



# Shelter Field Guide

FEMA P-785



**FEMA**



# Shelter Field Guide

*With contribution from:*

American Red Cross  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Missouri State Emergency Management  
New York City Department of Homeless Services  
San Francisco Department of Emergency Management



**FEMA**



**American  
Red Cross**



**NYC** Department of  
Homeless Services



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## Introduction



The operation of emergency shelters helps communities provide a safe and secure place for individuals and families to stay before, during and/or after a disaster. The Shelter Field Guide is intended to provide organizations without prior disaster experience with a basic overview of shelter operations that will help them to open and manage an emergency shelter. The Guide also contains information helpful to organizations that may wish to support the operation of a shelter, such as churches, service clubs, or businesses. The Guide refers to an organization acting in this capacity as a “supporting agency.”

Please remember that all disasters are different and, consequently, conditions caused by the disaster may require flexibility in interpretation and application of this guide. This flexibility does not include issues pertaining to civil rights law protections. Contact local emergency management or your supporting agency with any questions.



## Fundamental Objectives of Sheltering









- Shelters provide a safe place for individuals and families affected by a disaster to sleep or rest and may offer, among other things, food, snacks, beverages, cots, blankets, sanitation facilities, safety, first aid and information on recovery efforts.
- Shelters provide services to everyone in the community.
- Shelter staff abide by principles of confidentiality when handling shelter resident information.
- Shelter staff strive to accommodate the varying cultural and faith-based preferences of the residents. Such requirements could include variations in sleeping, eating and other areas as well as the provision of space to meet and honor spiritual needs.
- As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other civil rights laws, shelters must accommodate individuals with disabilities and those who support them. Take steps to ensure that every individual with a disability can fully use and enjoy the programs, services, activities, goods, facilities, privileges, advantages and accommodations provided by the shelter operator and their supporting agencies.
- Shelter residents who need acute health care that extend beyond the capacity of a shelter should be provided access to a medical facility.



## Using This Guide

### Design

This guide is designed to be used in the field throughout the sheltering cycle. It is divided into eight sections. On the right side of each page is a vertical color bar to assist you in navigating the guide with ease. The sections and color codes are as follows:

-  Introduction
-  Before Opening a Shelter
-  Opening a Shelter
-  Ongoing Shelter Operations
-  Closing a Shelter
-  Checklists
-  Coaching Aids
-  Resources

## Position Icons

In addition to the color coded sections, the Guide contains information on the seven fundamental functions within a shelter. A set of icons has been developed representing each of the functional staffing areas of a shelter. At the beginning of each section and above certain sub-sections, you will find icons that indicate the kind of information that section presents. The position icons are as follows:



**Shelter Management**



**Registration**



**Feeding**



**Dormitory Management**



**Staffing**



**Logistics**



**Health Services and Mental Health Services**

## Training

At the end of this guide are two sections related to training:

- Checklists
- Coaching Aids

The Checklists section contains a list of tasks for seven shelter positions. These lists can be removed from the Guide and given to trainees to assist them in learning their position. They can also be photocopied and used to track work daily.

The Coaching Aids section provides tools for instructors to use when training staff.

## Before Opening a Shelter



Before opening a shelter, there are a number of things to consider. Is a shelter necessary? Is the selected site appropriate for sheltering? Does the shelter site comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other civil rights laws? How will the shelter be publicized and supported? Who will pay for the cost of operating a shelter?

This section of the Shelter Field Guide will help to ensure that you have covered all the bases before opening a shelter.

**NOTE:** Contact the American Red Cross to learn more about sheltering, shelter partnering opportunities and benefits, and training that may be available near you.



### Determine if the Shelter is Necessary

Check with your local emergency management agency to see if there are other nearby shelters already operating. If there are, opening another shelter may actually be counterproductive, as it may cause confusion, unduly strain scarce resources, or overburden logistical support.



### Establish Relationships with Local Emergency Management

One key to a successful shelter operation is close coordination with local emergency management and other organizations supporting shelters.

- Local emergency management often opens an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) when a disaster or significant event occurs. The local EOC is the primary coordination center for the jurisdiction.
- The Shelter Manager should determine who the point of contact (POC) is that the local EOC establishes.
- The local EOC is a coordinator of services, not a provider.
- Not all resources will be available locally.



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## Complete a Site Review

To ensure a safe and healthy shelter environment, conduct an inspection of the facility prior to opening and consider the following liability, safety and security issues:

- Is the facility in a safe location near the affected area?
- Is the facility clean and orderly? Are kitchen and bathrooms functional and sanitary?
- Is there sufficient light in public areas?
- Are the building systems in working order (electrical, water, sewage, heat, ventilation and air conditioning)?
- Are the fire extinguishers and smoke detectors in working order?
- Are indoor and outdoor walkways open and free of hazards?
- Are the emergency exits clearly identified and unobstructed?
- Is the facility accessible to children and adults who may use mobility devices such as wheelchairs or canes? Does access to and within the facility require climbing stairs?
- Are first aid kits readily available and fully stocked? Where?
- Is there an emergency evacuation plan and identified meeting place?
- Will occupants be notified that an emergency evacuation is necessary by a public address system or alarm?
- Are there any hazardous materials or equipment onsite? If so, are they secured?
- Are there any pre-existing safety/fire hazards such as missing electrical covers, inappropriate use of extension cords, or improperly stored flammable materials?



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## Determine the Scope of Shelter Services Needed

Services should meet a variety of individual and community needs, including:

- Culturally appropriate meals and allocation of space
- Health and mental health services

- Assistance for:
  - Infants
  - Children
  - Elderly
  - Children and adults with access or functional needs
  - Individuals with limited English proficiency



## Site Layout and Setup

When allocating space in the shelter, consider establishing the following areas as well as the level of access to each area. Some areas will need to be restricted from the general population, such as supply storage areas, classrooms, libraries, or any area that has supplies or equipment that are dangerous or may be broken.

**NOTE:** Post signs indicating that the building is a shelter as well as signs to direct people to the different areas inside the shelter.

### ■ Parking Areas

Identify areas for resident, staff and visitor parking.

### ■ Drop-off Area

Keep main entrance clear for emergency vehicles and accessible for resident drop off.

### ■ Waiting Area

Identify an area to accommodate residents waiting to register. When possible, identify climate controlled areas, or areas that are protected from the elements. Include seats for those who are unable to stand. Make accessible restrooms and drinking water available.

### ■ Registration Area

Identify an area near the facility's main entrance for registration of residents. When setting up the registration area:

- Position several tables and many chairs by the main entrance to receive residents.
- Allow for one registration worker at each table. Allow enough space for privacy when clients are providing registration information.
- Use one table for Health Services and Mental Health Services.
- Use only one facility entrance, if possible. Position staff at other entrances to direct shelter residents.

## **Dormitory Areas**

Provide areas for cots or mats. Allow 40 square feet of space per person, unless additional space is required for a service animal, wheelchair, or other assistive aid. Consider the following:

- Ability to dim lights.
- Distance from internal and external traffic.
- Independent temperature control.
- Separate spaces for families, women, men and other groups.
- One toilet for 20 persons is recommended; if the shelter has only one toilet, it must be accessible for people with disabilities. (A minimum of 1 toilet for every 6 persons must be accessible for people with disabilities.)
- An approximate ratio of 1 shower for every 25 persons is recommended; if the shelter has only one shower, it must be accessible for people with disabilities. (A minimum of 1 shower for every 6 persons must be accessible for people with disabilities.)
- Set up cots and blankets.

## **Children and Family Areas**

Establish specific areas for the following:

- Children's recreation
- Diaper changing
- Breast feeding
- Bottle washing
- Temporary respite care—a supervised area for children

## **Household Pets Area**

Shelter household pets in distinct facilities designed to shelter animals.

## **Feeding/Food Preparation and Serving Areas**

If meals are produced on site, a commercial kitchen is desirable. If meals are catered, a staging area is needed.

- Set up a beverage and snack area.
- Identify sources for food, water, feeding support materials and equipment.
- Determine when the first meal will be served.
- Establish a schedule for meals.
- Set up dining area that is located away from the dormitory.
- Post signage that states that no food can be taken to the dormitory area.

**NOTE:** All food service areas must be accessible to every shelter resident.

Plan to offer meals based on several considerations:

- Availability of food
- Convenience of procurement
- Cultural concerns
- Health condition of shelter residents
- Cost

Evaluate staffing needs in order for meal service to function in a timely manner. Consider staffing the following:

- Kitchen supervisor
- Cook and helpers
- Food prep staff
- Dish washers
- Servers
- Clean-up crew

#### ■ **Snack Area**

Establish an area where food and beverages will be available 24 hours a day.

#### ■ **Health Services and Mental Health Services Areas**

Set up separate areas that provide privacy for residents seeking health and/or mental health services.

#### ■ **Lounge and/or Recreation Areas**

Establish lounge and/or recreation areas. Ensure that a quiet area for religious, spiritual, or meditative use is available.

#### ■ **Storage Areas**

Identify locked storage areas for food and facility supplies.

#### ■ **Shelter Management Offices**

Establish private offices with telephones and computers for the shelter manager and staff preparing reports.

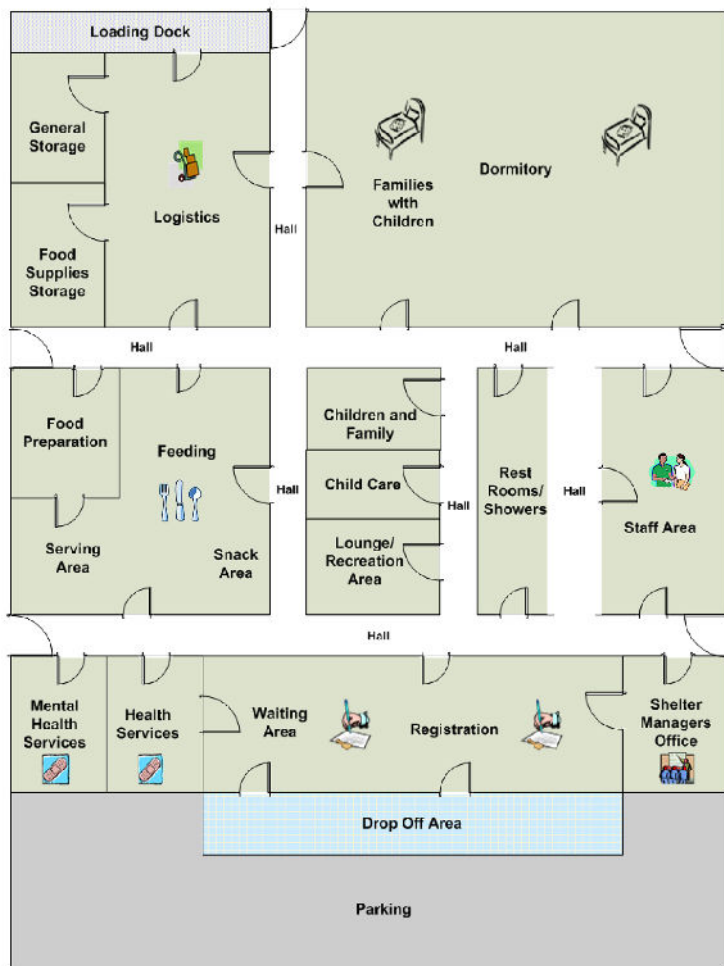
#### ■ **Staff Area**

Establish a private area for staff to take a break, rest, or complete administrative duties.



## Sample Shelter Floor Plan

Sample Shelter Layout



**BEFORE OPENING A SHELTER**

## Establish Shelter Rules

Below are sample shelter rules. It is recommended that shelter rules be posted in all areas of the shelter in the languages of the residents.

- No drugs, alcohol, weapons, or pets are permitted.
- Smoking – Use of all tobacco products, matches, or lighters inside the shelter is prohibited.
- Children – Parents are responsible for keeping track of and controlling the actions of their children. Do not leave children unattended.
- Personal belongings – Shelter staff cannot assume responsibility for belongings. Lock valuables in your car, out of sight, or keep valuables with you.
- Sleeping areas are quiet areas at all times of the day and night. Quiet hours with lights out are enforced in the sleeping areas between the posted hours (e.g., 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.).
- Residents leaving the shelter for any period of time must sign out and sign in at the registration area.
- Keep your areas clean. Help clean up of other areas when possible.
- Food and drinks, other than water, are not allowed in the sleeping area.
- Be respectful and courteous to others at all times. Loud, boisterous and disruptive behavior is not permitted.
- Immediately report all health or safety concerns to shelter staff.



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## Staffing

One of the greatest challenges in operating a shelter is recruiting and maintaining adequate staff.

**NOTE:** Every shelter needs a shelter manager who is qualified to provide support and supervision of all functions to ensure that residents' needs are met. It is important to **delegate** tasks to competent subordinates in order for the shelter to run smoothly.

### ■ Shelter Positions

The following staff are typically needed initially to open and operate a shelter:

- Shelter Manager and Shift Supervisor
- Registration
- Feeding
- Dormitory
- Staffing
- Logistics
- Health Services and Mental Health Services

### ■ Considerations When Planning Staffing

Determine the number of shelter staff needed based on these factors:

- Anticipated number of shelter residents
- Safety concerns
- Ability to secure the facility
- Anticipated duration of shelter operation
- Demographics of shelter residents, especially children and people requiring access and functional needs services (FNSS)
- Layout of the shelter

### ■ Forecasting Staffing Needs

In planning for the staffing of the shelter, consider the following:

- Assign one Shelter Manager for the entire operation.
- Assign a Shift Supervisor for each shift.
- Assign a Staffing position to recruit, orient, train and track the staff.
- Assign shelter staff to lead key responsibilities. Some staff can be assigned more than one responsibility depending on the size of the shelter population.
- Determine the number of Health Services and Mental Health Services staff required based on the shelter population and their needs.

**NOTE:** When opening a shelter, it is recommended that there be at least three staff members per shift, including a **Shelter Manager/Shift Supervisor, Registration Worker** and **Feeding/ Logistics Worker**.

## Shifts

The shift requirements of the shelter may change as the number of available staff and the number of residents fluctuates. Plan to:

- Start up the shelter with two 12-hour shifts.
- Transition to three 8-hour shifts as more staff become available.

**NOTE:** Overnight shifts minimally should consist of a supervisor and dormitory worker(s), as well as the appropriate level of health and mental health support.

## Scheduling

List the tasks that need to be performed and the hours required to complete these tasks. From this, prepare a daily schedule for each job and include the number of staff needed and some of the skills required to perform the tasks.

Many of these tasks have shifting levels of activity. For example, during opening and closing, registration may require higher staffing numbers to efficiently process residents. During slower times, some registration personnel can be moved to other functions.

## Orienting Your Staff

In addition to providing on-the-job training in specific sheltering tasks, ensure that incoming staff are briefed on:

- All shelter policies and procedures
- Policies for accepting monetary donations
- Policies for accepting donated goods

## Keeping Track of Your Staff

Just as you would maintain records of an employee's contact information and hours worked, it is important to obtain similar information for your shelter staff. Plan to track the following staff information:

- Contact information
- Dates/hours worked
- Type of work performed
- Location where work was performed

**NOTE:** During Presidentially declared disasters, your local and State governments may be able to utilize volunteer hours to offset the cost share of Public Assistance dollars awarded to the State through FEMA assistance programs.

Tracking volunteer hours not only helps you recognize the good work of your volunteers, but may translate into much needed cost savings for the community recovering from a disaster.

### ■ Resident Volunteers

Often shelter residents may be willing to volunteer for certain tasks. Keep the following in mind when working with resident volunteers:

- Consider utilizing residents for basic tasks such as setup and cleaning.
- Be careful when recruiting volunteers and be aware of their background. Consult your supporting agency or the local EOC for background check requirements, if any, in the local area.
- Assign resident volunteers to positions that do not compromise the privacy of other residents. For example, do not assign a shelter resident to work the registration area, as this desk requires handling the private information of other shelter residents.
- Volunteers can be used in positions where constant supervision is not necessary (e.g., feeding, cleaning and maintenance).
- Assign only trained and experienced staff to work with children, elderly people and individuals with access or functional needs.

**NOTE:** Use caution if assigning staff or resident volunteers under the age of 18. Written parental consent should be obtained and direct supervision should always be provided.



## Sample Staffing Chart

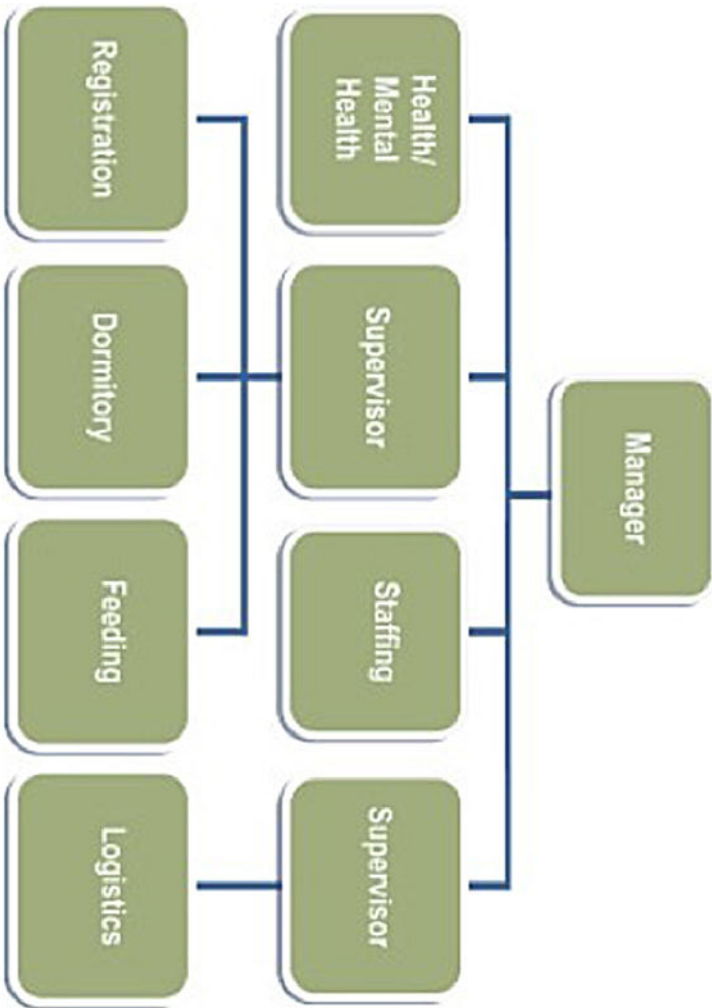
Standard Short-Term Emergency Shelters						
Staffing Per Shift* (Based on 200 residents)	Manager	# of Supervisors	# of Workers	Scaling Factor Per Population	Notes	
Shelter Management			1		Worker is administrative support person/staffing	
Client Registration			1	1 for every 165 residents, minimum 1		
Dormitory		1	2	1 for every 100 residents, minimum 1		
Feeding	1		2	1 for every 110 residents, minimum 1		
Health & Mental Health Services			1	1 for every 200 residents, minimum 1	Accredited professional	
Logistics		1	2	1 for every 500 residents, minimum 1		

\*For total staffing numbers, multiply by the number of shifts with the exception of the shelter manager of which there is only one.

Staffing levels and scaling factors are guidelines. Staffing for each shelter is situational dependent. Additional staff may be necessary based on the demographics and needs of the shelter residents. Examples of additional staff might include security personnel, janitorial services and staff for children's areas.



Sample Organizational Chart





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## Staffing Shortage/Overage Challenges

### ■ Staff Shortages

Should you encounter staffing shortages, you might consider requesting staff support from the local EOC or your supporting agency. Request staff through the chain of command. Be specific regarding the type of staff needed as well as the skills required (e.g., specify whether you need a Dormitory Supervisor or Dormitory Worker).

### ■ Staff Overages

Should your shelter have too many staff, advise the local EOC or your supporting agency. There may be a shortage at another shelter, and these staff could be re-assigned.



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## Logistics

Logistics include the acquisition and maintenance of materials, equipment and services necessary for shelter operations.

### ■ Identify Potential Resources

Your shelter will need a variety of items. Identify potential resources for the following:

- Potable water
- Communications equipment (phones, computers, etc.)
- Food and food service supplies/equipment
- Sanitation supplies/equipment
- Children's and infants' supplies
- Universal/accessible cots
- Blankets
- Pillows (if available)
- Personal hygiene supplies
- Towels
- Durable medical equipment (e.g., wheel chairs, oxygen concentrators)
- First aid and medical supplies
- Administrative supplies
- Tables and chairs

## ■ Procurement

Procure supplies and equipment through your supporting agency or through these options (local resources may vary):

- Local vendors and/or current suppliers
- Donations
- Local EOC



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## Safety and Security

Providing for the safety and well being of shelter residents is an important aspect of shelter operations.

### ■ Assessing Shelter Security

Assess and plan for shelter security needs—consider 24 hours a day, 7 days a week coverage, if necessary.

Consider the following factors when assessing and planning for security:

- The demographics and number of residents, including
  - Older adults
  - Individuals with disabilities
  - Children
- The physical layout of the shelter facility and how this may affect shelter security (e.g., lighting or isolated rooms and areas)

Coordinate with your local EOC about security needs.

- Communicate with law enforcement.
- Share the security plan with staff.
- Consider contracting security services as a last resort.

## Potential Security Issues

It is important for the shelter management team to be realistic about the security risks that may exist in a large emergency shelter and to constantly monitor for signs of developing situations. It is vital to seek local law enforcement's advice and technical support.

Be alert to any of the following activities in the shelter:

- Sale or use of illegal drugs and alcohol
- Weapons
- Prostitution
- Gang activities
- Fights and altercations
- Theft of shelter or personal property
- Loud, boisterous and disruptive behavior
- Damage to shelter facilities
- Mistreatment or abuse of shelter residents, including children

## Security Precautions

Special security measures that may need to be instituted based on the situation include the following:

- Issuing shelter identification (wrist bands, cards, etc.) to shelter residents and staff
- Performing identification checks at all doors
- Limiting the number of public entrances and exits
- Posting personnel to monitor the doors to the dormitory and children's recreation area
- Searching packages at doors
- Monitoring bathrooms
- Establishing "off limits" areas
- Instituting roving external patrols of the immediate area around the shelter (including parking areas)
- Relocating problem residents (including arrests, when appropriate)

## ■ Safety and Security Incident Documentation

A key element of risk management is documentation of any type of incident that may result in follow-up action, whether that action might be litigation, cost recovery, or criminal investigation.

Specific examples of when to document a shelter incident include the following:

- Situations resulting in injury
- Situations where individuals are removed from the shelter or law enforcement personnel are requested
- Situations resulting in significant damage to the facility or loss of property
- Threats of harm or bodily injury made against any shelter resident or staff member
- Allegations of improper conduct
- Copies of the incident report should be provided to:
  - Your supporting agency or the local EOC
  - Shelter Manager's records and the facility owner



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## Fire Safety

Your shelter should comply with local fire regulations. To ensure this:

- Request inspection assistance from the local fire department.
- Inspect shelter for fire safety and consider the following factors:
  - Check general condition of sprinkler systems, if present.
  - Check for fire extinguishers. Note locations and share with staff.
  - Check emergency exits and ensure that fire doors and exits are in good order and accessible.
  - Check for potential hazards (e.g., fire or electrical hazards).
  - Develop fire evacuation plan and conduct fire drill, if needed. Include notification and evacuation requirements for residents and workers with access and functional needs.



## Access and Functional Needs Support Services

For more information, please access the following documents at their respective links: *Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters (November 2010)* at [www.fema.gov/pdf/about/odc/fnss\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/odc/fnss_guidance.pdf) and *ADA Checklist for Emergency Shelters (updated July 26, 2007)* at <http://www.ada.gov/shleterck.htm>.

Shelters must address the needs of children and adults with access and functional needs. All shelter residents must have equal access to the programs, services and activities provided by the shelter. Some children and/or adults with access or functional needs may be fully independent, while others may require minimal to moderate assistance in the shelter. Respect the independence of all shelter residents and let people with access or functional needs make their own determination about what level of care and assistance they require.

Access and functional needs support services may include the following:

- **Communication** – People with communication needs may not be able to hear announcements, see signs, understand messages, or verbalize their concerns. Using picture boards or other alternative formats are sometimes useful.
- **Equipment and Personal Assistance** – Persons dependent on medical equipment or home health care will need to bring the equipment and/or the personal assistance they receive at home with them to the shelter. People can function independently as long as they have access to their assistive and supportive services or equipment. Examples of these include durable medical equipment, such as wheelchairs and walkers, medications and personal caregivers. If people do not bring their equipment, medications and/or personal assistant, these services must be provided. Call the local EOC or your supporting agency if such equipment or services are needed.
- **Supervision** – People with supervision needs may include children and adults with cognitive, intellectual and mental health disabilities.
- **Accessible Transportation** – Accessible transportation must be provided to children and adults who require it in order to benefit from the same programs and services offered to others in and away from the shelter.

The following are examples of some of the services that individuals with access and functional needs may require

### ■ People with Visual Disabilities

- Printed information may need to be accessible in Braille or large print. A verbal orientation may need to be provided and volunteers assigned to help as guides or readers.
- Sleeping space may need to be located along a wall or in a corner to make it easier to find.

### ■ People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- For many persons who are deaf, sign language is the primary means of communication. The shelter may need to provide a sign language interpreter.
- Volunteers can help with basic communication needs by writing instructions. Shelters should have note pads, pens and pencils available to use as communication tools. Keep language simple and draw pictures if necessary.

### ■ People with Mobility Disabilities

- Ask individuals using mobility devices if they would like assistance during activities such as transferring to and from a chair or going through a feeding line.
- An individual who uses a wheelchair may need assistance transferring from a chair to a bed or cot. Ask for advice on safe methods before lifting or moving the individual.
- Assign a cot space in an area where access to dining and restroom areas is easily available and not obstructed. Remember, the person being assisted is the most qualified person to ask about how to provide assistance.
- A person using a motorized wheel chair or scooter will need a place within the shelter to recharge their batteries.

### ■ People with Cognitive, Intellectual and Mental Health Disabilities

- People with cognitive, intellectual and mental health disabilities may have trouble processing information unless it is presented simply and slowly. Using picture boards or other alternative formats are sometimes useful.
- Establish a buddy system with volunteers providing reassurance, calm explanation and attention to personal needs.

## Service Animals

**NOTE:** As of March 15, 2011, the amended Title II of the ADA defines “service animal” as a “dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.”

An animal that only provides emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship (which do not constitute work or tasks), does not qualify as a service animal.

Other animals, whether wild or domestic, do not qualify as service animals.

There is a narrow exception to the rule that permits the use of trained miniature horses as alternatives to dogs, subject to certain limitations.

- A service animal is not a pet. Animals as noted above are considered service animals under the ADA regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a State/local government. People with disabilities who use service animals cannot be charged extra fees, isolated from other patrons, or treated less favorably than other patrons.
- Persons with service animals are entitled to keep the service animal with them at the shelter and in any conveyance at all times. By law, service animals must remain with the person they serve; this includes accompanying an individual anywhere within a shelter.
- Consider providing alternate accommodation to any residents who express concerns regarding allergies to animals.
- An individual with a service animal may be asked to remove the animal from the premises if:
  - The animal is out of control and the animal’s owner does not take effective action to control it (e.g., a dog barking unabated and the owner does not correct the behavior).
  - The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

For further information, see the ADA, Title II regulation.

## Household Pets

**NOTE:** Typically, the local government is responsible for addressing the needs of household pet owners by providing for emergency household pet sheltering. If an owner is unable to do so with his or her own resources, household pets should be sheltered in facilities identified to support pets and equipped to shelter animals. If sheltered in the same building as the human population, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) issues must be considered to reduce exposure of people to animal-related allergens.

Collocated emergency household pet shelters (EHPSs) provide a workable solution, allowing residents to maintain their bond with their household pets and assist in providing for the pet's care (this option also reduces staffing requirements for the care of sheltered pets). When pets are sheltered in the same facility near but not in the same space with their human owners, considerations in setting up the household pet shelter space must take into account HVAC capabilities to prevent exposure of people to animal-related allergens. When not practical to collocate in the same facility, an EHPS should be established as close as possible to the facility where people are sheltered (e.g., within walking distance for shelter residents or when transportation to a more distant shelter is planned for and provided).

Housing pets and their human owners in the same space (Cohabitational Pet Sheltering), while considered beneficial, can present challenges such as:

- Shelter residents who may have animal-related allergies or phobias
- Specific public health regulation(s) or law(s) regarding housing of pets and people in the same public space

Household pets should be sheltered in facilities identified specifically and equipped for sheltering animals, and operated by qualified, trained staff. Coordinate with the following organizations and agencies to determine appropriate sheltering options for household pets in your community:

- Local EOC
- Local animal shelter/welfare organization (e.g., local SPCA, Humane Society)
- Local animal control officer
- Local household pet boarding facilities
- Veterinarians/veterinary clinics

Service animals that accompany residents with disabilities are welcome in all areas of a public shelter accessible by humans (as required by law—see Service Animals, page 23).



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## Other

When a person self-identifies as transgender, the shelter manager must provide accommodations for toilets and showers to ensure the privacy of the individual.

- Additional portable toilets and showers may have to be brought to the shelter to accommodate or provide privacy to the individual.
- When no additional resources are available, the shelter manager may “sequester” other bathrooms (usually separated for staff or nurses) inside facilities to meet the needs of transgender individuals.

## Opening A Shelter



Outlined below are the key tasks required for opening a shelter. The tasks are organized by function. Many tasks will be completed simultaneously.



### Establish Schedules for Daily Activities

Establishing daily schedules and activities helps promote routine for shelter residents in an otherwise chaotic environment. Tools to assist with this include the following:

- Establish a bulletin board where messages, information and shelter rules and routines will be posted. Also share these verbally, in other languages and in alternate formats as needed by residents.
- Establish and post a shelter schedule in multiple places. Consider posting schedules for the following:
  - Showering schedule (allow residents to sign up)
  - Meal times
  - Lights out
- Schedule a daily staff meeting and discuss:
  - Updates on the shelter population
  - Updates on disaster operations, including any changes in staff assignments or responsibilities
  - Information about possible shelter visitors or handling media inquiries
  - Needs of shelter residents and staff
  - Any challenges or issues that need priority action
- Conduct a shelter resident meeting at the same time every day to:
  - Communicate pertinent information in order to keep everyone adequately informed
  - Address any issues residents may have



## Registration Staff Duties

Ensure that all shelter occupants are greeted and registered upon arrival. Complete legible and accurate information about the residents necessary to track the shelter population and manage the support of their needs. Maintain a system for checking occupants in and out when they leave for any period of time. Function as the general shelter information desk.

**NOTE:** If an individual arrives at the shelter with apparent emergent health needs, refer that person to Health Services staff or appropriate authorities immediately.

The following are some important points for Registration staff to remember.

### #1 Register Residents

Use one form, card, or sheet of paper for each household to record:

- Family name
- Total number of family members
- Pre-disaster address
- Phone numbers and email addresses
- Method of transportation to the shelter
- Primary language and name(s) of family member(s) who speak English
- Information on individual members:
  - Name
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Arrival date

Create a space on the registration form to record the date residents depart as well as their relocation address.

Place completed registration information in a secure folder to ensure resident confidentiality.

Privately ask if anyone in the family must register with State or local authorities for any reason. The Shelter Manager or designee should discreetly discuss in confidence why the individual must register and contact local authorities, if necessary, for guidance.

Privately ask anyone who self-identifies as a member of the transgender community what accommodations they need to ensure their privacy.

### **#2 Conduct an Initial Health and Mental Health Screening**

Conduct an initial health and mental health screening with each family member by asking if they:

- Are ill or injured?
- Require medication?
- Have dietary restrictions?
- Have mobility or accessibility concerns or functional support requirements?
- Have missing or deceased family member(s) due to this disaster?

Refer individuals to Health Services and Mental Health Services staff as appropriate.

### **#3 Identify Unaccompanied Minors**

Unaccompanied minors such as children separated from their parents during the disaster may come to emergency shelters. When unaccompanied minors are identified in the registration process:

- Notify local law enforcement immediately.
- Designate a member of the shelter staff to accompany the minor until custody can be transferred to the appropriate authorities.

### **Shelter Residents Whose Legal Status Affects Their Placement In Shelter Housing**

Registered sex offenders, parolees and persons with restraining orders are examples of those who may be a component of the dislocated population following a disaster. State and local laws vary regarding how they are required to identify themselves and where they will be housed following a disaster. Check with local law enforcement officials to determine what local statutes require concerning the sheltering of these kinds of residents.

## Privacy and Information Sharing

All resident information should be stored in a secure area.

- Create protocols for storing and sharing resident information while maintaining confidentiality.
- Limit access to resident information to staff who need the information to perform their job functions.
- Do not disclose resident information unless one of the following applies:
  - Resident has consented to the disclosure in writing.
  - A valid subpoena, court order, or warrant is presented.
  - This will avert an imminent threat to the health or safety of the shelter residents or the community.
  - It is required by law.



## Dormitory Management

Dormitory management includes setting up and assigning sleeping areas, coordinating the provision of cots, pillows (if available), blankets and personal hygiene supplies and maintaining a healthy and safe environment to rest.

- Allocate separate spaces for families, single women and single men. Be prepared to make accommodations for religious and cultural requirements.
- Distribute hygiene kits and other supplies (bedding, towels, etc.) if available.
- Ensure that emergency exits are not blocked in any way.
- Conduct a daily walkthrough to ensure that:
  - Emergency exits are operational
  - Exit routes are clear and accessible
  - Windows and doors are secure
  - Floor is clear of trip hazards
- Use dim lighting during sleeping hours.
- Continually monitor the dormitory area to ensure the safety of sleeping/resting residents and to maintain a clean and quiet environment.



## Health Services and Mental Health Services

Disasters may increase the risk of or exacerbate health and mental health conditions. Common health issues and potential solutions in shelters include the following:

- Communicable conditions (e.g., flu, lice):
  - Provide areas of isolation for individuals with identified infectious conditions.
- Health and mental health issues:
  - Arrange for screening and referral if required for health and mental health conditions.
- Lack of medications and/or prescriptions:
  - Maintain current list of pharmacies near the shelter.
  - Ask pharmacies if they will support medication/prescription needs of the residents.
  - If access to a local pharmacy is not readily available, contact your supporting agency or the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Restricted dietary requirements:
  - Accommodate the dietary needs of people with restricted diets by ensuring that alternate food is available at the shelter.
- Maternity:
  - Confirm maternity delivery plans (including location).

## Common Mental Health Concerns in Shelters

Shelters can present greater challenges to some individuals. Some common mental health problems in shelters may include the following:

- Symptoms of anxiety, anger and depression:
  - Promote feelings of calm and hope by providing accurate information about the situation, listening, making connections to support systems and resources, providing realistic reassurance and promoting resilience and positive coping strategies (also referred to as psychological first aid).
- Pre-existing mental health issues such as substance abuse or addiction:
  - Ensure that access to appropriate needed medications and support services is available.

## Preventing Contagious Disease Outbreaks

Prevention is paramount to keep contagious diseases at bay. Be sure to remind both residents and staff to follow the basic tenets of personal hygiene.

Specific methods for preventing the spread of contagious diseases include the following:

### Personal Hygiene

Work with appropriate staff to develop a personal hygiene outreach plan designed to ensure that the shelter population practices proper personal hygiene, such as:

- Cover mouth when coughing and sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water and use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth to prevent the spread of germs.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Keep areas clean, especially living areas.
- Promptly report illnesses or other medical concerns to shelter staff.

### Food Preparation

Shelter staff who are working in the food preparation area must follow these practices:

- Use gloves when packaging food and/or serving or handling prepared foods that will not be cooked (e.g., when making sandwiches or salads).

- Use fresh water for consumption and in food preparation.
- Separate raw and cooked foods.
- Cook food thoroughly.
- Ensure that food is kept within the temperature safety zone (above 140° F or below 40° F).
- Follow proper hand washing procedures.
- Ensure that food preparation and serving surfaces and equipment are sanitized properly.

Should any sort of contagious disease outbreak occur, shelter staff should take the following precautions:

- Continue to promote personal hygiene measures.
- Report any outbreak to the local public health department, your supporting agency and the local EOC.
- Request medical assistance as necessary.
- Ask residents who feel they may be affected to self-report to shelter staff.
- Work with medical personnel or other social service agencies to identify other residents who may be affected and speak with them privately.
- Increase the distance between people. When possible, place groups or families in individual rooms or in separate areas of the facility. Place cots head-to-toe.
- Perform additional environmental cleaning.

**NOTE:** All areas where children play should be cleaned regularly and frequently. Give particular focus to items that are more likely to have frequent contact with the hands, mouths, or body fluids of children (e.g., toys).

- Implement strategies to ensure infection prevention and control during food service. Cafeteria-style service is preferred over self-service, buffet-style, or family-style.
- Pay special attention to the needs of children. Encourage parents and caregivers to monitor children for symptoms of illness and report immediately to shelter staff.
- Isolate staff, residents and their caregivers, or family members if they are ill. If individual rooms are not available, designate a separate area.

Always:

- Coordinate with local health departments, hospitals, ambulance services, crisis counseling services and local mental health agencies to establish their capabilities and protocols for support.
- Have emergency phone numbers in an easily viewable location, and make a phone available for staff and residents to call for help.
- Identify qualified staff that can administer first aid/CPR, and have a fully stocked first aid kit available.



## Feeding

Provide meals, snacks and water for residents and staff. Ensure that necessary resources for food service are available. Plan for and manage the preparation and service of meals and snacks.

- Keep accurate records of food and supplies received and used.
- Ensure that safe food handling and sanitation practices are adhered to, and be cautious of food that isn't commercially prepared. Contact your local health department with questions.
- Consider inviting your local health department to inspect the shelter to ensure that regulations are met and guidelines are followed.
- Maintain a separate area stocked with salty, sweet and healthy snacks, including fruit, as well as beverages, such as water, coffee, tea and juice.



## Logistics

Logistics provides a number of services for opening, running and closing a shelter. These include:

### Site Maintenance and Custodial Services

Identify types of maintenance and custodial services that may be needed, such as:

- Janitorial and cleaning services (Determine if existing services can be increased to cover the greater need.)
- Waste removal services

- Grounds and parking lot cleaning
- Maintenance and/or repair of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), plumbing and electrical facilities, if necessary
- Extra cleaning and sanitation supplies

Arrange and contract for services, if needed, using resources from your supporting agency or the local EOC.

Create a procedure for tracking all expenses and commitments for possible reimbursement. Ensure that an organized, consolidated, easily referenced system is in place that is secure. Check with your supporting agency or the local EOC for potential reimbursement opportunities and record requirements, such as:

- Documentation of all expenses
- Types of records to keep:
  - Receipts
  - Invoices
  - Staff hours
  - Volunteer hours
  - Contracts
  - Memoranda of Understanding /Agreement
  - Incident reports
  - Daily activity and situation reports, as requested by the local EOC or your supporting agency

Establish and implement systems to track donated materials and services to ensure accountability and to support eventual formal recognition of the donors, such as:

- Donors' point of contact (POC) information
- Size, amount, location, type, date and time of donation

### **Inventory Management**

- Maintain an inventory of all shelter supplies and equipment, including those that are donated.
- Identify and document equipment loaned or rented to the shelter.
- Track expenditures of all supplies and equipment.

## Inventory Management Challenges

The shelter may experience some common inventory management challenges, including the following:

- Not enough supplies:
  - Maintain a count of supplies and document how quickly the shelter is using them.
  - Anticipate potential shortages and report what will be needed to the Shelter Manager, your supporting agency, or the local EOC.
- Supply overages:
  - Report any excess supplies to the Shelter Manager, your supporting agency, or the local EOC. These supplies may be needed elsewhere.
  - Sometimes a shelter may receive items in bulk for planned distribution elsewhere. Contact your supporting agency or the local EOC for guidance.



## Monetary and Material Donations

Members of the community may bring both material and monetary donations to the shelter. It is not advisable to accept unsolicited material donations on site as this may divert staff time, facility space and equipment into donations management and away from the management of the shelter. This may also cause tension among residents as there may not be enough donated resources for everyone. It is also difficult to guarantee the safety and/or quality of donated items.

Depending on the policies of your supporting agency, it is normally not recommended that on-site staff accept monetary donations due to the accountability for tracking donations and the possible perception that the shelter is accepting payment for services. Generally, shelter staff should be instructed to request that donors send their monetary donations through established systems for non-profit organizations.

Sometimes local or State jurisdictions will conduct donations operations and offers can be referred to these operations. Check with the local EOC for information.



## Communication

Effective and inclusive communication is critical for a successful shelter operation. All communication should be made available in alternate formats for non-English speakers and for individuals with hearing or visual disabilities. Individuals with speech, intellectual and cognitive disabilities, as well as those who are deaf and hard of hearing, have different requirements. Specific communication plans should be developed for each of the following audiences:

- Residents
- Shelter staff
- General public
- Media
- Local EOC
- Other officials

### Residents

A communication plan for residents should include the following:

- Interact regularly with shelter residents to answer questions, quell rumors and restate shelter rules. Regular communication conveys a sense of routine and a transparency that will comfort residents.
- Conduct daily briefings with residents to ensure that there is a timely and accurate flow of information. Use this briefing to inform residents of activities within the shelter and the overall disaster.
- Provide shelter residents with access to local news via a television, radio and newspaper. Turn on the captioning features on televisions.
- Provide information on recovery services, e.g., government agencies (including FEMA), American Red Cross, and local community-based or faith-based relief and assistance programs.
- Ensure that translators/interpreters are available to support information sharing at daily meetings and to provide updates as needed.
- Maintain bulletin/message boards as a means for disseminating information to the shelter population. Update postings throughout the day.

## Shelter Staff

A communication plan for shelter staff should include the following:

- Supervisors should check-in regularly with their staff.
- The Shelter Manager should conduct daily staff meetings to ensure that information is shared among all staff and volunteers working in the shelter.
  - Brief shelter staff on how to work with the media and how to handle media questions/interviews (e.g., speak only to the facts that you know).
  - Remind staff of the procedures for handling donations of monetary and material goods.

## General Public

A communication plan for the general public should include the following:

- Provide the following information to the general public:
  - Where to go for shelter
  - What people seeking shelter should bring with them (e.g., blanket, towel, air mattress, pillow, washcloth, prescription medications, durable medical equipment, diapers, food and supplies for infants), if these items are not immediately available at the shelter
- Be cautious about requesting material donations or volunteers from the general public. The shelter could quickly become inundated with material donations or unqualified volunteers. Consult with your supporting agency or local EOC prior to requesting resources from the community, such as volunteers with specific skills.
- Contact your supporting agency or local EOC for guidance if dignitaries or other officials and representatives of special interest groups visit the shelter.

## Media

A communication plan for the media should include the following.

- Balance the media's desire to publicize the disaster response with the privacy rights of the residents.
- Post signage requiring all media to check in through the registration desk.
- Notify the Shelter Manager when media arrive, and have a staff member accompany them to explain shelter operations and rules as well as to answer questions.

- Ensure that the media follows these rules:
  - Do not conduct interviews in the dormitory during quiet hours.
  - Do not take close-up photos or videos of people without obtaining written permission.
  - Do not by-pass the registration check-in area.
  - Display proper media identification at all times.
- Allocate a private area for media interviews away from the shelter population.
- Designate a shelter spokesperson at the facility to answer questions from the media. The spokesperson should answer only those questions that pertain to that particular shelter. Shelter staff should direct all media inquiries to the spokesperson so that there is consistent messaging.
- Identify one or two residents willing to talk about their experience versus having the media randomly interview people in the shelter.

### Supporting Agency and Local EOC

A communication plan with your supporting agency and the local EOC should include the following:

- Communicate regularly with your supporting agency and/or local EOC.
- Determine the information that must be reported to the local EOC and how often. The following items are traditionally monitored/reported:
  - Number of overnight residents
  - Number of new registrations
  - Demographic information of shelter population
  - Feeding numbers (numbers of people served at each meal)
  - Supply inventories and projected requirements
  - Staff count (and anticipated staff shortages/overages)
  - Types of services available at the site (e.g., household pet care and feeding of non-residents)
  - Any other issues to report (e.g., resource issues, communication problems, facility problems, security issues, shelter population problems)
- Determine significant shortfalls of available and projected resources and communicate requirements to your supporting agency or the local EOC.



Outlined below are the key management tasks required for ongoing shelter operations.

All shelter residents must have equal access to the programs, services and activities provided by the shelter. For more information, go to: [www.fema.gov/pdf/about/odc/fnss\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/odc/fnss_guidance.pdf) and <http://www.ada.gov/shleterck.htm>.



### Reporting

The purpose of reporting is to provide details on the shelter status and any issues that may be occurring. The shelter manager is responsible for communicating this information through the appropriate chain of command to the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and to your supporting agency.

Shelter information should be provided in the correct form and reflect the appropriate reporting period. Additionally, the information should be provided according to the deadlines established by the local EOC and your supporting agency.

**NOTE:** The number of shelters, individuals being sheltered, and meals served is often needed by State governments when requesting a presidential disaster declaration and all the forms of assistance that come with this declaration.

#### Establish the Reporting Structure

Set up a reporting structure based upon the shelter's chain of command. Assign staff to collect data for inclusion in the report for the local EOC and your supporting agency.

#### Create and Implement Reporting Tools

Create and implement the use of reporting tools that will allow the Shelter Manager to provide accurate information to the supporting agency and the local EOC.

- **Situation Report** – A situation report gives a quick overview of shelter operations. It can contain situational information for a 24-hour period and aggregate information over the life of the shelter. This information can include:
  - Number of overnight residents
  - Number of meals/snacks served
  - Number of hygiene kits distributed
  - Specific issues/resource needs
- **Shelter Population Count** – The shelter population count is taken after most residents have gone to bed (e.g., midnight). The resulting population is reported in the morning report. A noon count may also be taken to gauge the number of people accessing the shelter for meals, showers and other services.



## Adjusting Operations to Changing Requirements

Shelter operation requirements typically shift and change throughout the life of the shelter. Shelter management can be proactive in addressing these changes by considering the following information.

### Utilizing Shelter Resident Leadership

The local community's culture will influence the shelter environment. Seek out shelter leaders who have influence and can assist in identifying local cultural and other evolving shelter resident needs.

Occasionally factions can develop within shelter populations. These factions can be addressed by identifying and working with shelter resident leadership who can assist in making difficult decisions on behalf of any of the factions involved.

By including the shelter population in the operation of the shelter, residents assist in determining how needs in the shelter are met and help to provide a more positive atmosphere for everyone.

### Competing Priorities

While there are almost always limited resources and competing needs within a shelter, it is important that fairness and transparency be apparent when arriving at solutions. As an example, if there are not enough cots for all of the residents, priority should be given to the elderly, individuals with disabilities, children and adults with access and functional needs, and women who are pregnant. Then, work with shelter resident leadership who can assist in determining the allocation of the remaining cots.

### Inadequate Shelter Space/Overcrowding

- Report overcrowding to your supporting agency or local EOC. Some residents may need to transfer to another shelter.
- Work with the shelter population to determine a transportation plan as needed.
- Do not separate families.
- Determine if the facilities at the new shelter are fully accessible to help make decisions about shelter residents who have access and functional needs. Make modifications as required.
- If there is inadequate space, work with your supporting agency or the local EOC to make the determination to close the shelter to additional residents.
- Request referral information from your supporting agency or the local EOC to identify the closest available shelter(s).



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## Reunification Services

During disasters, individuals and/or family members may become separated. Support is available for reuniting missing and displaced persons due to disasters. Here are some of the services available.

- **National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRLS)** – NEFRLS facilitates communication among family members and friends separated as a result of a disaster by storing and sharing contact information and personal messages in a secure system. The Web address is: <https://asd.fema.gov/inter/nefrls/home.htm>

- **Safe and Well** – The American Red Cross can help people throughout the country find family members or friends through the use of Safe and Well, a Web-based system. People displaced by disaster register and provide basic information on their status; their friends and family can then come to the site and search for posted messages. The web address is [www.redcross.org/safeandwell](http://www.redcross.org/safeandwell).
- **The National Emergency Child Locator Center (NECLC)** – Part of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), NECLC is available during disasters and offers the following services:
  - Toll-free hotline that receives reports of displaced children
  - Website that provides information about displaced children
  - Deployment of staff to the location of a declared disaster event to gather information about displaced children
  - Provision of information to the public about additional resources
  - Collaboration with Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies



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## Transportation

Transportation support may be required to bring residents to the shelter, to transport them for services while staying at the shelter and for their return home.

- Residents may request assistance with transportation to and from medical providers, post offices, banks, shops, places of employment, schools and other essential destinations.
- Work with your supporting agency or the local EOC, local transportation providers, or community organizations to arrange shuttle service for shelter residents to link them to public transportation systems or provide door-to-door services, as needed and if available.
- Accessible transit vehicles will be needed for individuals using wheelchairs and other persons with disabilities that affect mobility.

## Closing a Shelter



As residents are able to move back into homes, the shelter population will begin to dwindle. There will need to be a plan for closing the shelter. Some residents may not be able to move back into their homes and may need assistance to find alternative housing.

All shelter residents must have equal access to the programs, services and activities provided by the shelter. For more information go to: [www.fema.gov/pdf/about/odc/fnss\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/odc/fnss_guidance.pdf) and <http://www.ada.gov/shleterck.htm>.



### Shelter Closing Considerations

Before closing a shelter, several important items should be considered. With your supporting agency or the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC), determine the following:

- How to meet the needs of the remaining shelter residents
- If there is a plan for combining multiple shelters to minimize the number of open shelters
- If other housing options are available for shelter residents

**NOTE:** If a number of residents do not have a place to return to after the danger has passed, it may be too soon to close the shelter.

- The facility's ongoing availability (e.g., is the facility needed for previously scheduled events?)
- Requirements under the facility shelter agreement or lease for returning the facility to normal use.
- The availability of resources needed to keep the shelter open, including staff, equipment and supplies



## Shelter Closing Coordination

- Coordinate shelter closing with the local EOC and your supporting agency.
  - Update and share shelter population data including number of residents, number of households and number of individuals who do not have a place to go.
  - Share shelter closing plan.
  - Coordinate public messaging.
- Identify caseworkers who will visit with residents and help them transition out of the shelter.
- Communicate the closing plan.
  - Communicate the closing plan to staff.
  - Share clear, concise and timely notice of a confirmed shelter closing date with residents, staff and the community. Provide advance notification of the shelter closing to help mitigate any negative reaction from the residents.
  - Determine when the last meal will be served and notify residents and staff.
  - Inform residents of pre-arranged services, such as transportation, household pet reunification and other available resources and referrals.

**NOTE:** When people are able to return to their pre-disaster living conditions, the pre-disaster homeless will need to find alternative accommodations as well.



## Closing Schedule

Develop and implement a closing schedule to include the following:

- Staff schedule for closing, which may include debriefing and acknowledgement
- Cleaning and return of loaned or rented equipment
- Disposal and/or donation of excess expendable materials and supplies
- Removal of internal and external signage
- Cleaning and repair of site
- Inspection and completion of site release documentation. Resolve any discrepancies through agreements to make repairs to damaged areas, etc.
- Processing of invoices and other reimbursement documentation
- Date/time when facility will be released to owner



## Document Retention

Retain documents in a safe and secure environment.

Documentation may include the following:

- Logs
- Incident and other reports
- Agreements and/or contracts
- Invoices
- Shelter registration forms
- Volunteer and staff records
- Staff time sheets

## Checklists



### Shelter Operation Functions

Successful shelter operations rely on the coordinated performance of seven separate functions.

**Shelter Management:** Provide oversight, administrative support and supervision for all functions in the shelter. Ensure that the residents' needs are being met.

**Registration:** Ensure that all shelter residents are greeted and registered upon arrival. Maintain a system for checking residents in and out when they leave for any period of time. Manage the system of record keeping for shelter registrations.

**Feeding:** Supervise food preparation and service in the shelter. Ensure that supplies needed for food service are available. Keep accurate records of food and supplies received and expended.

**Dormitory Management:** Set up sleeping areas. Ensure that residents have assigned areas for sleeping. If applicable, coordinate placement of cots and blankets in area. Monitor the dormitory area to maintain a safe and quiet area to sleep/rest.

**Staffing:** Recruit, place and support staff assigned to the shelter. Provide opportunities to shelter residents to serve as volunteers in the shelter. Maintain records of all workers who assist with shelter operations (including name, address, phone number and hours worked).

**Logistics:** Provide support for the use of the facility. Ensure the safety, security and sanitation of the shelter. Procure, store and distribute supplies and equipment at the shelter.

**Health Services and Mental Health Services:** Provide equal access to quality health services and ensure that public health standards are met.



## Using the Checklists

A checklist has been developed for each of the functions listed on the previous page. The checklists can be used as:

- Training tools (See the “Coaching Materials” section for more information on training using checklists.)
- Ongoing checklists for each function

**NOTE:** Consider making copies of each checklist to provide to staff members during their shifts or post checklists in functional areas as reminders for staff.



## Shelter Manager Checklist

Provide administrative support for and supervision of all functions in the shelter. Ensure that the residents' needs are being met.

### Opening

- Determine scope of shelter services.
  - Determine shelter capacity.
  - Survey and lay out the space plan for the shelter.
  - Complete site review.
  - Brief and organize staff.
    - Ensure that staff understands procedures for:
      - Support for people with access and/or functional needs
      - Service animals
      - Household pets
      - Other key issues, including cultural requirements
  - Assign staff to the following positions and tasks:
    - Logistics: Put up shelter identification and other signage (outside and inside as appropriate).
    - Health Services and Mental Health Services: Set up the Health Services and Mental Health Services areas to determine immediate supply requirements and prepare to perform health screenings for incoming shelter residents.
    - Staffing: Ensure that all shelter staff is registered and properly identified; evaluate staffing needs for the next 48/72 hours.
    - Registration: Set up registration area.
    - Feeding: Prepare/set out snacks and beverages in a separate canteen area; determine when, how many of and how the first meal will be obtained/procured.
    - Dormitory/Logistics: Set up sleeping area(s). Post internal signage to include shelter guidelines.
- Call your supporting agency or local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to discuss:
  - Financial authority limits
  - Process for ordering resources
  - Shelter activity reporting requirements
  - Location of food supplies (vendor information, etc.)
  - Contact information (including email addresses) for the local EOC, Shelter Manager and appropriate point of contact (POC) at your supporting agency
  - Security coverage, if necessary
  - Anticipated shelter population
- Develop a staffing plan for the next 48/72 hours.



## Shelter Manager Checklist — Continued

- Coordinate recruitment of additional personnel. Encourage involvement of shelter residents.
- Order any needed start-up supplies.
- Meet with Feeding staff to discuss feeding options.
- Establish a shelter log reporting system.

### Ongoing

- Conduct shift change briefing with the shift supervisor to share issues from the previous shift.
- Maintain regular (at least daily) communication with your supporting agency or the EOC:
  - Provide daily shelter activity report information.
  - Discuss issues and resource support needs.
  - Relay plans for shelter's immediate future.
  - Discuss status of overall disaster response, including any potential issues or secondary hazards that might impact shelter operations.
- Evaluate security requirements and place support requests.
- Hold regularly scheduled meetings with shelter residents:
  - Communicate pertinent information.
  - Provide rumor control.
- Greet and work with media (in the absence of Public Information staff):
  - Obtain resident permission for media involvement.
- Hold regularly scheduled meetings with shelter staff.
- Oversee shift assignments for shelter staff as needed.
- Monitor shelter operations by regularly walking through the facility including these areas:
  - Registration area
  - Food preparation and serving areas
  - Dormitory area
  - Other areas of facility, including restrooms and exterior
- Ensure that resident needs and health standards are being met.
  - Meet regularly with facility representative to share concerns and address potential problems.
- Update all contact information regularly:
  - Supporting agency (POC)
  - EOC
  - Shelter staff
  - Health services contacts



## Shelter Manager Checklist — Continued

### Closing

- Discuss plans for closing the shelter with your supporting agency and the local EOC.
- Discuss closing plans with shelter staff. Identify:
  - Immediate needs of each family and resources that may be available to assist
  - Individual family relocations, if needed
- Discuss closing plans with shelter residents. Provide:
  - Adequate notice of closing
  - Referrals, if needed
  - Relocation to another shelter, if appropriate
- Identify borrowed, misplaced, or broken equipment
- Clean facility thoroughly
- Remove shelter signage
- Submit all paperwork to your supporting agency for retention, including:
  - Shelter Registration Forms
  - Shelter staff contact information, evaluations, etc. Purchasing records
  - Copies of activity logs, invoices and reports
  - Shelter incident reports
  - Contracts



## Registration Checklist

The Registration Supervisor and workers are responsible for ensuring that persons entering and leaving the shelter go through the registration process. Complete, legible and accurate information about the residents of the shelter is needed.

### Opening

- Set up registration table near entrance. Welcome those entering and answer any questions.
- Provide enough registration tables to handle the number of residents within a reasonable period of time.
- Post registration signage at the registration area.
- Be prepared for large crowds.
  - Use only one entrance, if possible.
  - Position shelter staff at other entrances to direct residents.
  - DO NOT BLOCK** emergency exits.
- Use a registration form, index cards, or a pad of paper to record information about families entering the shelter.
  - Use only one form, card, or piece of paper per family. This allows for confidentiality and assists with record maintenance.
- Provide a Shelter Information Sheet to each family who registers.
- Refer these individuals to a Health Service staff member:
  - Ill or injured persons
  - Any individuals on medications
  - Any individuals with restricted diets
  - Any individuals who claim to have formal medical training People who require/request support for access or functional needs or who may have pre-disaster medical needs (e.g., mother with a newborn infant or someone just released from the hospital)

**NOTE:** It is recommended that a Health Services staff member work at the registration table.

- Remind shelter residents that they are expected to sign out at the registration desk upon final departure.



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## Registration Checklist – Continued

### ■ Ongoing

- Sign in new incoming shelter residents, and track and provide new registration information to the Shelter Manager.
- Place signs at all exits to remind those leaving the shelter to go to the registration desk when checking out of the shelter.
- Provide general shelter resident information.
- Sign in and escort official visitors, including the media, to the Shelter Manager.

### ■ Closing

- Ensure that shelter registration forms are forwarded to the appropriate location, as instructed by the Shelter Manager.



## Feeding Checklist

The Feeding staff advise Logistics and the Shelter Manager of what food and supplies are needed; monitor the preparation and serving of food; keep accurate records of meals served and food and supplies received and expended; and, if requested, record the hours of food preparation and serving staff.

### Opening

- Discuss the following with your Shelter Manager:
  - Meal schedules
  - Menus
  - Procedures for obtaining food and supplies
  - Whether food will be prepared onsite or catered
- Establish a beverage and snack canteen as soon as possible.
- Determine when the first meal will be needed.

**NOTE:** The first meal should be served within four hours of shelter opening or at the next traditional meal time (e.g., 7:00 a.m., noon, or 6:00 p.m.).

- Inventory the facility's food and feeding support supplies such as paper towels, plastic and paper utensils, and coffee.
- Ensure that all staff are briefed on safe food handling procedures and provided with required gloves and hats.

**NOTE:** Keep the list of the facility's initial inventory so that the inventory can be re-stocked prior to shelter closing.

- Plan menus based on these considerations:
  - Availability of food
  - Dietary needs
  - Cultural preferences
  - Convenience of procurement and preparation
  - Cost and quality
- Locate the dining area near the serving area.
  - Set up tables and chairs.
  - Arrange tables and chairs to accommodate the maximum number of people expected to be served at one time.
  - Post accessible signs communicating information such as meal times, clean-up requests and food restrictions in the dormitory area.



## Feeding Checklist – Continued

- Evaluate staffing needs:
  - Plan staffing levels to accommodate a timely, efficient meal service.
  - Speak with the Shelter Manager if more feeding/food preparation or serving staff is required.
- Consider the following food service staffing:
  - Kitchen and Logistics Supervisor
  - Cook and helpers Food service workers Dish washers
  - Clean-up crew
- Review local health codes and/or contact local health department for assistance and guidance.

### Ongoing

- Monitor resident needs and adjust meal service times or add additional meal service to accommodate residents who work night shifts.
- Establish a work schedule and assign shifts as necessary. Ensure that staff are assigned to and briefed on their specific duties.
- Keep menus simple.
- Ensure that there is enough food for everyone and that food is not wasted.
- Monitor food temperatures and safe food handling procedures. Ensure that all food is eaten in the food service area and is not taken into other areas of the facility (particularly the dormitory area).
- Be open to comments and suggestions from the shelter residents.
- Serve food appropriate for the weather (i.e., cold food when the weather is hot, hot food when the weather is cold).
- Keep records:
  - Maintain lists of all inventory obtained.
  - Keep receipts of all expenses incurred.
  - Record any breakage of the facility's equipment for replacement at closing.
- Ensure that food areas are kept clean and sanitary.
- Monitor usage levels to adjust orders and inventory levels as the shelter feeding requirements change.
- Keep the Shelter Manager informed of the status of your food operation. Report any problems or needs.



## Feeding Checklist – Continued

### ■ Closing

- Determine when the last meal will be served.
- Discuss the disposition of excess food and supplies with the Shelter Manager.
- Ensure that the kitchen and food service area are clean and restored to their pre-disaster condition.



## Dormitory Checklist

Dormitory staff are responsible for setting up and assigning sleeping areas within the dormitory; coordinating with Logistics or the Shelter Manager for cots, blankets and hygiene kits; and monitoring the dormitory area to maintain a safe and quiet environment for residents to sleep and rest.

### Opening

- Designate space within the dormitory area. Allocate separate spaces for:
  - Families
  - Single women
  - Single men
  - Others, including cultural, religious, etc., requirements
- Consider items unique to the event. For example, during hurricanes the shelter may have to accommodate greater numbers of people initially. Residents may be placed in confined areas with less than 20 square feet per person until the storm is over.
- Ensure that the building is compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), allowing access and movement through the building to all individuals.
- Work with Logistics or the Shelter Manager to procure blankets, cots, pillows, towels and hygiene items.
- Set up cots and distribute blankets, pillows, towels and hygiene items.

**NOTE:** It is recommended that 40 square feet of space be allocated per resident in the dormitory area. Individuals using mobility devices or other assistive support may require between 80 and 100 square feet.



## Dormitory Checklist – Continued

### Ongoing

- Communicate to residents that personal items are the responsibility of the resident.
- Post shelter rules in appropriate languages within the dormitory, and monitor the dormitory to ensure that shelter rules are being followed.
- Post the “lights out” and “quiet hours” schedule within the dormitory.
- Arrange for dim lighting during sleeping times.
- Coordinate with security personnel to ensure that shelter personnel circulate throughout the shelter during quiet hours. Control all equipment using standard inventory techniques. Communicate that shelter occupants are expected to help keep the dormitory area clean.
- Coordinate with Health Services staff to monitor shelter residents for potential health issues.

**NOTE:** It may be useful to have families sign for the number of cots and blankets that they have been issued.

### Closing

- Determine disposition of all dormitory equipment in conjunction with Shelter Manager.
- Take down and clean equipment (cots, blankets, etc.) as required.
- Return equipment as requested by the Shelter Manager.
- Clean the dormitory area, returning it to a pre-disaster condition.
- Remove all shelter signage.



## Staffing Checklist

To ensure proper staffing levels, it is important to anticipate workload and staff availability. Individuals assigned to ensure that proper staffing levels will coordinate with the Shelter Manager and supervisors to recruit, train, assign and release employees and volunteers.

### Opening

- Consult with the Shelter Manager and other supervisors to determine each function in the shelter. Make a list of the following:
  - Tasks to be performed and expectations to be met
  - Skills needed
  - Hours required daily
- Prepare a daily schedule for each function that includes the:
  - List of tasks to be performed
  - Number of staff needed
  - Schedule of times for tasks to be performed
  - Post daily staff sign-in and sign-out sheets to log individual work times.
- Secure a staffing work space that:
  - Is easily accessible to staff
  - Can be used as a sign-in, interviewing and orientation area

### Ongoing

- Survey the existing shelter population for possible staff. Look for people with the type of skills and abilities needed to fill various shelter positions.
- Keep a daily record of all shelter volunteers.
  - Maintain each volunteer's name, address and phone number.
  - Note if each volunteer was also a shelter resident.
  - Maintain a log of each volunteer's date/hours worked.
- Ask the Shelter Manager what statistics will be needed for the daily report. Track and provide this information consistently.
- Do not assign shelter volunteers to jobs that would expose them to the personal information of other shelter residents.

### Closing

- Provide all records needed for retention to the supporting agency.
- Ensure that volunteers receive recognition by submitting their contact information to the supporting agency.



## Logistics Checklist

Logistics personnel have a variety of important tasks to perform to ensure proper shelter operations. These tasks include supporting the use of the facility; ensuring the safety, security and sanitation of the shelter; and procuring, tracking, storing, distributing, and returning or disposing of supplies and equipment at the shelter.

### Opening

- Conduct a quick inspection of the facility. Note the:
  - General condition of the areas to be used
  - Potential hazard areas
- Inventory and establish security for the facility's supplies and equipment.
- Prepare the facility for operations.
- Place signage inside and outside the building.
- Support the equipment/furniture placement in the following locations:
  - Waiting area
  - Registration area
  - Health Services and Mental Health Services areas
  - Dormitory area
  - Food serving area Children/family area Lounge/recreation area Staff area
  - Shelter Manager's Office
  - Supply and storage areas
- Discuss with the Shelter Manager:
  - Building security
  - ADA compliance
  - Financial authority
  - Process for requesting needed items
  - Shower/bathing facilities, if applicable
  - Extra restrooms/toilet facilities, if needed



## Logistics Checklist – Continued

### Ongoing

- Conduct routine rounds of the facility including:
  - Perimeter walks
  - Interior walks
- Conduct safety inspections:
  - Kitchen
  - Storage areas
  - Food staging areas
  - Dining areas
  - Restrooms
  - Entrances and exits
  - Dormitory areas
  - Health Services and Mental Health Service areas
- Coordinate with other functions regarding supply needs.
- Take steps to resolve any facility or supply problems.
- Consult with the food preparation supervisor about food sanitation arrangements.
- Discuss waste removal and pick-up arrangements with your supporting agency.
- Order supplies necessary to ensure proper sanitation and personal hygiene.
- Keep records of expenses.

### Closing

- Return all borrowed or rented equipment to owners.
  - Submit a list of returned items to your Shelter Manager.
- Return the facility to its pre-disaster condition.
  - Clean the facility.
  - Remove signage inside and outside.
  - Note any shelter-related damage and arrange for repair.
- Conduct a final inspection of the building.
  - Discuss any additional follow-up needed with your supporting agency.



## Health Services and Mental Health Services Checklist

Health Services and Mental Health Services should be made available to ensure that shelter residents' basic health needs and applicable public health standards are met. This is often achieved by referring residents to the appropriate medical providers.

### Opening

- Obtain contact information from your supporting agency or your local EOC and discuss potential Health and Mental Health needs and resources for the shelter.
- Conduct an initial Health and Mental Health screening with each family member and make appropriate referrals if necessary.

### Ongoing

- Arrange to meet the anticipated needs of all shelter residents, including:
  - Infants
  - Elderly
  - People with functional needs
- Discuss needed medical coverage with your supporting agency.
- Determine dietary needs and discuss these with your Shelter or Feeding Manager.
- Note individuals with communicable diseases (e.g., flu, lice) and discuss appropriate interventions with your supporting agency.
- Note individuals with pre-existing medical conditions. Discuss shelter facility health inspections with your supporting agency.
- Monitor individuals on medications and provide secure storage for these medications.
- Discuss shelter facility health inspections with your supporting agency.
- Arrange for 24-hour medical consultation by getting a recommendation from your supporting agency or the local EOC.
- Ensure that health/medical records are properly documented and securely maintained.
- Circulate among residents to monitor, engage with and provide support to those in need. Provide referrals if necessary.



## Health Services and Mental Health Services Checklist—Continued

### ■ Closing

- Transfer health/medical records as directed by your supporting agency.
- Return supplies and equipment.

**NOTE:** Always:

- Coordinate with local health departments, hospitals, ambulance services, crisis counseling services and local mental health agencies and disability groups to establish their capabilities and protocol for support.
- Have emergency phone numbers in an easily viewable location, and make a phone available for staff and residents to call for help.
- Identify qualified staff that can administer first aid/CPR, and have a fully stocked first aid kit available.



The following coaching aids are provided to assist Shelter Managers and their designees in quickly training shelter staff.

**NOTE:** The American Red Cross offers courses on shelter operations. For more information, please contact your local American Red Cross chapter.

### ■ Preparing to Train

- Gather needed materials:
  - Shelter Field Guide
  - Copy of position checklist
  - Copy of position coaching aid
  - Examples of forms (contact your supporting agency for any specific registration forms to be used in your shelter)
- Review the sections specified in the coaching aid.
- Review the position checklist.
- Pre-identify items you want to demonstrate for the trainee and the materials that will be needed.
- Self-Study** – Have trainee review those areas of the Shelter Field Guide identified on the coaching aid.
- Discuss** – Use the **Discussion Points** on the coaching aid to discuss position-relevant information with the trainee.
- Demonstrate** – Demonstrate the tasks you wish the trainee to complete.
- Observe** – Observe the trainee completing tasks. Provide guidance and assistance if needed.
- Reinforce** – Reinforce the training concepts by answering any questions the trainee may have.



## Shelter Manager Coaching Aid

### Self Study

- Have trainee review the following sections of the Shelter Field Guide:
  - Introduction
  - Before Opening a Shelter
  - Opening a Shelter
  - Ongoing Shelter Operations
  - Closing the Shelter
  - Checklists

### Discussion Points

Discuss the following items with the trainee, and answer any questions that the trainee may have.

#### *Before Opening a Shelter*

- Fundamental Objectives of Sheltering (pg. 2)
- The first four steps in opening a shelter (pg. 5-6)
- Items to consider when determining the shelter layout (pg. 7-10)
- Discuss policy/procedure regarding household pets (pg. 8)
- Establish Shelter Rules (pg. 11)
- Staffing (pg. 11-17)
  - Discuss use of resident volunteers to augment shelter staff
  - Discuss handling staffing overages/shortages
  - Discuss staffing template
- Logistics (pg. 17-18)
- Safety and Security (pg. 18-20)
- Access and functional needs support services (FNSS) (pg. 21-25)
  - Discuss how access and functional needs will be met
  - Discuss policy/procedure regarding service animals

#### *Opening a Shelter*

- Establish Schedules for Daily Activities (pg. 26)
- Registration process (pg. 27-29)
- Policy/procedure for unaccompanied minors (pg. 28)
- Policy/procedure for shelter residents whose legal status affects their placement in shelter housing (pg. 28)
- Policy/procedure for privacy and information sharing (pg. 29)
- Daily management of registration, dormitory management, health services and mental health services, food services and logistics functions (pg. 27-35)
- Policy/procedure for monetary and material donations (pg. 35)
- Communication (pg. 36-38)



## Shelter Manager Coaching Aid – Continued

### *Ongoing Shelter Operations*

- Reporting structure and tools (pg. 39-40)
- Reunification Services (pg. 41-42)
- Transportation (pg. 42)

### *Closing a Shelter*

- Shelter Closing Considerations (pg. 43)
- Document Retention (pg. 45)

### **Demonstrate**

- Refer to the pre-identified items that you selected to demonstrate for the trainee.
- Demonstrate processes, including:
  - Preparing a daily activity schedule
  - Preparing a staffing checklist
  - Reviewing expenditures
  - Reporting shelter numbers
- Ensure that the trainee feels confident completing each of the selected tasks.
- Respond to any questions that the trainee may have.
- Review the Shelter Manager Checklist with the trainee. Provide copies for the trainee to use.

### **Observe**

- Have the trainee shadow you during a shift.
- Allow the trainee to complete tasks; observe his/her performance.
- Provide assistance as needed and answer any questions.

### **Reinforce**

- Remember that every individual learns at his/her own pace. Reinforce learning by:
  - Encouraging the trainee to ask questions
  - Being available to answer questions and demonstrate tasks
  - Explaining support agency policies and procedures, local State laws, or other guidance that governs policy and decision-making within the shelter



## Registration Coaching Aid

### Self Study

Have the trainee review the following sections of the Shelter Field Guide:

- Introduction (pg. 1-4)
- Before Opening a Shelter
  - Establish Shelter Rules (pg. 11)
  - Security Precautions (pg. 19)
  - Access and Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) (pg. 21-25)
  - Service Animals (pg. 23)
  - Household Pets (pg. 24-25)
- Opening a Shelter
  - Registration (pg. 27-29)
  - Health Services and Mental Health Services (pg. 30-33)
  - Monetary and Material Donations (pg. 35)
- Closing a Shelter
  - Document Retention (pg. 45)
- Checklists
  - Registration Checklist (pg. 51-52)

### Discussion Points

Discuss the following items with the trainee and answer any questions that the trainee may have.

---

#### ***Before Opening a Shelter***

- Shelter rules pertaining to registering upon entering the facility
- Security issues at registration

---

#### ***Opening a Shelter***

- Policy/procedure for:
  - Service animals and household pets
  - Unaccompanied minors
  - Registered sex offenders
  - Privacy and information sharing
  - Monetary and material donations
- Communication

---

#### ***Ongoing Shelter Operations***

- Required reporting
- Shelter ingress and egress policies



## Registration Coaching Aid – Continued

### *Closing a Shelter*

- Discuss triggers that could signal that it is time to close the shelter.
- Discuss any information needed from registration in order to make a shelter closing determination.
- Return registration materials.
- Return the area to its previous condition.
- Retain documents.

### **Demonstrate**

- Refer to the pre-identified items that you selected to demonstrate for the trainee.
- Demonstrate processes for all aids, including:
  - Completing a registration form
  - Storing the registration form in a safe place
  - Developing a shelter population report
  - Handling sensitive situations such as unaccompanied minors, and shelter residents whose legal status affects their placement in shelter housing
  - Handling service animals
  - Handling household pets
- Ensure that the trainee feels confident completing each of the selected tasks.
- Respond to any questions that the trainee may have.
- Review the Registration Checklist with the trainee. Provide copies for the trainee to use.

### **Observe**

- Have the trainee shadow you during a shift.
- Allow the trainee to complete tasks; observe his/her performance.
- Provide assistance as needed and answer any questions.

### **Reinforce**

- Remember that every individual learns at his/her own pace.
- Reinforce learning by:
  - Encouraging the trainee to ask questions
  - Being available to answer questions and demonstrate tasks
  - Explaining the support agency policies and procedures, local State laws, or other guidance that governs registration policy within the shelter



## Feeding Coaching Aid

### Self Study

Have the trainee review the following sections of the Shelter Field Guide:

- Introduction (pg. 1-4)
- Before Opening a Shelter
  - Determine the Scope of Shelter Services Needed (pg. 6-7)
  - Feeding/Food Preparation and Serving Areas (pg. 8-9)
  - Establish Shelter Rules (pg. 11)
- Opening a Shelter
  - Establish Schedules for Daily Activities (pg. 26)
  - Feeding (pg. 33)
  - Monetary and Material Donations (pg. 35)
- Closing a Shelter
  - Document Retention (pg. 45)
- Checklists
  - Feeding Checklist (pg. 53-55)

### Discussion Points

Discuss the following items with the trainee, and answer any questions that the trainee may have.

---

#### *Before Opening a Shelter*

- Meal schedules
- Dietary requirements
- Cultural preferences
- Food service staff

---

#### *Opening a Shelter*

- Daily activity schedule
- Food and supply inventory
- Food and supply ordering

---

#### *Ongoing Shelter Operations*

- Required reporting
- Food service rules for residents



## Feeding Coaching Aid – Continued

### *Closing a Shelter*

- Discuss triggers that could signal that it is time to close the shelter.
- Discuss any information needed from food service in order to make a shelter closing determination.
- Return food service supplies and equipment.
- Determine disposition of food stuffs.
- Return the area to its previous condition.
- Retain documents.

### **Demonstrate**

- Refer to the pre-identified items that you selected to demonstrate for the trainee.
- Demonstrate processes, including:
  - Menu preparation
  - Meal preparation
  - Meal service
  - Inventory
  - Ordering
  - Equipment maintenance
  - Record keeping
- Ensure that the trainee feels confident completing each of the selected tasks.
- Respond to any questions that the trainee may have.
- Review the Feeding Checklist with the trainee. Provide copies for the trainee to use.

### **Observe**

- Have the trainee shadow you during a shift.
- Allow the trainee to complete tasks; observe his/her performance.
- Provide assistance as needed and answer any questions.

### **Reinforce**

- Remember that every individual learns at his/her own pace.
- Reinforce learning by:
  - Encouraging the trainee to ask questions
  - Being available to answer questions and demonstrate tasks
  - Explaining support agency policies and procedures, local State laws, or other guidance that governs food preparation and food service policy



## Dormitory Coaching Aid

### Self Study

Have the trainee review the following sections of the Shelter Field Guide:

- Introduction (pg. 1-4)
- Before Opening a Shelter
  - Site Layout and Setup (pg. 7-10)
  - Establish Shelter Rules (pg. 11)
  - Safety and Security (pg. 18-20)
  - Access and Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) (pg. 21-25)
- Opening a Shelter
  - Establish Schedules for Daily Activities (pg. 26)
  - Dormitory Management (pg. 29)
  - Monetary and Material Donations (pg. 35)
- Closing a Shelter
  - Document Retention (pg. 45)
- Checklists
  - Dormitory Checklist (pg. 56-57)

### Discussion Points

Discuss the following items with the trainee, and answer any questions that the trainee may have.

---

#### *Before Opening a Shelter*

- Setting up the dormitory
- Dormitory rules
- Personal hygiene/comfort items
- Dormitory staff

---

#### *Opening a Shelter*

- Daily activity schedule
- Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance
- Assigning space within the dormitory

---

#### *Ongoing Shelter Operations*

- Dormitory rules
- Dormitory security
- Required reporting



## Dormitory Coaching Aid – Continued

### *Closing a Shelter*

- Discuss triggers that could signal that it is time to close the shelter.
- Discuss any information needed from dormitory staff in order to make a shelter closing determination.
- Return supplies and equipment.
- Return the area to its previous condition.
- Retain documents.

### **Demonstrate**

- Refer to the pre-identified items that you selected to demonstrate for the trainee.
- Demonstrate processes, including:
  - Setting up cots
  - Inventory management
  - Maintaining a clean dormitory
  - Equipment maintenance
  - Record keeping
- Ensure that the trainee feels confident completing each of the selected tasks.
- Respond to any questions that the trainee may have.
- Review the Dormitory Checklist with the trainee. Provide copies for the trainee to use.

### **Observe**

- Have the trainee shadow you during a shift.
- Allow the trainee to complete tasks; observe his/her performance.
- Provide assistance as needed and answer any questions.

### **Reinforce**

- Remember that every individual learns at his/her own pace.
- Reinforce learning by:
  - Encouraging the trainee to ask questions
  - Being available to answer questions and demonstrate tasks
  - Explaining support agency policies and procedures, local State laws, or other guidance that governs dormitory management policy



## Staffing Coaching Aid

### Self Study

Have the trainee review the following sections of the Shelter Field Guide:

- Introduction (pg. 1-4)
- Before Opening a Shelter
  - Establish Shelter Rules (pg. 11)
  - Staffing (pg. 11-16)
  - Sample Organizational Chart (pg. 16)
  - Staffing Shortage/Overage Challenges (pg. 17)
  - Safety and Security (pg. 18-20)
- Opening a Shelter
  - Establish Schedules for Daily Activities (pg. 26)
  - Monetary and Material Donations (pg. 35)
- Closing a Shelter
  - Document Retention (pg. 45)
- Checklists
  - Staffing Checklist (pg. 58)

### Discussion Points

Discuss the following items with the trainee, and answer any questions that the trainee may have.

---

#### *Before Opening a Shelter*

- Staffing requirements
- Recruitment possibilities
- Shelter policies and procedures

---

#### *Opening a Shelter*

- Daily activity schedules
- Staff schedule for each function
- Recruitment

---

#### *Ongoing Shelter Operations*

- Maintaining the staff schedule
- Maintaining log of volunteer hours worked
- Addressing staff issues
- Reporting



## Staffing Coaching Aid – Continued

### *Closing a Shelter*

- Discuss triggers that could signal that it is time to close the shelter.
- Discuss any information needed from staffing in order to make a shelter closing determination.
- Return supplies and equipment.
- Return the area to its previous condition.
- Retain documents.
- Ensure that volunteers receive recognition for their work at the shelter.

### **Demonstrate**

- Refer to the pre-identified items that you selected to demonstrate for the trainee.
- Demonstrate processes, including:
  - Staff and volunteer orientation
  - Staff documentation and records
  - Volunteer hours worked
  - Disciplinary actions
  - Incident reporting
  - Recruitment
  - Scheduling
  - Other record keeping
- Ensure that the trainee feels confident completing each of the selected tasks.
- Respond to any questions that the trainee may have.
- Review the Staffing Checklist with the trainee. Provide copies for the trainee to use.

### **Observe**

- Have the trainee shadow you during a shift.
- Allow the trainee to complete tasks; observe his/her performance.
- Provide assistance as needed and answer any questions.

### **Reinforce**

- Remember that every individual learns at his/her own pace.
- Reinforce learning by:
  - Encouraging the trainee to ask questions
  - Being available to answer questions and demonstrate tasks
  - Explaining support agency policies and procedures, local State laws, or other guidance that governs staffing policy



## Logistics Coaching Aid

### Self Study

Have the trainee review the following sections of the Shelter Field Guide:

- Introduction (pg. 1-4)
- Before Opening a Shelter
  - Complete a Site Review (pg. 6)
  - Site Layout and Setup (pg. 7-10)
  - Sample Shelter Floor Plan (pg. 10)
  - Logistics (pg. 17-18)
  - Safety and Security (pg. 18-20)
  - Fire Safety (pg. 20)
- Opening a Shelter
  - Establish Schedules for Daily Activities (pg. 26)
  - Logistics (pg. 33-35)
  - Monetary and Material Donations (pg. 35)
- Closing a Shelter
  - Closing Schedule (pg. 45)
  - Document Retention (pg. 45)
- Checklists
  - Logistics Checklist (pg. 59-60)

### Discussion Points

Discuss the following items with the trainee, and answer any questions that the trainee may have.

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#### ***Before Opening a Shelter***

- Conduct a site review
- Site layout and setup
- Initial Inventory
- Shelter policies and procedures

---

#### ***Opening a Shelter***

- Daily activity schedules
- Facilities maintenance
- Inventory control
- Procurement
- Financial authorities



## Logistics Coaching Aid – Continued

### *Ongoing Shelter Operations*

- Inventory control
- Ongoing procurement
- Ongoing financial authorities
- Facilities maintenance
- Safety and security

### *Closing a Shelter*

- Discuss triggers that could signal that it is time to close the shelter.
- Discuss any information needed from logistics staff in order to make a shelter closing determination.
- Return supplies and equipment.
- Return the area to its previous condition.
- Retain documents.

### **Demonstrate**

- Refer to the pre-identified items that you selected to demonstrate for the trainee.
- Demonstrate processes, including:
  - Inventory control
  - Procurement
  - Facilities maintenance
  - Safety and security
  - Other record keeping
- Ensure that the trainee feels confident completing each of the selected tasks.
- Respond to any questions that the trainee may have.
- Review the Logistics Checklist with the trainee. Provide copies for the trainee to use.

### **Observe**

- Have the trainee shadow you during a shift.
- Allow the trainee to complete tasks; observe his/her performance.
- Provide assistance as needed and answer any questions.

### **Reinforce**

- Remember that every individual learns at his/her own pace.
- Reinforce learning by:
  - Encouraging the trainee to ask questions
  - Being available to answer questions and demonstrate tasks
  - Explaining support agency policies and procedures, local State laws, or other guidance that governs logistics policy



## Health Services and Mental Health Services Coaching Aid

### Self Study

Have the trainee review the following sections of the Shelter Field Guide:

- Introduction (pg. 1-4)
- Before Opening a Shelter
  - Site Layout and Setup (pg. 7-10)
  - Establish Shelter Rules (pg. 11)
  - Safety and Security (pg. 18-20)
  - Access and Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) (pg. 21-25)
- Opening a Shelter
  - Establish Schedules for Daily Activities (pg. 26)
  - Health Services and Mental Health Services (pg. 30-33)
  - Monetary and Material Donations (pg. 35)
- Closing a Shelter
  - Document Retention (pg. 45)
- Checklists
  - Health Services and Mental Health Services Checklist (pg. 61-62)

### Discussion Points

Discuss the following items with the trainee, and answer any questions that the trainee may have.

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#### *Before Opening a Shelter*

- Shelter policies and procedures

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#### *Opening a Shelter*

- Health and mental health policies
- Supporting agency and medical support contact information
- Assessing the shelter population

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#### *Ongoing Shelter Operations*

- Accommodating access and functional needs
- Providing for dietary requirements
- Preventing the spread of communicable disease
- Ensuring the security of medical records and medications
- Monitoring the health of the shelter population
- Maintaining 24-hour medical consultation
- Record keeping



## Health Services and Mental Health Services Coaching Aid – Continued

### *Closing a Shelter*

- Discuss triggers that could signal that it is time to close the shelter.
- Discuss any information needed from health and mental health staff in order to make a shelter closing determination.
- Return supplies and equipment.
- Return the area to its previous condition.
- Retain documents.

### **Demonstrate**

- Refer to the pre-identified items that you selected to demonstrate for the trainee.
- Demonstrate processes, including:
  - Health assessment form
  - Record security
  - Medicine security
  - Contact information
  - Other record keeping
- Ensure that the trainee feels confident completing each of the selected tasks.
- Respond to any questions that the trainee may have.
- Review the Health and Mental Health Checklist with the trainee. Provide copies for the trainee to use.

### **Observe**

- Have the trainee shadow you during a shift.
- Allow the trainee to complete tasks; observe his/her performance.
- Provide assistance as needed and answer any questions.

### **Reinforce**

- Remember that every individual learns at his/her own pace.
- Reinforce learning by:
  - Encouraging the trainee to ask questions
  - Being available to answer questions and demonstrate tasks
  - Explaining support agency policies and procedures, local State laws, or other guidance that governs health and mental health policy

## Resources



### Resource Links

American Humane Association	<a href="http://www.americanhumane.org/">http://www.americanhumane.org/</a>
American Red Cross	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">http://www.redcross.org</a>
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	<a href="http://www.asPCA.org">http://www.asPCA.org</a>
American Veterinary Medical Association	<a href="http://www.avma.org">http://www.avma.org</a>
Best Friends Animal Society	<a href="http://www.bestfriends.org">http://www.bestfriends.org</a>
Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards	<a href="http://www.nrckids.org/cfoc3">http://www.nrckids.org/cfoc3</a>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Emergency Preparedness and Response	<a href="http://www.emergency.cdc.gov">http://www.emergency.cdc.gov</a>
CDC Public Health Assessment and Surveillance Tools After a Disaster	<a href="http://www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/surveillance/">http://www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/surveillance/</a>
CDC Shelter Assessment Tool	<a href="http://www.emergency.cdc.gov/shelterassessment/">http://www.emergency.cdc.gov/shelterassessment/</a>
CDC Shelter Resources	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/etp/shelter.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/etp/shelter.htm</a>
Department of Justice (DOJ): Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments: The ADA and Emergency Shelters: Access for All in Emergencies and Disasters	<a href="http://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap7shelterprog.htm">http://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap7shelterprog.htm</a>
DOJ ADA Checklist for Shelters	<a href="http://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap7shelterchk.htm">http://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap7shelterchk.htm</a>
Disaster Planning – Meeting the Needs of Pregnant Women & Infants – 6 Key Elements for Every Disaster Plan	<a href="http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/mch/disasterpreparedness/MODdisaster.pdf">http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/mch/disasterpreparedness/MODdisaster.pdf</a>
FEMA: Eligible Costs Related to Evacuations and Sheltering	<a href="http://www.fema.gov/9500-series-policy-publications/952315-eligible-costs-related-evacuations-sheltering">http://www.fema.gov/9500-series-policy-publications/952315-eligible-costs-related-evacuations-sheltering</a>

FEMA FNSS: Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) in General Population Shelters	<a href="http://fema.gov/pdf/about/odc/fnss_guidance.pdf">http://fema.gov/pdf/about/odc/fnss_guidance.pdf</a>
FEMA: Private Nonprofit (PNP) Facility Eligibility	<a href="http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-9500-series-policy-publications/private-nonprofit-facility-eligibility-0">http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-9500-series-policy-publications/private-nonprofit-facility-eligibility-0</a>
FEMA Public Assistance Guide	<a href="http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-policy-and-guidance/public-assistance-guide">http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-policy-and-guidance/public-assistance-guide</a>
FEMA Reference Guide: Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities in the Provision of Disaster Mass Care, Housing, & Human Services	<a href="http://www.fema.gov/accommodating-individuals-disabilities-provision-disaster-mass-care-housing-human-services">http://www.fema.gov/accommodating-individuals-disabilities-provision-disaster-mass-care-housing-human-services</a>
Helping Families and Children Cope with Traumatic Events	<a href="http://www.naccrra.org/parents/parent-resources/helping-families-and-children-cope-with-traumatic-events">http://www.naccrra.org/parents/parent-resources/helping-families-and-children-cope-with-traumatic-events</a>
HHS: Health Information Privacy	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/">http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/</a>
The Humane Society of the United States	<a href="http://www.humanesociety.org">http://www.humanesociety.org</a>
Initial Intake and Assessment Tool – Department of Health and Human Services/American Red Cross	<a href="http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Pages/initialintakeassessmenttool.aspx">http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Pages/initialintakeassessmenttool.aspx</a>
Keeping Children Safe – A Policy Agenda for Child Care in Emergencies	<a href="http://www.naccrra.org/publications/research-reports/2008/1/keeping-children-safe-a-policy-agenda-for-child-care-in-emergen">http://www.naccrra.org/publications/research-reports/2008/1/keeping-children-safe-a-policy-agenda-for-child-care-in-emergen</a>
National Council on Independent Living	<a href="http://www.ncil.org">http://www.ncil.org</a>
National Disability Rights Network	<a href="http://www.ndrn.org">http://www.ndrn.org</a>
National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRLS)	<a href="http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit/recovery-directorate/national-emergency-family">http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit/recovery-directorate/national-emergency-family</a>
National Family Registry	<a href="http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit/recovery-directorate/national-emergency-family">http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit/recovery-directorate/national-emergency-family</a>
National Shelter System (NSS)	<a href="http://nss.communityos.org/cms/">http://nss.communityos.org/cms/</a>
National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD)	<a href="http://www.nvoad.org">http://www.nvoad.org</a>

NVOAD Disaster Spiritual Care Points of Consensus	<a href="http://www.nvoad.org/library/cat_view/9-points-of-consensus?orderby=dmdate_published&amp;ascdesc=DESC">http://www.nvoad.org/library/cat_view/9-points-of-consensus?orderby=dmdate_published&amp;ascdesc=DESC</a>
Noah's Wish	<a href="http://www.noahswish.org">http://www.noahswish.org</a>
Office of Child Care: Child Care Resources for Disasters and Emergencies	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/child-care-resources-for-disasters-and-emergencies">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/child-care-resources-for-disasters-and-emergencies</a>
Operational Guidance on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies v2.1	<a href="http://www.enonline.net/resources/6">http://www.enonline.net/resources/6</a>
Safe and Well	<a href="http://www.redcross.org/safeandwell">http://www.redcross.org/safeandwell</a>
The Salvation Army	<a href="http://www.salvationarmyusa.org">http://www.salvationarmyusa.org</a>
Section 508 Compliance	<a href="http://www.section508.gov">http://www.section508.gov</a>
ServSafe®	<a href="http://www.servsafe.com">http://www.servsafe.com</a>
Society of Animal Welfare Administrators (SAWA)	<a href="http://sawanetwork.org">http://sawanetwork.org</a>
The Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Disaster Response	<a href="http://sphereproject.org">http://sphereproject.org</a>
State Emergency Planning and Preparedness Recommendations for Maternal and Child Care Populations	<a href="http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/emergency-preparedness/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/emergency-preparedness/Pages/default.aspx</a>
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	<a href="http://www.samhsa.gov">http://www.samhsa.gov</a>
World Health Organization (WHO): Water Sanitation & Health (WSH): Environmental Health in Emergencies and Disasters	<a href="http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/hygiene/emergencies/emergencies2002/en/">http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/hygiene/emergencies/emergencies2002/en/</a>
Woman and Infants Service Package (WISP): National Working Group for Woman and Infant Needs in Emergencies in the United States	<a href="http://www.whiteribbonalliance.org/index.cfm/the-issues/technical-resources/">http://www.whiteribbonalliance.org/index.cfm/the-issues/technical-resources/</a>



## Contacts

<b>Supporting Agency</b>	Contact Name
	Contact Phone Number
	Address

<b>Local Emergency Management</b>	Contact Name
	Contact Phone Number
	Address

<b>American Red Cross Local Chapter</b>	Contact Name
	Contact Phone Number
	Address

<b>Police Department</b>	Contact Name
	Contact Phone Number
	Address

<b>Fire Department</b>	Contact Name
	Contact Phone Number
	Address

<b>Health Department</b>	Contact Name
	Contact Phone Number
	Address



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