

DISASTER RESPONSE VOLUNTEER GROUP INFORMATION SHEET

General Information for Volunteers

Volunteers are needed in the aftermath of a disaster to help in clean-up and rebuilding. Although work projects may vary, the following general information may help your group in planning.

What you may be doing:

- pumping water from basements
- carrying out mud-covered furnishings and belongings
- removing wet wallboard, insulation, and flooring
- pressure washing mud from interiors/exterior
- helping in reconstruction (e.g., concrete, carpentry, etc.)

What to wear while doing clean-up:

- old clothes and work boots that can be discarded after project
- cotton or leather work gloves
- rubber gloves and boots if doing clean-up
- long pants (not shorts)
- t-shirts or light-weight long-sleeved cotton shirts

What to bring:

- work clothes mentioned above
- change of clothing to wear when not working
- drinking water, coolers for food
- sack lunches to take to the work site
- medical permission for minors
- first aid kit for cuts (antiseptic, bandages)
- sleeping bags, personal items, if staying overnight
- hand tools (hammers, crow bars)

What you need to know:

- every worker must have a current tetanus shot (within the last 5 years)
- needs in flooded areas change from day to day, so job site assignments will be made when you arrive
- sometimes the Red Cross, United Way, Salvation Army, or other agency requests our workers to assist in areas other than clean-up
- if staying overnight, a host site and showers need to be arranged
- unless otherwise instructed, plan to be self-sufficient in regards to meals

For more information, contact:

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Group Size:

- optimum group size varies with the work being done
- large groups are appropriate for relief efforts
- groups of 10 or 12 are appropriate for rebuilding
- groups may be separated into teams of 4 to 6 to work in homes
- a ratio of 1 adult per 4 youth is recommended

Composition:

- each group needs skilled workers in the area of work
- in some cases the local response agency may be able to provide skilled lead workers if the group has persons who can follow directions
- support workers may be needed to provide meals, on-site assistance, etc., for the non-skilled workers
- a ratio of one skilled worker per 4 non-skilled workers is recommended

Accommodations:

- there will be a wide variation in accommodations depending on availability and group preference
- lodging and meals may be in churches, homes, camps, motels, etc.

Insurance:

- insurance must be provided by each individual or group
- this includes health and accident, vehicle, liability and lost or stolen articles

Transportation:

- each group must provide their own transportation
- each group must coordinate with the host agency to be aware of the number of vehicles needed
- if the group is to split into several work teams, each team may need their own transportation

Tools:

- each group must coordinate with the host agency to be aware of the type of tools to bring