

DISASTER ACTION TEAM MANUAL

Greater Toledo Area Chapter

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We would like to thank the many chapter and service area staff members that reviewed and provided input for initial template from which this document was adapted.

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Dear Red Cross Disaster Action Team Volunteer,

We are delighted to welcome you to the Greater Toledo Area Chapter and to the American Red Cross team of people who have dedicated their time to assisting others.

The Greater Toledo Area Chapter of the American Red Cross provides emergency food, clothing and shelter to victims of disaster. We also support emergency workers, usually through canteening services, during search and rescue operations, structure fires, large scale transportation accidents and other emergency situations. Additional disaster services may be available depending on verified, disaster-caused needs. All disaster assistance provided by the Red Cross is free of charge.

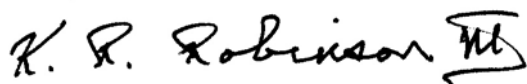
The Disaster Action Team (DAT) is charged with the initial response for most, if not all, disaster events. Each DAT has at least two members including a team leader. Our DAT is primarily responsible for the providing coverage on weekends, holidays, and after regular business hours (4:45 p.m. through 8:30 a.m.) within the chapter's jurisdiction. Volunteer DAT members will respond to incidents during business hours whenever possible.

This Disaster Action Team manual is for you to keep. It will prove to be a valuable resource during your career as a Red Cross Disaster Action Team volunteer, detailing the standards and guidelines that employees and volunteers must follow in the pursuit of our common cause.

We encourage you to read through the manual carefully so you are familiar with the policies and procedures that lend a hand to our success. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to consult the Response Coordinator or your local branch office director.

Again, thank you for becoming a Red Cross Disaster Action Team volunteer. Without the help of our volunteers, the Red Cross would not exist and our clients and community would not receive the vital services they need. There are not enough ways for us to show our deep appreciation to our dedicated volunteers. I know that you will find great satisfaction as a part of the greatest humanitarian organization in the world. Thank you all for helping us to carry on the mission of the American Red Cross in Lucas, Ottawa, and Wood counties!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. R. Robinson III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "III" at the end.

Kenneth R. Robinson III
Director of Programs and Services
Greater Toledo Area Chapter

Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavors, in its international and national capacity, to **prevent and alleviate human suffering** wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to **protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being**. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes **no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions**. It endeavors to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may **not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies** of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The **National Societies**, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, **must always maintain their autonomy** so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service

It is a voluntary relief movement **not prompted** in any manner **by desire for gain**.

Unity

There can be **only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country**. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The **International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is **worldwide**.

INTRODUCTION

The Disaster Services/Emergency Services Department of the Greater Toledo Area Chapter of the American Red Cross has organized disaster action teams (DATs) to ensure that trained Red Cross employees and volunteers can respond within two of being notified a disaster event. Disaster action teams provide immediate, identifiable emergency services to those affected by disaster. In addition to initiating Red Cross disaster relief, DATs determine the need for mobilizing additional chapter resources that may be needed.

This manual provides an overview of the responsibilities and activities that result in effective and efficient disaster action team responses. This document discusses:

- Responsibilities
- Member qualifications
- Disaster action team activities
- Member training
- Team equipment and attire
- Team member personal conduct
- Team notification and alerting
- Response procedures

The information in this document applies to all Greater Toledo Area Chapter individuals responsible for or performing disaster action team duties under the American Red Cross Disaster Services Program. The American Red Cross uses the following definition of disaster in determining its Disaster Services Program:

A disaster is a threatening or occurring event of such destructive magnitude and force as to dislocate people, separate family members, damage or destroy homes and injure or kill people. A disaster produces a range and level of immediate suffering and basic human needs that cannot be promptly or adequately addressed by the affected people, and impedes them from initiating and proceeding with their recovery efforts. Natural disasters include floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, typhoons, winter storms, tsunamis, hail storms, wildfires, windstorms, epidemics and earthquakes. Human-caused disasters, whether intentional or unintentional, include residential fires, building collapses, transportation accidents, hazardous materials releases, explosions and domestic acts of terrorism.

TEAM COMPOSITION

Disaster action teams are comprised of a single disaster action team leader and several disaster action team members. The disaster action team leader serves as coordinator of and provides leadership for other team members. The disaster action team concept is intended to place trained Red Cross volunteers on the scene of a disaster within minutes. The responding disaster action team volunteer makes an initial assessment and calls for additional help as needed¹. The support and resources of the entire chapter are available to disaster action team members when they respond to an incident.

¹ See Chapter Response Protocols, June 2008, included as an annex to this manual.

The local table of organization for the disaster action teams is (from top to bottom): Director of Programs and Services → Response Director/Coordinator (or branch office director) → disaster action team leader → disaster action team members.

The first disaster action team member to arrive serves as the on-scene coordinator for the Red Cross response until relieved by the disaster action team leader or a higher ranking staff member. Additional chapter resources can be requested through the Response Coordinator (cell number: 419-277-8087. If the Response Coordinator is unreachable, the next person to contact is the Director of Programs and Services (cell number: 419-345-8169 or pager: 419-327-1010).

RESPONSIBILITIES

Director of Programs and Services

- Develops a concept of operations for disaster response and procedures needed to implement the concept in accordance with the [*Disaster Response Handbook*](#).
- Determines disaster action team response requirements, response capabilities and potential shortfalls.
- Approves, or recommends to chapter management for approval, local disaster action team authorities, regulations and procedures consistent with the [*Disaster Response Handbook*](#).

Response Director

- Ensures recruitment, training and recognition of team members.
- Organizes, manages and supports disaster action teams in the chapter.
- Arranges for adequate resources to be made available for disaster action team activities.
- Recruits volunteers for disaster action team membership.

Response Coordinator/Branch Directors

The disaster action team coordinator, in consultation with chapter leadership team –

- Ensures disaster action team members receive appropriate Disaster Services training.
- Maintains the disaster action team roster and records of individual authorities granted to members to provide financial assistance.
- Develops and implements local disaster action team workshops and seminars appropriate to local chapter needs.
- Develops an on-call schedule for disaster action teams and dispatches or ensures that there is a system to dispatch disaster action teams to specific incidents.
- Recognizes the contributions of disaster action team members.

Disaster Action Team Leader

- Manages Red Cross response at the disaster site until relieved.
- Makes contact with the ranking public officials and other appropriate authorities at the disaster scene to coordinate Red Cross actions. This may be the incident commander, fire department, the police department or any other emergency management officials.
- Ensures that all appropriate services required are provided.
- Determines the need for Red Cross services at the disaster scene that are beyond the team's capability and relays that information according to Greater Toledo Area Chapter established procedures.

- Maintains communication with the designated chapter personnel, as required.
- Assesses need for Public Affairs support during the response effort and/or ensures that media inquiries and needs for information are met.
- Assesses need for Disaster Health Services and Disaster Mental Health support during the response effort.
- Submits case documents to the chapter within time lines established by Disaster Services regulations and the chapter.

Disaster Action Team Members

Team members report to the disaster action team leader. A disaster action team member, depending on training and experience—

- Conducts a disaster assessment.
- Assists in opening a shelter and participates in mass feeding services, as needed.
- Initiates interviews with those affected by the disaster to determine emergency needs.
- Provides appropriate assistance based on the nationally standardized price list, up to financial limits established by Disaster Services leadership.
- Provides disaster health services and mental health (by qualified Disaster Mental Health team members).
- Completes any necessary reports or documents related to the incident or to assistance; identifies and reports needed follow-up.

All Red Cross Disaster Action Team volunteers will—

- Provide Red Cross services to people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age or handicap.
- Make a commitment to the American Red Cross.
- Wear appropriate Red Cross identification while on a disaster response.
- Be receptive to training that will make them more aware of the social and physical needs of the clients being served.
- Support and supplement the work of other volunteers and employees.
- Respect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to Red Cross clients receiving our services or the work sites in which they volunteer.
- Have automobile liability and physical damage insurance on their own cars that meet the minimum requirements of the state in which the car is registered when driving their cars on Red Cross assignments.
- Accept and transmit funds only in accordance with Red Cross policy.
- Respond to disaster response calls appropriately when on-call.

MEMBER TRAINING

Each disaster action team member should have the following orientations and training:

- An orientation to disaster action team responsibilities, activities and organizational structure, including the team's relationship to the chapter's disaster leadership team, and general information about how to respond to the media.
- An orientation to the chapter disaster response plan
- Fulfilling Our Mission
- Disaster Assessment

- Mass Care: An Overview
- Shelter Operations and Shelter Simulation
- Client Services: Providing Emergency Assistance
- First Aid and CPR-Adult
- Client Assistance Cards: Caseworkers

Other training desirable for all team members, and/or required for specific activities:

- Collaborating to Ensure Effective Service Delivery
- Working with Total Diversity
- Psychological First Aid
- Disaster Public Affairs (Overview and/or Fundamentals)
- Disaster Health Services (required for Disaster Health Services volunteers)
- Disaster Mental Health Overview (required for Disaster Mental Health volunteers)
- Defensive Driving Training in order to operate Red Cross vehicles
- Client Assistance System training

MEETINGS

Regular meetings are scheduled to ensure disaster action team members receive up-to-date information about American Red Cross policy and procedures. These meetings will allow team members and chapter staff to coordinate preparation activities and facilitate discussion to maximize the efficient and effective delivery of American Red Cross services. Meetings are scheduled in each county by the Response Director or branch office director.

EQUIPMENT

Team Equipment

- Disaster action team bags equipped with forms, flashlight and phone book
- Cellular phones/pagers
- Paper or plastic hot and cold beverage cups and containers (Cambros)
- First aid supplies
- Blankets
- Comfort kits
- Clean-up kits
- Large trash bags
- Cards with chapter phone numbers
- Current map of jurisdiction
- Client Assistance Cards (CAC) and *Disbursing Orders* (DO)

Required for Team Leaders

- Primary resource list with contact information including:
 - Shelter list with phone numbers
 - Area hotel list with phone numbers
 - Vendor list

Personal Equipment

- All persons engaged in providing Red Cross disaster relief services will wear designated Red Cross disaster relief identification including:
 - American Red Cross name badge issued by the Greater Toledo Area Chapter
 - An official American Red Cross disaster relief vest over personal attire
- Clipboard
- A flashlight or portable electric lantern
- Pens

Optional Personal Items:

- Hiking or heavy duty shoes, rubber boots
- Rain gear and other weather-appropriate clothing

ATTIRE

All Red Cross disaster workers must wear attire that is professional, appropriate for the task at hand and clearly identifies them as Red Cross disaster relief workers while on duty as part of disaster response.

At a minimum, disaster action team members' attire should be unambiguously identified with the appropriate Red Cross logo and signature. Every effort should be made to ensure that attire will not confuse either the public or local officials. Uniforms or other insignia which might cause confusion should not be worn on disaster action team responses. In addition, the following items should not be worn:

- Tight or revealing garments, including short-shorts, halter tops, see-through garments and bathing suits.
- Garments or accessories bearing offensive or inappropriate slogans.
- Garments bearing product endorsement.
- Thongs, flip-flops or any other footwear that is unsafe, unprofessional or inappropriate for disaster tasks.
- Torn or dirty clothing.
- Fishnet reflective vests in colors other than red or white.
- Any Red Cross apparel which bears design elements other than the official American Red Cross or American Red Cross disaster signature, including "job" T-shirts.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

Disaster action team members shall read and sign the Red Cross Code of Conduct, and they shall abide by the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross stated at the beginning of this document. Prior to beginning work, a background check is required of all employees and volunteers.

American Red Cross name badges and apparel should be removed when a disaster action team member is not on-duty and should never be worn while engaging in any activity that may reflect adversely on the American Red Cross, including, but not limited to, engaging in illegal activity

or in political activities. Red Cross disaster workers are considered on-duty at any time they are engaged in official activities on behalf of a Red Cross disaster response. This on-duty definition applies exclusively to attire and identification standards. It does not create or negate other statutory or corporate definition of on-duty with respect to eligibility for worker's compensation, benefits and/or liability coverage for activities.

The possession of weapons (guns, knives, clubs, explosive devices, etc.) is strictly prohibited in the workplace, including any Red Cross identified vehicle or building.

NOTIFICATION AND ALERTING

The first step of any response to a disaster is learning that the disaster has occurred. For many disasters, this is not a problem. The Red Cross may learn of disasters from radio and television news or from people that live in the affected area and report the incident directly. But single-family disasters rarely produce public notice, and the Red Cross must establish and maintain a network that ensures that it receives timely notification that such disasters have occurred.

In the event of an emergency, local fire and emergency responders are instructed to call the chapter emergency number. During normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.) calls are answered by daytime employees who deploy available daytime disaster action team workers to the scene. During after-hours, phone calls are routed to an administrator-on-call who will notify the on-call disaster action team leadership for the county. (Toledo Fire Division pages the primary team directly.) If the call is not answered within ten minutes, a second call is made to the back-up team to begin a response.

Disaster action teams are responsible for responding to disaster incidents and providing for basic needs. The main objective of a disaster action team response is to provide the minimum level of assistance. The minimum level of assistance is defined as the baseline amount of assistance that a Red Cross unit is expected to make available to people affected by disasters in its jurisdiction as stated in Red Cross policy. The minimum level of assistance meets the very basic needs that are required for individuals to sustain life. Items required to meet the minimum level of assistance include food, clothing, toilet articles, shelter and health needs.

The following items are located in the chapter and can be distributed to disaster clients:

- Comfort Kits
 - Stored in the ERV or Jeep and in the branch office.
 - Disaster comfort kits should be given to each person affected by the disaster. Each comfort kit has basic necessities such as a toothbrush, toothpaste and soap. If a comfort kit is provided, this should be noted on the client's case record.
- Clean-Up Kits
 - Disaster clean-up kits are stored in the chapter trailer in Toledo or at the branch office. A clean-up kit includes a broom, squeegee, mop and cleaning products. Clean-up kits can be provided to families if their damage is repairable or to prevent any additional damage to their belongings. The clean-up kits should only be given if

the family will be cleaning in the home, and this will allow them to return. If a clean up kit is provided, this should be noted on the client's case record.

Disaster action team members are dispatched to a disaster scene by an administrator-on-call, chapter staff member, or in some cases, directly by a fire department. Disaster action team members may NOT self-dispatch to any incident. Disaster action team workers arriving at an incident who were not dispatched by the appropriate persons will not be given an assignment and may also be subject to disciplinary actions for self-dispatching.

Upon initial notification to respond, the team leader will notify the on-call Public Affairs representative prior to departure, if the following circumstances exist:

- The media are in route to or on the scene.
- The disaster is a multi-unit fire or affects more than five families.
- The disaster involves a serious injury or death.
- Hazardous materials (Hazmat) are involved.
- A shelter or canteen service is requested.
- Circumstances arise that the team leader or responders determine to be out of the normal and that may generate media attention or greater than normal public interest.

If the team leader or responders arrive on the scene and observe any of the above conditions and have not previously notified the on-call Public Affairs representative, they should do so before beginning the response. If approached by the media, the leader should request that the media wait for the arrival of the Public Affairs representative so that the team can focus on the client(s). If the media insist on immediate input from the Red Cross, then the team leader should act as the single point of contact and provide a concise, factual account of the Red Cross purpose and participation at the disaster scene. Remember, all detailed information regarding the client is confidential. **DO NOT REVEAL** specific information about the client at any time without the client's written permission.

RESPONSE

All calls should be responded to in the shortest amount of time possible. The Red Cross requires that a Red Cross representative make contact with the people affected by the disaster within two hours of being notified of the incident. Team leaders should start completion of an incident report upon notification of every incident.

The team leader will determine what resources are taken to the disaster site. If additional resources are needed, contact the Response Coordinator or branch director. In the event s/he is unreachable, contact the Director of Programs and Services.





The disaster action team leader will determine if the team will meet at the Red Cross chapter or at a central location near the scene. In the case of a haz-mat incident, the disaster action team leader will contact appropriate officials to determine a safe area for meeting clients or providing canteen services. **No Red Cross representative should report to the scene alone. A minimum of two people is required for all responses.**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The on-call disaster action team leader is to pick up the cell phone and/or pager, disaster action team handbook and disaster action team kit by close of business on the day he or she starts on-call duty. You should re-stock the disaster action team kit before your shift.

Turn on the cell phone and/or pager to check that it is working and leave it on until it is returned. ***The on-call disaster action team leader should carry the cell phone continuously once it is picked up.*** The cell phone and/or pager, disaster action team handbook and disaster action team kit should be returned on the last day of on-call duty by 9 a.m. along with either a verbal or written summary of any incidents that occurred during the shift.

When you receive a call for service, you must determine the type of response needed and inform the appropriate chapter leadership personnel. Most calls fall within the following four categories:

Single Family Disasters	→	
Canteen Calls	→	
Multi-Family Disasters	→	
Major Disasters	→	

SOP: Single Family Disaster



Call back the original caller only if necessary for additional information. Your initial information will most likely be just an address. Call out the on-call disaster action team and ensure that at least two people are available to respond to the address as quickly as possible (within two hours). Be sure to wear your Red Cross ID.

The people affected by the disaster are our first priority. Canteen operations are conducted after the clients' emergency disaster-caused needs have been met.

- 1. Upon arriving, report to the incident commander or ranking fire official.** Make a damage inspection from the exterior of the building.
- 2. Have the incident commander introduce you to the family.** Identify yourself and inform them that you are there to help them determine what kind of assistance they may need.
- 3. Conduct the initial interview.** Visit with the family to determine their immediate disaster-caused needs, identify their personal resources for recovery, work with them to create a recovery plan and provide appropriate Red Cross assistance. Record detailed information on the client's case record. Use the Standardized Emergency Assistance Price List and the following guidelines for issuing assistance.
- 4. Personal hygiene items.** Issue one comfort kit for each person affected. They are unisex. Remind parents to remove razors from their children's comfort kits. Record the number issued on the client's case record.
- 5. Medical needs.** If the client has emergency medical needs such as life sustaining prescriptions, oxygen, eyeglasses, etc., call the administrator-on-call at pager number 419-327-1030 or the Response Coordinator at telephone 419-277-8087. If the Response Coordinator is unavailable, the next person to contact is the Director of Programs and Services at pager number 419-327-1010.
- 6. Issue the Client Assistance Card and/or Disbursing Order.** A Client Assistance Card is a MasterCard® that can be loaded with a specific dollar amount. The client can use the Client Assistance Card at any merchant that accepts MasterCard®. *Disbursing Orders* are paper vouchers that can be filled out and used as a check at a specific vendor for a specific dollar amount and are provided when a hotel/motel stay is needed. The *Disbursing Order* is a four-part form that is used to provide individual assistance to disaster victims. *Disbursing Orders* are written as non-cash grants for the purchase of goods for standardized items and prices.

Activate the Client Assistance Card by calling one of the online activation people for the chapter's activators as noted on your DAT roster. If no activation person is available, call the Administrator on call at pager 419-327-1030. If the AOC cannot respond timely, please call the Response caseworker at pager 419-327-1071 to activate the Client Assistance Card. This call must be made before leaving the client. The client's signature is needed on the authorization form.

Note: Never cross out any words written on a *Disbursing Order*. If you need to void a *Disbursing Order*, follow the procedures in the *Client Casework Handbook*, task #16 "Void or cancel a *Disbursing Order*". Put all copies of the voided *Disbursing Order* in the case file; do not tear up.

- 7. Follow-up appointment.** Provide a "Disaster Caseworker" business card and instruct the client to telephone a disaster caseworker at their county's branch office the next morning. (If the fire occurred over the weekend and further assistance is needed before the next regular business day, you should notify the administrator on call. If the AOC is unavailable, the next person to contact is the Response Coordinator or branch director. If needed, you may contact the Director of Programs and Services.

SOP: Canteen Calls



Call back the original caller only if necessary to obtain essential information. Respond to the address as quickly as possible (should be no more than two hours). Be sure to wear your Red Cross ID.

The people affected by the disaster are our first priority. Canteen operations are conducted after the clients' emergency disaster-caused needs have been met.

Respond to the canteen location and begin providing snacks and drinks to the emergency workers and people affected by the disaster. If needed, mass care supplies can be purchased by using a disbursing order or by a staff member with a chapter P-card.

For larger fires, you may not have enough supplies. It is imperative that you update the Response Coordinator at 419-277-8087 or your branch director. If the Response Coordinator or branch director is unavailable, the next person to contact is the Director of Programs and Services at pager 419-327-1010. Once canteening has been established, it should never be stopped or interrupted until the incident is over, the Incident Commander (IC) makes other arrangements or if the situation is determined to be unsafe. Chapter leadership can arrange for additional supplies, workers and resources (like the emergency response vehicle).

**** It is expected that the local disaster action team will support canteen operations in its response area until the relief operation is completed. Local disaster action teams should not abandon disaster action team members from other areas that have come to help. ****

If communication is a problem, most fire or police personnel on the scene will relay a message through their dispatcher for you.

Note: Plan for the supplies you will use. Always request supplies before you think they will be needed. It is better to err on the side of over response.

The Response Coordinator (419-277-8087) should be contacted before responding to ANY canteening incident. If the on-call leadership person does not respond, call the Director of Programs and Services at pager 419-327-1010.

SOP: Multi-Family Disasters



Should you receive a call for a fire with five families/15 individuals or more, notify the Response Coordinator (419-277-8087) **immediately** for response guidance. If the Response Coordinator is unavailable, contact the Director of Programs and Services at pager 419-327-1010.

- **For Smaller Apartment Fires (Up to Two Units)** - Typically for smaller apartment fires, the response is handled similar to a single family fire: complete a client case record for each family, making sure needs are addressed for emergency food, clothing and shelter.
- **For Larger Apartment Fires (Three or More Units)** -
 1. **Locate the apartment owner/manager.** The apartment/manager may have already reported to the scene. Find out if any units are available in the complex to relocate the fire clients temporarily. If apartment owner/manager not reported, ask if the fire department has contacted them.
 2. **Locate as many residents as possible and see who needs emergency shelter.** In incidents involving 10 or more **people**, a congregate shelter may be established. Consult the Response Coordinator (419-327-8087) for guidance. If the Response Coordinator is unavailable, contact the Director of Programs and Services at pager 419-327-1010.
 3. **Complete an *On-Site Detailed Damage Assessment Worksheet (F5739)*.** List each unit, in numerical order, on a separate line. In most instances, the apartment manager has a list of units and their occupants. They may also have some preliminary damage assessment information. Validate any assessment information you are given from a non-Red Cross source.

Note: Red Cross damage assessment is conducted from the exterior of the building. It is not required nor expected of you to enter the building and do a “walk through.” Many times it is unsafe. Emergency workers and apartment owners cannot grant legal permission for you to enter individual living units. You may, with the escort of the fire department and permission of the apartment manager, walk the common hallways if safe to do so to gain more accurate information.

You can make additional notes on the damage assessment form. Helpful notes include post disaster location or contact information for the victims, special needs, etc.

- 4. Casework process begins.** Depending on how many residents are affected, time of day and availability of local caseworkers, the rest of the process will be determined at the time of the incident. Options could include opening a service center, conducting casework at the fire scene, etc. Consult with the Response Coordinator for guidance on any further process.

Disaster action team volunteers must work in coordination with chapter leadership to activate additional supplies, workers and resources if necessary. **Disaster action team leaders/captains are responsible for coordinating responses within their county until leadership and direction of the relief operation is assumed by the chapter's Response Coordinator or Director of Programs and Services.** All disaster action team members responding to the incident are to support the efforts of the local disaster action team leader.

Contact the Response Coordinator before responding to ANY multi-family incident. If the Response Coordinator does not respond, call the Director of Programs and Services.

SOP: Major Disasters



Contact the Response Coordinator before responding to ANY major disaster incident. If the Response Coordinator does not respond, call the Director of Programs and Services.

Response to a large incident is usually somewhat confusing; information rapidly changes during the initial stages. The chapter will establish an emergency operations center according to the chapter's disaster plan to initiate a large scale response if necessary.

Cell phones and pager systems usually become overloaded, you may experience communication break downs. **Expect this and have a contingency plan for reporting back before responding to the scene. If necessary, the chapter can activate its agreement with Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES).**

Disaster action team leaders/captains are responsible for coordinating responses within their area until leadership and direction of the relief operation is assumed by the chapter's Response Coordinator or the Director of Programs and Services. All disaster action team members responding to the incident are to support the efforts of the local disaster action team leader.

Typically, the initial disaster action team responding to the scene will locate the Incident Commander (IC) at the disaster site, let him or her know that a Red Cross representative has arrived and identify the most pressing immediate needs. It is not uncommon for requests to be made of the Red Cross for services we do not offer. Emergency personnel are often unaware of the particulars of the services we do or do not offer.

The initial disaster action team member on scene will make an independent assessment of the situation as quickly as possible and report back to the on call Disaster Services/Emergency Services leadership person. Disaster action team members must work in coordination with Disaster Services/ Emergency Services leadership to activate additional supplies, workers and resources if necessary.

The Response Coordinator (419-277-8087) should be contacted before responding to ANY major incident. If the Response Coordinator does not respond, call the Director of Programs and Services at pager: 419-327-1010 or cell 419-345-8169. If they do not respond, contact the chapter's CEO at pager 419-327-1060 or cell 419-360-1127.

FOLLOWING THE RESPONSE

If an emergency response vehicle or other chapter vehicle was used, the driver should complete the beginning mileage, ending mileage and purpose of the trip upon returning to the chapter. Check for personal items in the vehicle. Remove all trash, paper cups, wrappers, used paper, etc., from the vehicle. Return the keys to their proper location. Clean and dry any used equipment and restock the vehicle as required.

Completed client case records and incident report forms must be submitted to the chapter no later than the morning of the next business day. This will allow chapter staff and volunteer caseworkers to follow up and provide additional assistance to clients immediately.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The relationship between the Red Cross and the persons who come to us for service is confidential. Safeguarding this relationship is an essential part of the organization's obligation to the people and communities we serve. The principles of confidentiality will be observed by all Red Cross employees and volunteers in obtaining, protecting and releasing information about clients, recognizing that such information is given to workers as representatives of the Red Cross and is to be used only for the purpose of providing Red Cross services. The Red Cross complies voluntarily with the spirit of the Privacy Act of 1974.

All information obtained under the client-agency relationship is considered confidential. The term "client" as used in these regulations refers to any individual or family who seeks Red Cross assistance in recovering from a disaster. A client relationship is established by the individual's or family's contact with the Red Cross, whether or not any assistance is given.

The Red Cross caseworker should request no additional information other than what will be needed for the service that may be given. Citizenship is not a pre-requisite for Red Cross disaster assistance; clients will not be questioned about their citizenship status, nor asked to produce birth certificates, immigration papers, passports, social security cards or similar documents that could be interpreted as being used to identify the nationality or immigration status of persons seeking Red Cross assistance.

The Red Cross must have written consent for the release of specific information to a specific agency or written evidence that the individual or family has given such agency or agencies permission to request that information from the Red Cross.

SAFETY

All employees and volunteers must make it priority to drive safely and must obey all traffic regulations when responding to disaster incidents—we are not first responders. The chapter will not pay for fines or citations. Red Cross policy requires the use of seat belts and prohibits smoking in Red Cross vehicles at all times. Never drive over fire hoses or downed power lines. Make sure the vehicle is parked in a safe location. If damage occurs to one of the chapter vehicles, notify the authorities immediately. There is an accident reporting toolkit in each

chapter vehicle. After everyone is safe, notify the Director of Programs and Services. Proper documentation for driving a Red Cross vehicle needs to be on file in the volunteer file. The emergency response vehicle requires specialized training. The Red Cross insurance will not cover the use of a personally-owned vehicle.

If a volunteer is hurt while responding, seek appropriate emergency medical assistance and notify the Director of Programs and Services.

Disaster action team members are issued photo identification. This ID must be worn at all times during the disaster action team call. If a disaster action team member loses an ID, notify the disaster services office immediately.

Team leaders may gain access to the chapter offices through a lock code on the door in Toledo and Bowling Green. The code can be issued to team members and team leaders. Care should be taken to ensure the security of the code. Upon leaving the Red Cross office, ensure the doors are securely closed and locked.

Unauthorized personnel are not allowed at the disaster scene, including family and friends of Red Cross employees and volunteers.

RESOURCES

Remember you are never alone and you can always call for assistance. Chapter leadership is available to answer any questions and provide assistance as required. Call the administrator on call for the resources you need at pager 419-327-1030 to receive assistance or to ask questions.

Thank you for being the vital part of helping people survive disasters and delivering the mission of the American Red Cross.

Incident Report Form

Date/time of notification: _____ Date/time of incident: _____

Name of caller: _____

Organization/title: _____

Telephone/fax #: _____

Location of the incident: _____

Number of people involved: _____

Number of adults: _____ Number of children: _____ Number of pets: _____

Known casualties? Yes / No

Details known at this time:

Evacuations? Yes / No

Details known at this time:

In-place sheltering: Yes / No

Details known at this time:

List all requests for services (to include Biomedical) and all services being provided at this time:

Anticipated support needed by chapter:

Name of person filing report: _____

Chapter name and location: _____

Position/title within chapter: _____

Telephone/fax #: _____

Date/time sent: _____

Incident report #: _____

Resource List

[**Disaster Response Handbook**](#)

[**Disaster Operations Management Handbook**](#)

[**Group and Activity Pages**](#)

[**Client Casework Handbook**](#)

[**Disaster Assessment Handbook**](#)

[**Sheltering Handbook**](#)

[**Feeding Handbook**](#)

ANNEXES

This document is intended to consolidate guidance found in the Greater Toledo Area Chapter's disaster response plan (approved in February 2008), the Chapter's Disaster Action Team Manual (revised March 2007), and American Red Cross corporate policy as outlined in the operations management course, Fundamentals of Chapter Disaster Operations Management (revised 2005).

1. The Greater Toledo Area Chapter's disaster plan will be activated automatically when any of the following conditions apply:
 - a) An incident with five or more families and/or involving more than 15 individuals
 - b) A pending disaster, e.g. watch or warning issued for severe storms, tornado, flood/flash flood, dam failure, etc.
 - c) An incident requiring notification support for a disaster in another jurisdiction, such as a plane crash
 - d) Special responses, to include riot/civil unrest, multiple injuries or fatalities, an incident involving special needs populations, aviation incidents
 - e) Events with significant media attention
 - f) A response where the possibility of opening a shelter exists
 - g) A response where the cost of the operation (the sum of emergency and additional assistance, costs for providing canteen services, sheltering, support expenses) over the lifetime of the job is expected to exceed the chapter's non-recurrent floor for expense, roughly \$6,000
2. In the event a response meets any of the above triggers, chapter leadership² will contact the DOC with all available data within the first two hours to facilitate a preliminary entry into DSARS in preparation for the possible assignment of a DR number.
3. The primary DAT leader(s) will remain in charge of the response until relieved by a DSHR rated job director (Readiness Coordinator or Director of Programs and Services) or another person designated by chapter leadership. The DAT leader(s) will likely be requested to serve as a group or activity manager until other resources are in place.
4. On any response where the chapter's disaster response plan has been activated, the DAT leader should contact disaster mental health volunteers for response to the scene as appropriate. At a minimum, a disaster health services volunteer should be available by telephone and should be able to respond to the scene if requested.

Note: The back-up DAT team is to be called only as a last resort after consultation with chapter leadership in order for the second team to remain available to respond to other local emergencies in place of the primary team. DAT members not on primary or back-up duty from all three counties and other local disaster volunteers (LDV) should be recruited before the back-up team is asked to respond. Other volunteer support can be recruited for the primary DAT leader by contacting the Director of Readiness and Response or the Casework Specialist. Under no circumstances should DAT members or LDVs call in to the chapter's emergency line to spontaneously report availability. This ties up communication and prevents emergency responders and disaster victims from contacting the duty worker.

² Chapter leadership in the Disaster Response Plan is identified as the Executive Director, the Director of Programs and Services, the Director of Readiness and Response, or the Response Coordinator.

**INITIAL DISASTER RELIEF OPERATION
CHAPTER DISASTER RESPONSE CHECKLIST³**

Within two hours of the onset of a disaster:

- American Red Cross shelters are opened within two hours of a request by an appropriate government official and/or from the time the chapter recognizes the need for shelters.
 - Local police and fire departments and local health departments are consulted before publicizing and populating a shelter location.
 - Reception or casework centers may be opened while determining an appropriate shelter location. Local police and fire departments should be informed as soon as possible.
- American Red Cross shelter managers are at the shelters prior to their opening (this could be within two hours of activation or less dependent on the situation)
- Disaster Health Services coverage is provided in all American Red Cross shelters on a twenty-four hour basis.
- American Red Cross Government Liaisons are present at the appropriate government emergency operations centers with two hours of their activation or at an incident command location on scene if no EOC is opened.
- Responding Disaster Action Team has notified the chapter leadership of the disaster and has requested assistance through the duty worker per the transition triggers described above from the GTAC disaster response plan.
- Chapter activates its disaster response plan and transitions to a management model appropriate for a reimbursable disaster, including the creation and dissemination of a preliminary table of organization.
- An initial incident report is provided to the appropriate next level of the American Red Cross reporting chain as outlined within the GTAC disaster response plan. Chapter leadership will contact Service Area 5 as needed.

Within four hours of the onset of a disaster:

- All American Red Cross shelters are properly identified, both within the facility and outside the facility.
- Disaster Mental Health personnel are available at the shelter(s) and other service delivery points.
- American Red Cross shelter information is provided to the local media.
- Agreements for personnel and/or vendor support for feeding operations are activated.
- Feeding is initiated at shelters in operation for more than four hours and at reception or casework centers as needed.
 - The food provided reflects the cultural diversity of the population.
- Disaster action team initiates transition for the response to chapter leadership if not already completed.
- An assessment is made of the need for expanded Community Services activities, to include mobile feeding or bulk distribution.
- The list of chapter disaster volunteers is provided to the DSHR System Administrator and the LDV coordinator.

³ Adapted from course materials for Fundamentals of Chapter Disaster Operations Management (revised 2005)

Within eight hours of the onset of a disaster:

- Chapter's leadership has ensured that relief operation management team is in place and operational.
- Agreements with local voluntary agencies are activated.
- Chapter received a report of activities from the shelters and other areas staffed by American Red Cross staff.
- Second shift personnel are activated.

Within twelve hours of the onset of a disaster:

- Mobile feeding, if required, is initiated.
- Assessment of the operation's accomplishments and needs is completed.
- Information needed to complete the *Statistical and Cost Report of Disaster Operation* (F2066) begins to be assembled.
- ARC logistical and human resources shortfalls are identified and support is requested from appropriate ARC sources.
- All assigned staff members are given an orientation to the disaster relief operation.
- Staff Registration Forms (F1492) are prepared for all staff and volunteers.

Within twenty-four hours of the onset of a disaster:

- Cots, blankets and/or other suitable bedding are provided to the residents of American Red Cross shelters expected to be opened for more than twenty-four hours.
- Comfort kits have been distributed to shelter residents.
- Facility agreements for shelters and other facilities currently in use are updated and signed.
- Facilities for materials support supplies and for client casework have been identified and the facility agreements activated, updated and signed.
- A comprehensive preliminary damage assessment is completed.
- The first *Statistical and Cost Report of Disaster Operation* (F2066) is completed and sent to the ARC Disaster Operations Center via the appropriate reporting channels.
- The first *Disaster Operation Control* (F5266) is completed and sent to the ARC Disaster Operations Center via the appropriate reporting channels.
- A table of organization for the ARC chapter disaster response, listing all Group Administrators and Activity Managers, with contact information is placed onto a Disaster Operation Information Sheet (DOIS) and sent to the appropriate ARC offices and provided to ARC disaster response personnel. (Copies of the DOIS are emailed to night3@usa.redcross.org.)
- A service delivery plan is completed.
- A public relations plan is initiated.
- Reports of ARC disaster response activities are provided to electronic and print media.
- Disaster fund-raising is initiated in accordance with the chapter's disaster fund-raising action plan (DFRAP).

Within forty-eight hours of the onset of a disaster:

- Disaster response actions to date are evaluated and adjustments made as needed.
- Requests for exceptions to the *Standardized Emergency Assistance Price List* (A4416) are completed and transmitted to Disaster Services, NHQ via the service area for processing.

Within seventy-two hours of the onset of a disaster:

- A detailed damage assessment report is completed. This does not mean that one must do a DDA; it means that the report is detailed and complete which could include a DDA.
- An approved *Standardized Emergency Assistance Price List* (A4416) is available before the opening of the first service centers.
- Bulk distribution good not available at the chapter are identified and ordered.
- ARC Service Centers are identified, agreements signed, and readied for business if utilized.
- ARC Service Centers are staffed with Client Services supervisors, caseworkers, disaster assessment workers, disaster health services personnel, and disaster mental health services workers.
- A one-page summary of significant community issues that may affect the ensuing disaster relief operation is provided to the disaster relief operation director.
- A summary of all local voluntary agency agreements and services is provided to the disaster relief operation administrative team.
- Chapter leadership meets with the mayor(s) and public officials in the disaster affected area to explain the American Red Cross disaster relief activities.

As required:

- *Statistical and Cost Report of Disaster Operation* (F2066) and the *Disaster Operation Control* (F5266) are provided to the appropriate ARC offices, usually by 5 p.m. each day and a level 2 or higher DR.
- Human interest stories are provided to the media through the public affairs manager.
- Disaster fund-raising reports are provided to the financial development offices of the chapter and the DRO through the *Disaster Operation Control* (F5266).
- ARC Government Liaisons advise the disaster relief operation of government assistance that becomes available or that may be available in the future.

Closing the disaster relief operation:

- Facility walk throughs are completed and the facility releases are signed.
- All ARC identification is removed from both inside and outside of the facilities.
- Equipment and supplies are returned and/or stored.
- Plans for recognition for staff, vendors, voluntary agencies, facilities, etc. are complete.