director is named by the National Office, Disaster Services, to ensure that the Red Cross operation is coordinated by an individual with the necessary level of training and experience to provide appropriate planning and guidance to the officers heading each Red Cross function:
- Logistics: Working with facilities, transportation, procurement, supply, etc.
- Operational Data Management: Records and reports, accounting, and invoice review and approval.
- Disaster Assessment: Disaster Assessment (previously called 'damage assessment') specifically addresses the 'livability' of residential structures. The Red Cross does not perform Disaster Assessment of commercial property, such as office buildings.

- Staffing and Local Disaster Volunteer: Recruitment and utilization of human resources to perform Red Cross work.
- Government Liaison: The Red Cross interface with local, state, and federal government to ensure that information flows from the Red Cross relief operation to the local government and from the local government operation to the Red Cross relief operation. Note that we often can't give 'instant decisions' at an EOC; our headquarters is elsewhere, and our liaison must get some decisions from Red Cross leadership.
- In-Kind Donation: To work, from the scene of the Red Cross operation, with our national disaster services In-kind Donation unit to meet needs for bulk items for distribution to victims of the disaster (such things as water, bleach, garbage bags, gloves, sun screen, clean up kits, comfort kits, first aid supplies, etc).
- Public Affairs: to provide information to the community and to the media concerning the availability of Red Cross services (where, when, what) as well as human interest stories concerning the operations, its volunteers, and when appropriate, its clients.
- Fund Raising: to work with local Red Cross chapter leadership to raise the dollars to support the services being provided by the American Red Cross disaster relief operation. All Red Cross disaster assistance is free, made possible by voluntary donations of time and money from the American People.

Background:

The American Red Cross is a national organization, chartered by Congress in 1905, to, among other things, *“carry out a system of national and international relief in time of peace, and apply that system in mitigating the suffering caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry out measures for preventing those calamities.”*

As chartered units of the American Red Cross, Minnesota Red Cross Chapters are a part of one legal, corporate entity known as the American National Red Cross. As such, our commitments to disaster preparedness, planning, mitigation, and response are an integral part of our organizational purpose. Indeed, our national Organizational Mission Statement reflects this commitment and focus:

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

In compliance with our Congressional mandate to *“carry out a system...”* each Red Cross Chapter is required to develop the plans, preparedness activities, training, and capacity

development to enable them to initiate a Red Cross disaster response. The incident might be a single-family fire, or it might be a large disaster event that affects significant portions of the population. Each Chapter must be able to initiate a response, provide needed assistance, and complete the cycle of services necessary to help individuals and families affect their recovery from disaster in smaller events. For larger events, the Chapter must be prepared to at least initiate an immediate and effective response. In the event of larger catastrophic incidents, where the capacity of the local chapter is or will be exhausted, our national system is triggered. This system provides both human and material resources to ensure that the Red Cross element of response is timely, effective, efficient, and meets the immediate, disaster related emergency needs of the community.

As in all other community efforts, the American Red Cross sees itself as only one part of a significant collaborative effort between local, state, and federal government, community agencies and organizations, non-profits and the faith based community.

It is important to remember that, although we partner and collaborate with many entities, in time of disaster, the assistance and service provided by the American Red Cross relief operation is very specific. Although we are flexible in many ways in our delivery of disaster services, we are bound by our Board of Governors Disaster Services policies and procedures. This simply means that we have pre-defined parameters and pre-determined areas of service and these can not be neglected nor shifted to accommodate other's priorities.

Often the fact that we collaborate and coordinate our activities with local and emergency government creates an unrealistic expectation that we will be, in time of disaster, a human resource support to augment their activities, but this is not an accurate assessment. In planning and preparedness, the Red Cross may commit to help support specific, non-Red Cross activities (such as volunteer management, etc) but this is on a case by case basis and is predicated upon the ability of the local Red Cross unit to first fully provide the designated American Red Cross Disaster Services and still have the human and material resources to fulfill their agreed upon support to local and/or emergency government. According to standards set forth for Chapters by our National Board of Governors, we must first be fully able to fulfill our own services before we use Red Cross resources (human or material) to support other entities in their priorities.

There are also times when Local or Emergency Government, in their planning and preparedness efforts, ascribes to Red Cross tasks or responsibilities which, under the policies of our national Board of Governors, we can not accept. The Red Cross does not make the initial notification of serious injury or disaster related death to the next of kin, or provides transportation for victims, or manage everybody's spontaneous volunteers, or conduct evacuations, or manage quarantines or stock sandbags. Few Red Cross chapters have language banks.

To avoid such misunderstanding and to best leverage the resources that the American Red Cross brings to a disaster community, it is extremely helpful if the Red Cross is included as a partner in pre-disaster planning and preparedness effort. It will ensure that, in time of disaster, the scope and abilities of the Red Cross are understood and utilized to the best advantage.

In Conclusion:

The American Red Cross believes strongly in collaborative efforts, and in being a planning and preparedness partner with local government. It brings a set of direct services (Mass Care, Family Service, Disaster Health Service, Disaster Mental Health Service, and Disaster Welfare Information) supported by a full set of underlying support services.

Red Cross disaster response may, on any given operation, include interactions with numerous governmental entities (a multi-city, multi-county, or even multi-state disaster event is not unprecedented) in the event of a wide spread event. This necessitates the Red Cross to maintain, as per our Congressional Charter requirements, our own response system, which, although strongly interfacing with and supporting local response systems, is independent of those local systems.