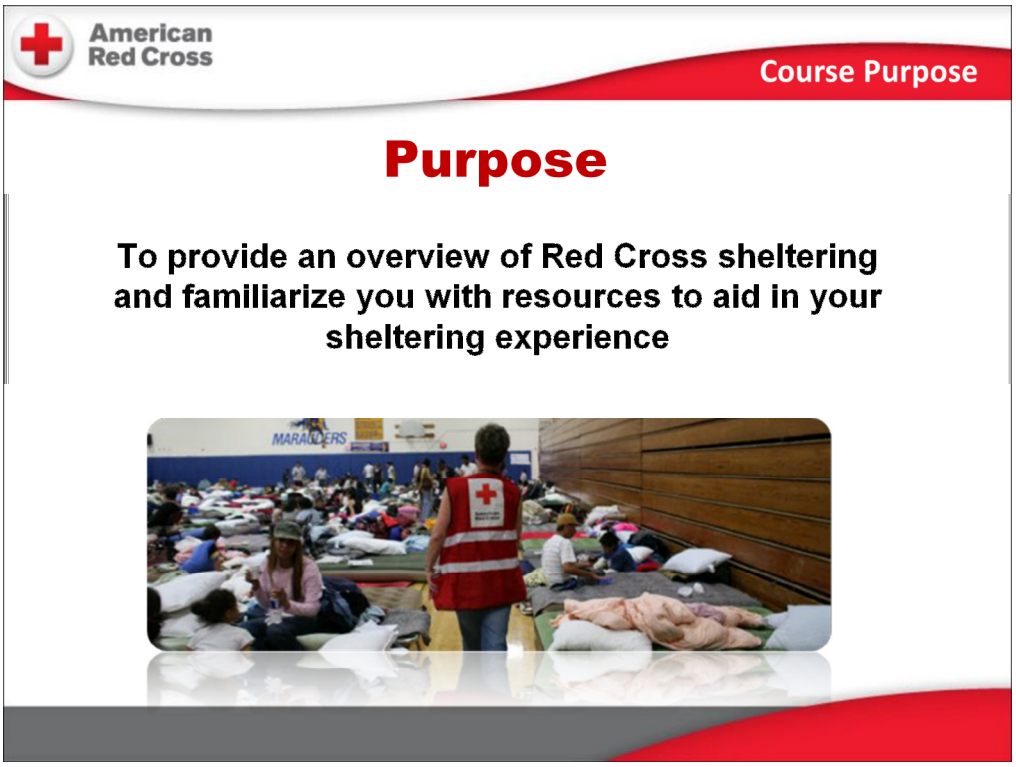
American Red Cross

Operating a Shelter

Just in Time Training

Welcome to this short training on operating a Red Cross shelter. Thank you for wanting to help these communities during this time of need.

To gain the most information from this self-study training, please have the Operating a Shelter Checklist and Operating a Shelter Job Tool printed or downloaded for reference. If you will be printing, use the “booklet format” checklist. If you will be viewing on a screen, use the “single-sided” format checklist.



The purpose of this course it to provide you with a brief overview of Red Cross sheltering, and to familiarize you with tools and resources to help you be successful working in a Red Cross shelter**. We are also going to discuss two specific shelter types that require modifications to our standard procedures, Hurricane Evacuation shelters and Mega shelters.**

Hurricane Evacuations Shelters are meant to be a "place of last resort" typically for individuals and families who are unable to shelter in place or when government officials mandate evacuations. These are meant for pre-landfall events as a safe place to weather the storm. There are no standard amenities (cots, blankets, comfort kits)

Mega shelters are large, complex shelters typically set up in an arena or convention center sized facility. They are most often opened under the administration of either local or State government because running these shelter facilities requires the coordination and cooperation of multiple local and State agencies, including those of law enforcement, public health, social and human services, food service, and facility management.

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Prepare Yourself

Bring supplies to support yourself for the duration of the storm.

It is not safe to leave the shelter while tropical force winds are affecting the area the shelter.

Before we get started, let's take a moment to talk about what you should be prepared for in a hurricane evacuation shelter. Life safety is the primary focus of hurricane evacuation shelters and personal preparation is critical. Bring all the supplies you will need to support yourself including clothing, toiletries, and medications. It will not be safe for you to leave during the storm **and after the storm passes, there will most likely be staff shelters established for your lodging.**

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Take Care of Yourself

Consider what stress-management techniques work best for you; then implement them throughout the day. Even just a few minutes can make a big difference. Here are some suggestions:

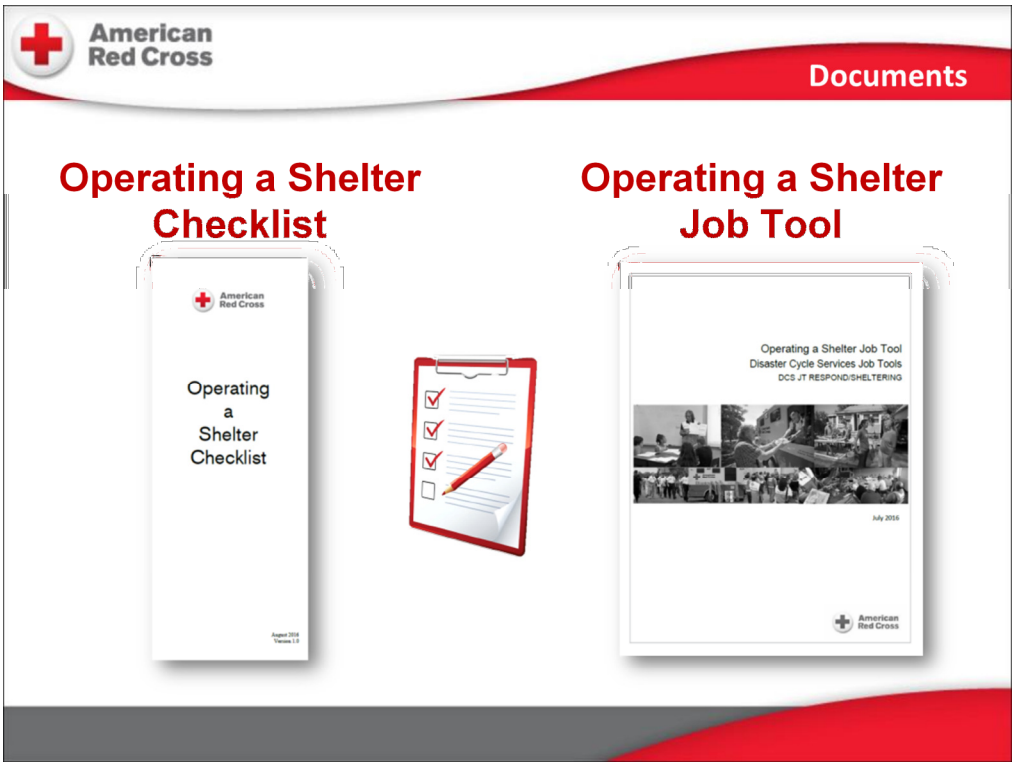
- Take Breaks
- Take Walks
- Stay in Touch with Family & Friends
- Pause
- Meditate
- Listen to Relaxing Music
- Exercise (even just some jumping jacks will raise your heart rate)
- Take Your Day Off
- Maintain Your Sense of Humor…LAUGH!

Encourage everyone on your team to take care of themselves & each other!

Working in a shelter is an important & challenging job. In hurricane events, anxiety tends to increase within the shelter population, which typically consists of the most vulnerable (*i.e., elderly, functional/access needs, homeless, etc.*). As the storm nears and passes through, it is important for shelter workers assigned to Hurricane Evacuation Centers to remain vigilant and prepared to handle heightened emotions and have a good sense of self-awareness to ensure both worker and client safety.

It is essential that you take care of yourself so you can provide the best service to your shelter clients. Remember that you cannot take care of anyone else if you do not take care of yourself! Please review the tips on this page and make self-care a priority.

Only you know what works best for your own stress management. Take time each day to do something that recharges your batteries.



Best practices developed through our experience have led us to create the Operating a Shelter Job Tool and its companion, the Operating a Shelter Checklist.

These and other sheltering documents can be found on the Sheltering Toolkit on the Red Cross intranet (the Exchange) or you can download the Shelter Field guide at http://nationalmasscarestrategy.org/sheltering/

It is important to note that these tools apply to standard Red Cross short term shelters. We will point out differences in operating hurricane evacuation shelters **and mega shelters** as we walk through the training.

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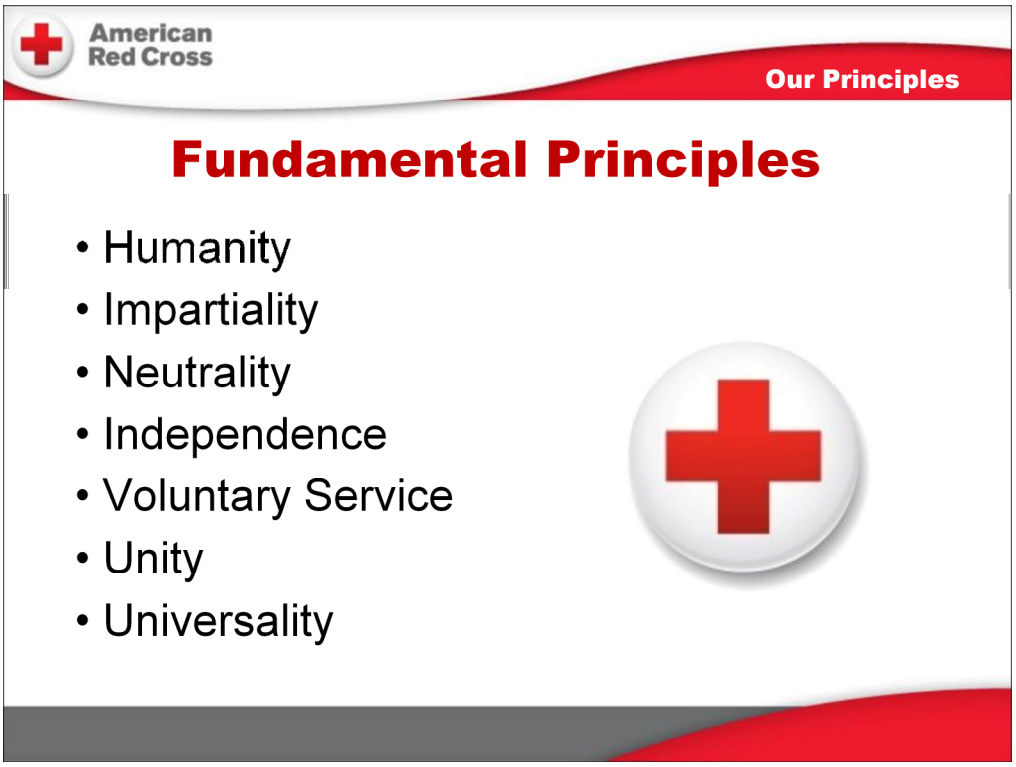
Mission Statement

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors

Everything we do in the Red Cross relates to our fundamental principles and our mission statement. Everything we do as far as sheltering also relates to our commitment as shelter workers.

Review the mission statement on this slide. What stands out to you in these statements?

Think about: volunteer workforce, donor funded, short term basis for sheltering



The Fundamental Principles of the Global Red Cross Network also guide all of our actions.

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

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

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

- **Independence**: The Red Cross is independent. The national societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with Red Cross principles.

- **Voluntary Service**: The Red Cross is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

- **Unity**: There can be only one Red Cross society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

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Sheltering Program Principles

- Provide **QUALITY** customer service
- Ensure shelter services are accessible to **EVERYONE**
- Delivery sheltering services **CONSISTENTLY** across the country

When we look at sheltering in the Red Cross, we have some concepts and principles that we are committed to in our service delivery.

We are committed to providing quality customer service, ensuring accessibility for all, and delivering services consistently across the country.

What does "quality customer service" mean to you?

Think about: making the customer feel welcome and important, paying attention to the customer's needs, being friendly to the customer, etc.

What kinds of concerns might be involved when ensuring accessibility?

Think about: different languages, other forms of diversity (culture, religion, race, ethnicity, etc.), disabilities, homeless, nationality. Red Cross shelters are open to everyone. We do not discriminate in any way. Shelters must be ADA accessible. We need to provide for clients with different languages, dietary needs, cultural needs, etc.

As a resource, Disaster Tips Sheets for Faith Community Partners in Sheltering & Mass Care, including Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs, are located at

http://www.n-din.org/ndin_resources/ndin_tips_sheets_partners.php

In the Red Cross, we look at sheltering as a cycle with six phases. The first two phases, Overall Planning and Coordinating the Sheltering Operation happen as part of a coordinated effort outside the shelter. Planning the sheltering operation includes deciding where to open shelters and how to coordinate resources between them.

This training focuses on the remaining phases which happen inside each shelter: resourcing the shelter, opening the shelter, operating the shelter, and closing the shelter. The work done inside a shelter is part of an overall plan to help people in need.

To run a successful shelter program, ensuring our sheltering principles are met takes an entire team in the shelters, in districts, and in headquarters.

In the operations and district headquarters offices there will be sheltering leads who are responsible for all the shelters in the disaster response. In each shelter there will be one Shelter Manager whose responsibilities include: administration, managing shelter staff, assuring the needs of clients (customers) are met, assuring the safety of clients and staff, coordinating with partner agencies inside the shelter, coordinating information and resources with headquarters, conducting and reporting shelter counts, and assuring staff keep accurate records.

Supervisors in each shelter who report to shelter manager, provide administrative support; supervise workers; act on behalf of the shelter manager for a particular shift, function, or set of functions. The number of supervisors is determined by the size and complexity of the shelter following a general span of control of 5-7 workers.

In Mega shelters, the overall management of the shelter usually belongs to the state or municipality. Red Cross' role is typically dormitory management and sometimes feeding, registration, reception, and other activities as agreed with the partner managing the shelter. In this setting, the Red Cross Shelter Manager is overseeing all of the Red Cross activity and coordinating with the managing partner for many of the services.

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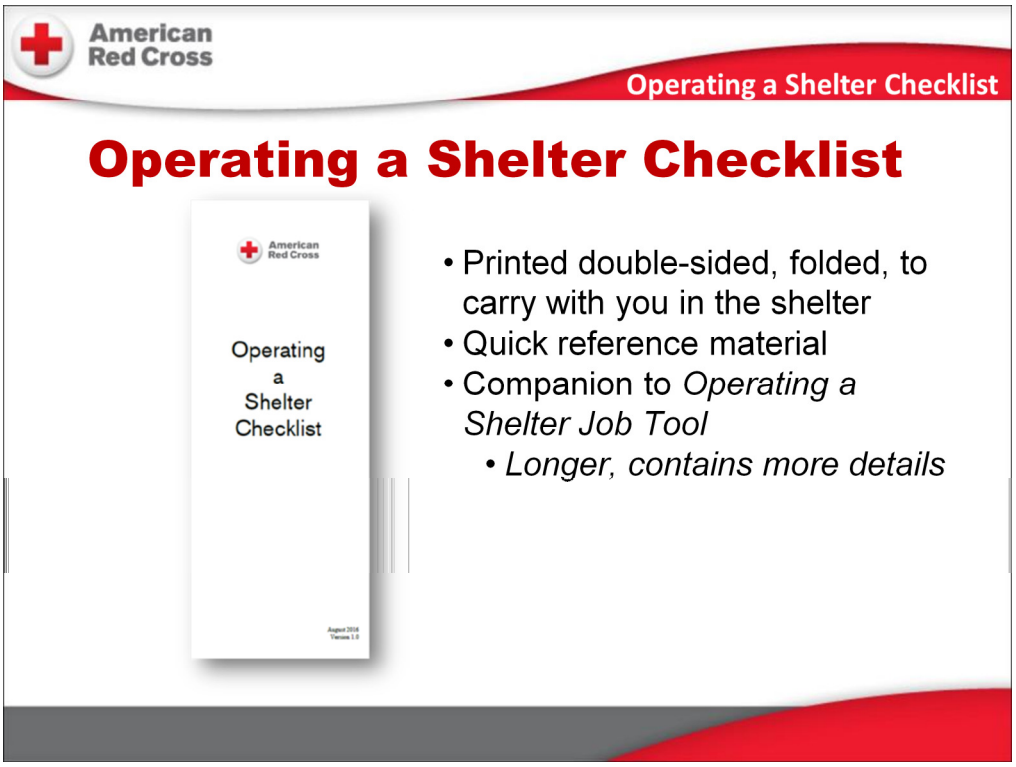
Shelter Workers

- Complete the day-to-day activities within the shelter
- Report to the Shelter Manager or Shelter Supervisor
- Help wherever needed, often doing many different jobs within the shelter

Shelter workers complete day-to-day activities within the shelter. They often perform many roles and tasks as needed, reporting to the shelter manager or a supervisor. Shelter workers include Red Cross volunteers, event-based volunteers (EBVs), and volunteers from partner agencies. In smaller shelters, workers may perform a variety of roles such as dormitory worker, feeding worker, reception and registration worker, or information worker.

In a hurricane evacuation setting, safety is even more important and limited services are provided.



The Operating a Shelter Checklist is designed to be printed double-sided and folded to create a booklet you can use throughout your sheltering experience.

It is written with the shelter manager in mind, but provides a good overview for all levels of shelter workers.

The check list is a companion to the Operating a Shelter Job Tool. If at any point you need more details about a task, you can look in the exact same section of the Job Tool.

We are going to follow this guide throughout todays training so you gain an overview of operating a shelter and an understanding of how to use the resources while in the shelter.

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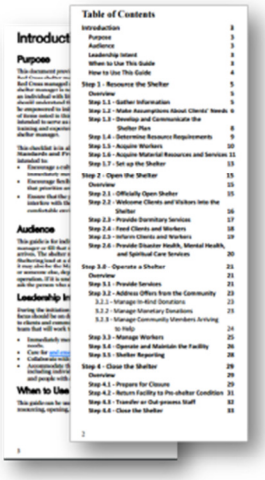
Table of Contents & Purpose

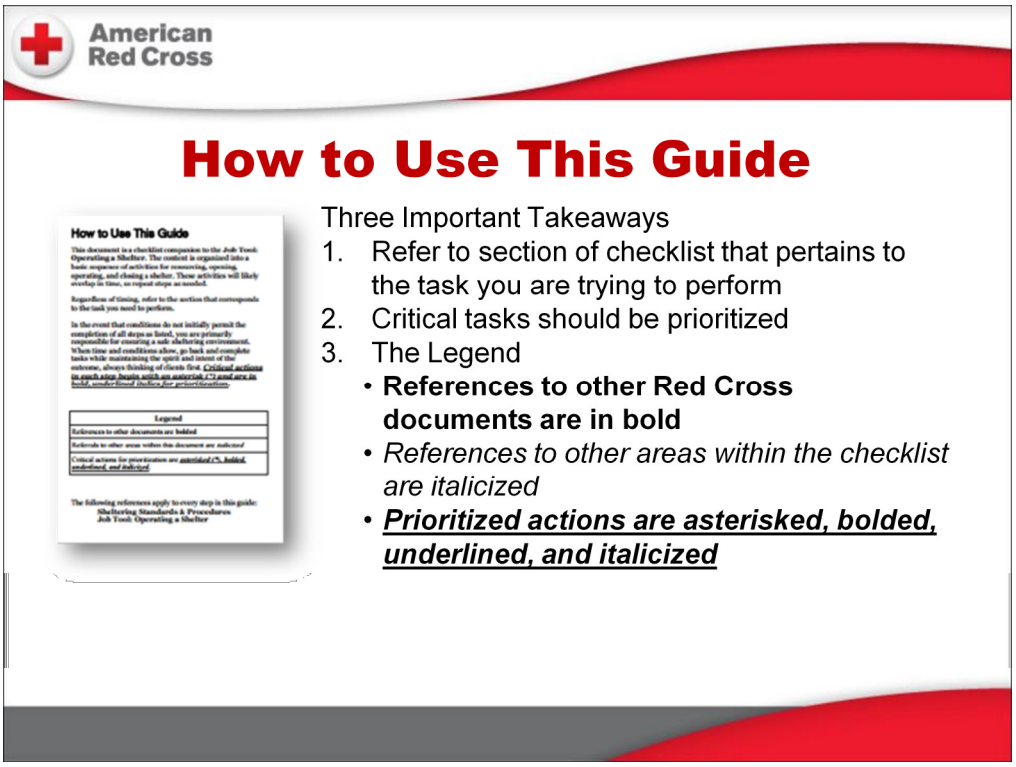


Help shelter volunteers to…

- Encourage a culture of customer service while immediately meeting the needs of clients
- Encourage flexibility and innovative thinking
- Ensure that the process of running a shelter does not interfere with goal to offer a welcoming environment

The table of contents gives an indication of how the checklist is set up. You will see here that the checklist is designed to follow the logical flow of a shelter operation. When we get into the actual checklists, however, you will notice that the steps are not necessarily done in a specific order.

The purpose of the job tool is summarized on this slide.



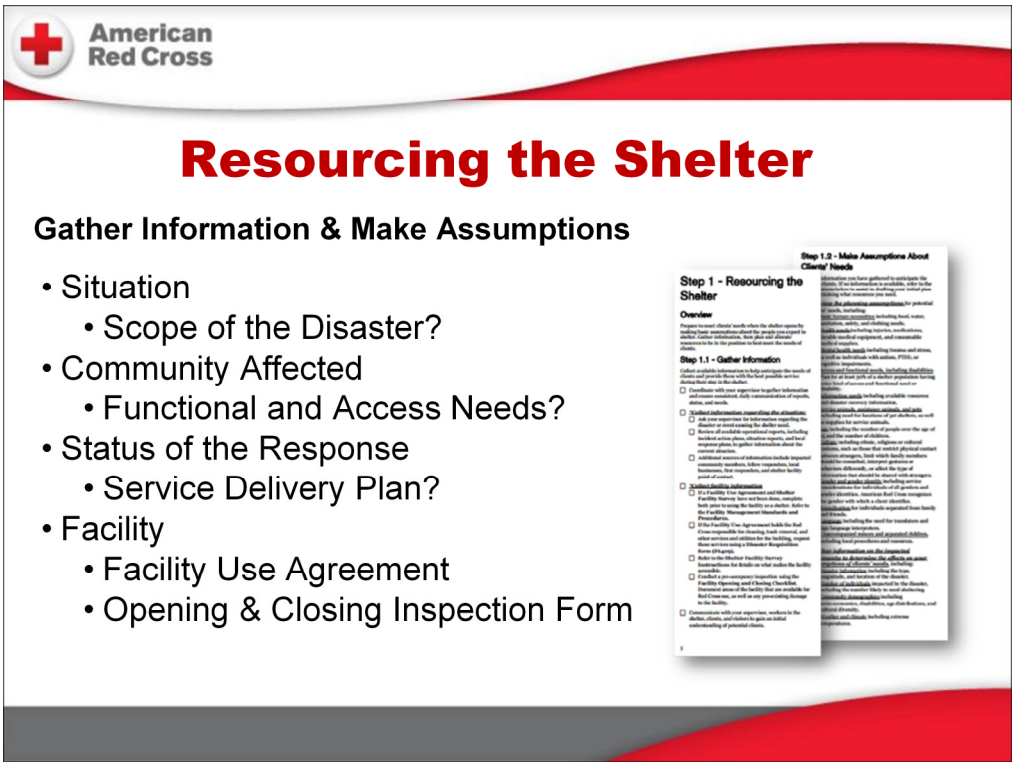
Page 4 gives information on how to use the tool.

Regardless of what phase of the shelter operation you are in, you should refer to the section of the checklist that pertains to the task you are trying to perform. For example, the shelter may already be open and operating and then additional resources are needed. The instructions for requesting resources are in the Resourcing the Shelter step.

There may be times when not all tasks can be completed because of timing or resource constraints. This may be particularly true in hurricane evacuation shelters when resources are scarce and the services provided are limited. When this happens, the critical tasks should be prioritized. The rest of the steps are not skipped forever – they should be completed as soon as time and resources allow.

The Legend indicates that reference to other Red Cross documents are in bold print, referrals to other areas within this checklist are italicized, and prioritized actions are asterisked, bolded, underlined, and italicized.

Remember: If time and resources don't allow all of the steps to be completed, focus on the prioritized actions.

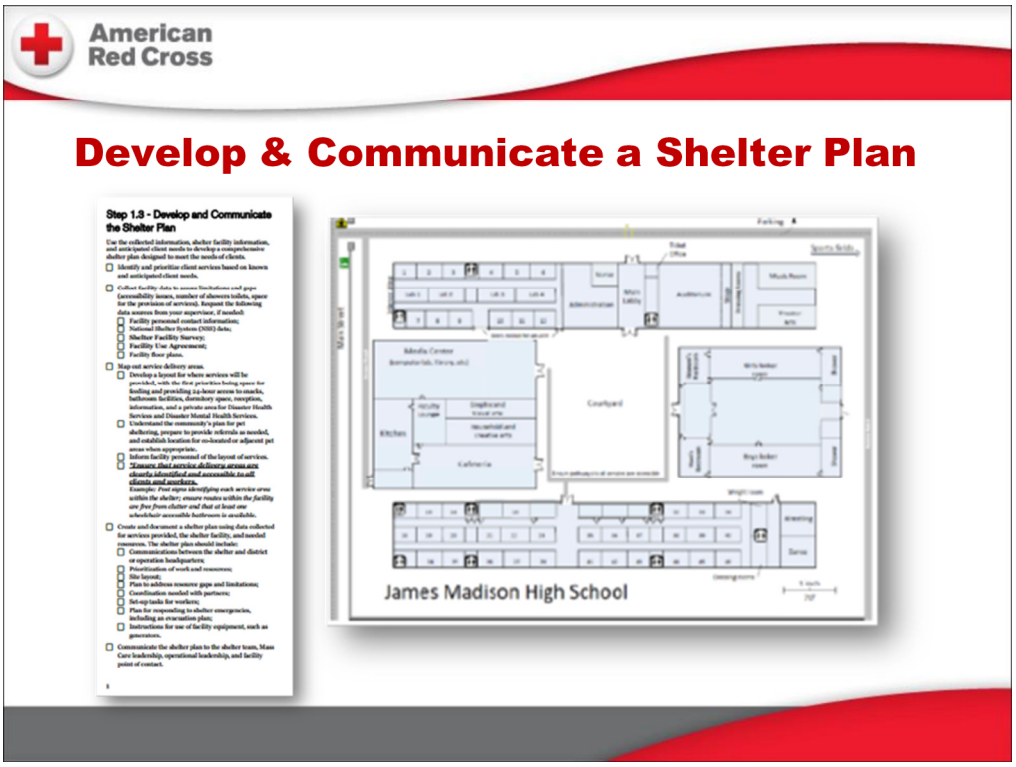


Step 1: Before we can open a shelter, we must have the people and supplies to do so. Deciding what and how much is needed comes from gathering information about the disaster and the impacted population.

The shelter manager has to think about what information would be helpful in setting up a shelter. They gather information about the facility, the disaster, and the clients. Information about completing this task can be found in the Resourcing the Shelter section.

The opening of facilities as Hurricane Evacuation Shelters is contingent on size, scope and complexity. Some considerations could be: activated facilities are sites that are safe from the direction and intensity of the storm track. Local radio, television, social media are the standard sources of disseminating information to the public about said sites. Facilities used for hurricane evacuation were evaluated against a set of safety criteria to ensure safety from wind, storm surge, etc using the ARC 4496 Standards for Hurricane Evacuation Shelters.

Clients receive some messaging prior to evacuation to prepare them for evacuation sheltering. Local government/authorities in each county/parish provides public education that informs residents about hurricane hazards and preparedness steps as it pertains to evacuations and safety. The public is advised to bring supplies for their households with them to the shelter. Shelter residents will have no privacy, limited space and delays in meal service.



Step 1.3 –

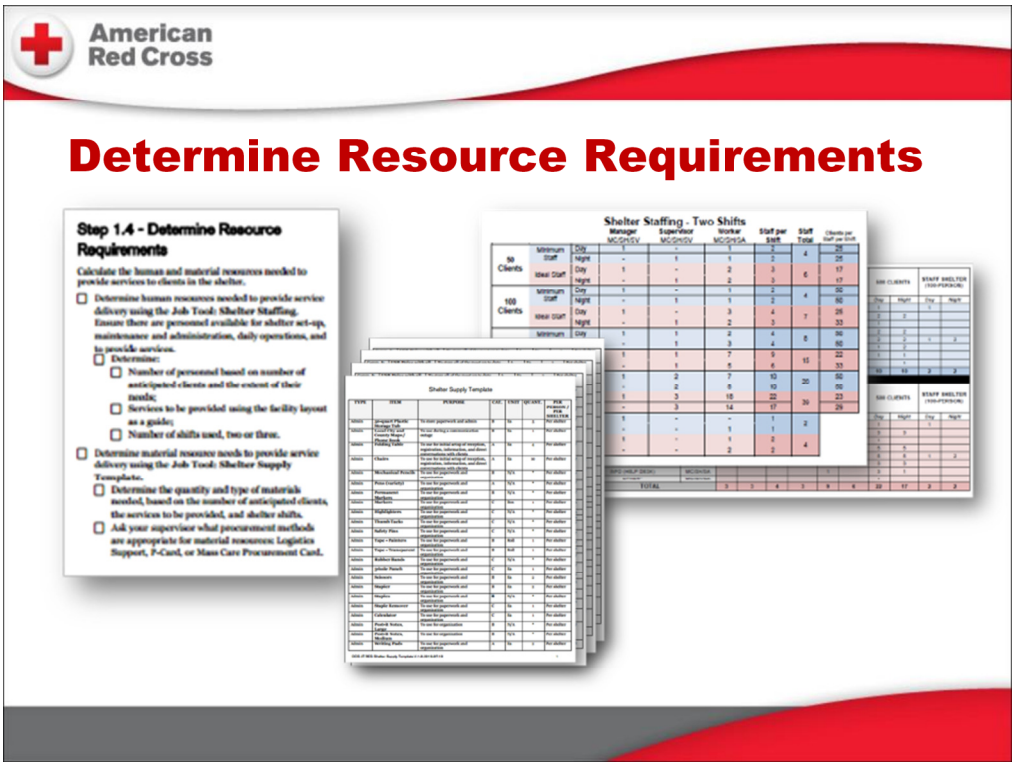
Now we begin to develop and communicate our shelter plan.

The shelter manager makes an initial plan for the shelter. The manager will: map out the areas where services will be provided, making sure that all service delivery areas are clearly identified and fully accessible.

Hurricane Evacuation Shelters are typically found in school structures. The standard for housing in these facilities will be within the hallways, which does not necessarily align with the Sheltering Standards and Procedures. This requires thinking “outside the box” as it relates to dormitory accommodations. Access is typically limited because at this stage we are operating in pre-landfall status. This may change in post-landfall status, which will be determined following impact assessment and client needs for post storm sheltering.

The layout of Red Cross services in a mega shelter may be prescribed by the managing partner or we may be able to select where we want to set up. Coordination with the managing partner and other partners providing services such as childcare, medical, laundry, transportation, and recovery casework in the shelter will be vital.

In addition to layout, the plan will include: how the shelter will communicate with their district or headquarters, what tasks and resources need to be prioritized and



Page nine directs the manager to two tools available to use in determining the personnel and material needs in a shelter: the Shelter Staffing Tool and the Shelter Supply Template. These job tools are available on the Red Cross intranet (The Exchange). If you do not have access to the exchange and need these documents, ask your supervisor for assistance.

Staffing for a mega shelter is very different than staffing a standard shelter. Operational leadership will assist in establishing a staffing template based on the size and complexity of the shelter and the services Red Cross will be providing. Positions may include a partner liaison, spiritual care liaison, logistics workers, and security.

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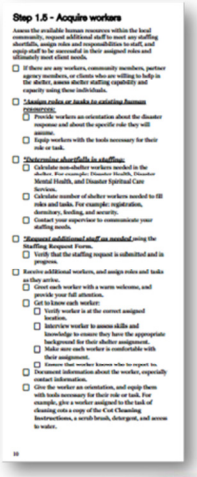
Acquire Workers

Shelter Manager Will…

- Assess worker resources:
  - Workers already present in the shelter
  - Community members who come to volunteer
  - Workers from partner agencies
  - Clients who are willing to help
- Assign roles/tasks to shelter workers
  - Greeter, Dormitory Worker, etc…
- Request additional staff as needed



Step 1.5 - Acquire workers

Assess the available human resources within the local community, request additional staff to meet any staffing shortfalls, assign roles and responsibilities to staff, and equip staff to be successful in their assigned roles and ultimately meet client needs.

- ☐ If there are any workers, community members, partner agency members, or clients who are willing to help in the shelter, assess shelter staffing capability and capacity using these individuals.
- ☐ *Assign roles or tasks to existing human resources:
  - ☐ Provide workers an orientation about the disaster response and about the specific role they will assume.
  - ☐ Equip workers with the tools necessary for their role or task.
- ☐ *Determine shortfalls in staffing:
  - ☐ Calculate non-shelter workers needed in the shelter. For example: Disaster Health, Disaster Mental Health, and Disaster Spiritual Care Services.
  - ☐ Calculate number of shelter workers needed to fill roles and tasks. For example: registration, dormitory, feeding, and security.
  - ☐ Contact your supervisor to communicate your staffing needs.
- ☐ *Request additional staff as needed using the Staffing Request Form.
  - ☐ Verify that the staffing request is submitted and in progress.
- ☐ Receive additional workers, and assign roles and tasks as they arrive.
  - ☐ Greet each worker with a warm welcome, and provide your full attention.
  - ☐ Get to know each worker:
    - ☐ Verify worker is at the correct assigned location.
    - ☐ Interview worker to assess skills and knowledge to ensure they have the appropriate background for their shelter assignment.
    - ☐ Make sure each worker is comfortable with their assignment.
    - ☐ Ensure that worker knows who to report to.
  - ☐ Document information about the worker, especially contact information.
  - ☐ Give the worker an orientation, and equip them with tools necessary for their role or task. For example, give a worker assigned to the task of cleaning cots a copy of the Cot Cleaning Instructions, a scrub brush, detergent, and access to water.

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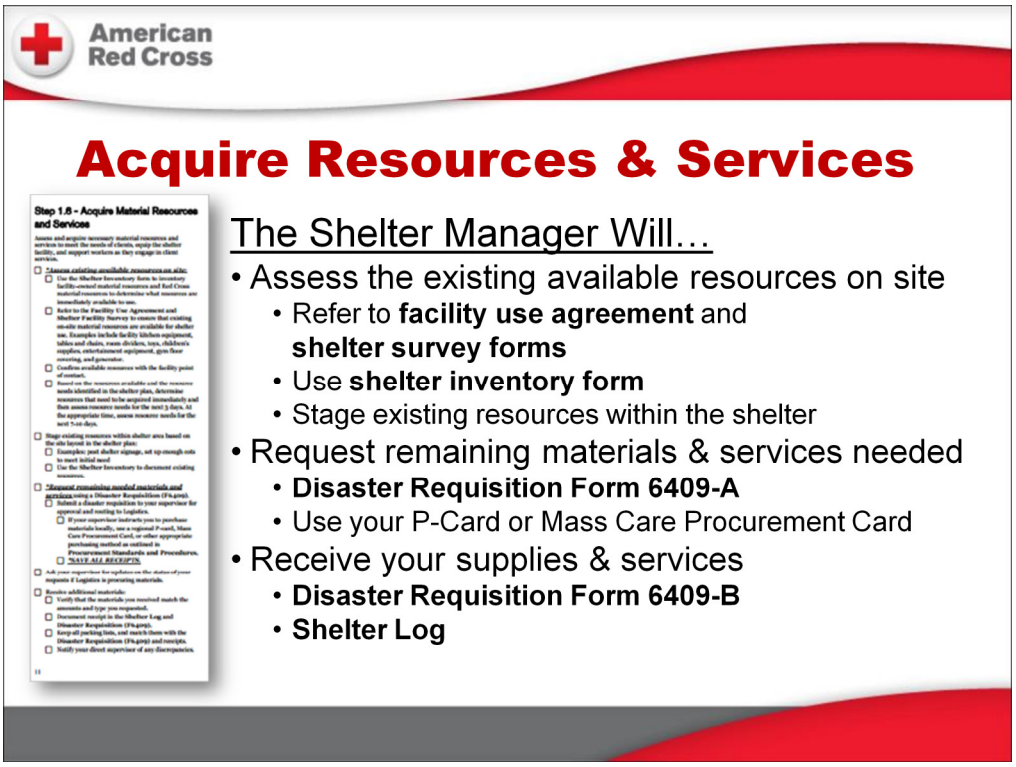
Once the number and type of workers needed is determined, page ten provides the manager with the tasks to assess the current worker resources, acquire more workers as needed, and assign tasks to current and new workers. You'll see in step *1.8 Acquire Workers* that every worker should receive an orientation and job induction. This means someone should greet you when you arrive, orient you the shelter and all service delivery areas, and give you instructions about your role. **Steps for requesting workers, orienting and providing job inductions, and assigning tasks and roles is the same regardless of the shelter type.**

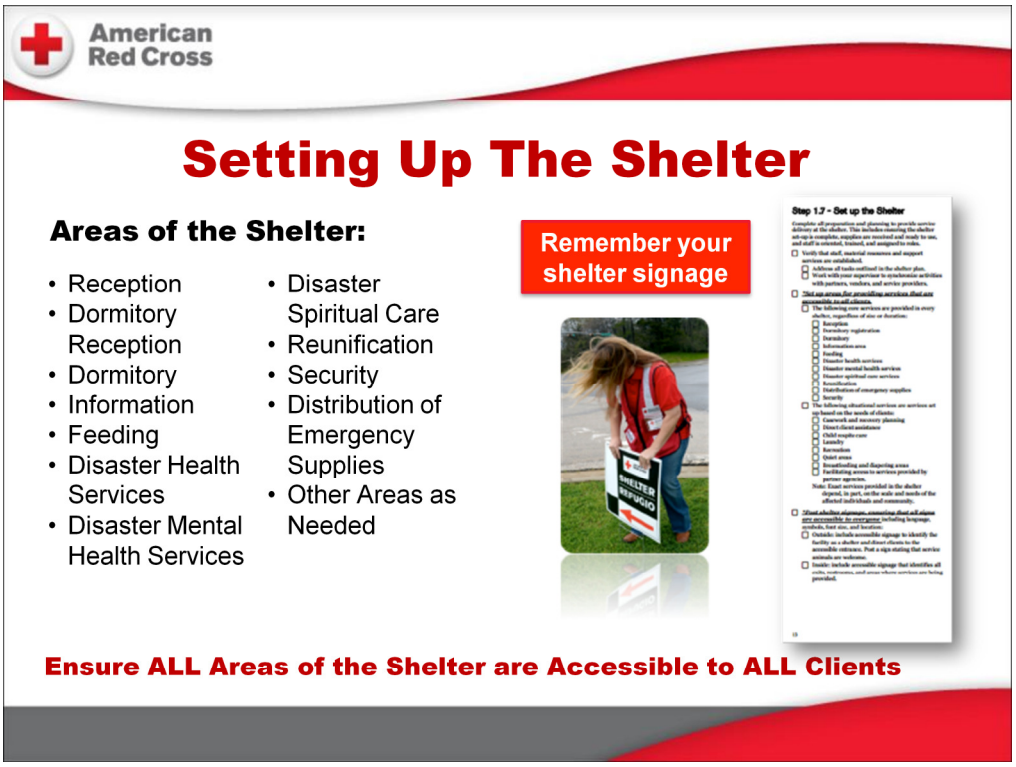


In addition to workers, material resources are needed to run a shelter. *Step 1.8 Acquire Material resources and Services* provides information on assessing, ordering, and tracking the material needs of a shelter.

An initial inventory is completed of both Red Cross resources and facility-owned supplies available for shelter use. Routine inventories are done to ensure accurate accounting of resources throughout the shelter operation.

Why would it be important to accurately track what resources are in the shelter?

Think about: To know what is one hand. To know what will need to be requested. To be able to return facility supplies in good condition. To track the cost of the operation. To be good stewards of the donor dollars. To have a good idea of how the shelter is running. To be able to tell public and our partners what we are doing to help people in need.

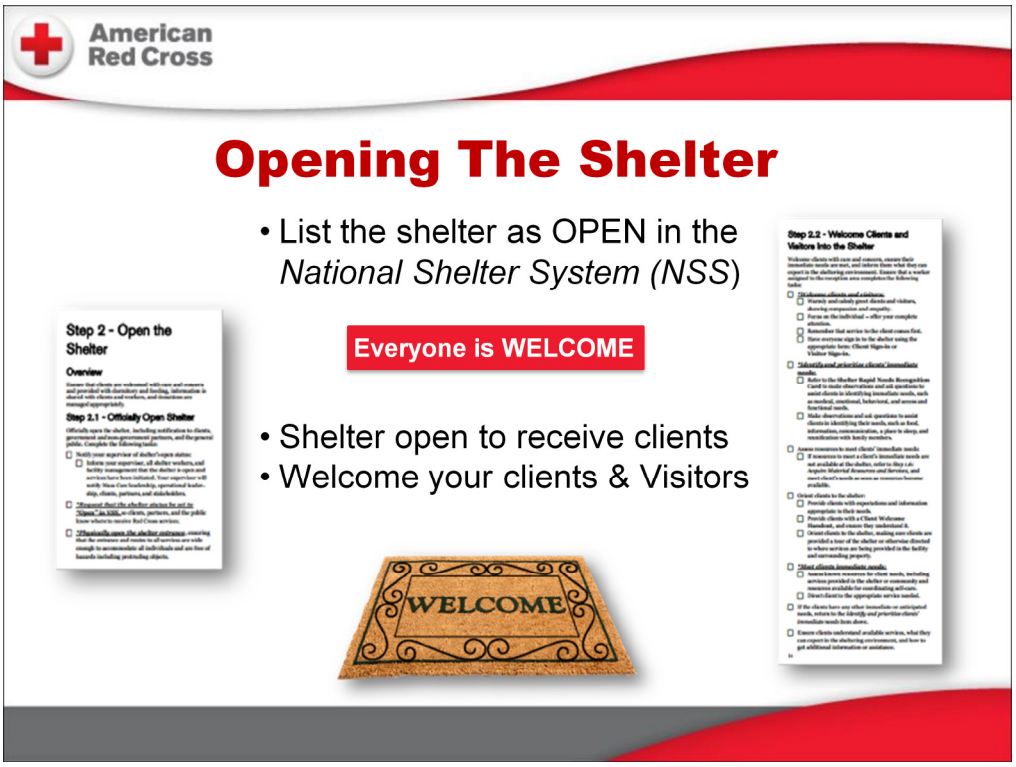


In setting up the shelter, the shelter manager will have identified spaces to be used for different areas of the shelter. Each area will need to be set up and ready to receive clients. As this is happening, workers will need to post signage throughout the shelter.

The areas listed on this slide are client areas in a standard shelter. Many of them will not be established in a hurricane evacuation shelter. Every area set up for services in the shelter needs to be accessible to every client. There are other areas that are for workers only. These may include an administrative area, and area for receiving and storing food and supplies, and an area for preparing food.

In mega shelters and shelters that are open for long periods of time, additional areas might be set up when room allows such as children's play area, entertainment area, quiet area, staff room for staff to have some down time, co-located pet shelter, etc.

When posting signage in a shelter, think about: languages, directional signs, schedules, information specific to the shelter or the current disaster.



We're now ready to move to Step 2 - Opening the Shelter.

In this step, the shelter is officially opened, clients and visitors are welcomed into the shelter, and services are initiated. In addition to physically opening the shelter entrance, the shelter status must be set to open in the National Shelter System (NSS) database.

It is important to note that the shelter may open and accept clients even if it is not fully resourced. **The timing for opening a mega shelter is determined in close coordination with the managing partner and other organizations providing services in the shelter.**

Page sixteen covers the very important concept of welcoming our clients and visitors and having an attitude of customer service which sets the tone of the shelter.

In Step 2.2, we greet clients warmly and identify client needs during Reception and Registration. Two observations and two questions to help assess and prioritize immediate needs. These questions and observations are located at the top of the dormitory registration and also printed on the Rapid Needs Recognition Card, which every shelter worker should carry.

After clients' needs are assessed and prioritized, they are provided a Shelter Welcome Handout and are oriented to the shelter. It is important to meet their immediate needs, even if that pauses the registration process, if those needs are critical health or mental health related.

In hurricane events, as the storm gets closer, concerns within the community increase which can produce long lines at Hurricane Evacuation Shelters. **In mega shelters, clients may become overwhelmed by the sheer size and complexity of the shelter.** This will increase the need to be kind and provide "good customer service", which we'll talk more about later.

For safety reasons, registration in hurricane evacuation shelters closes with the onset of tropical storm winds. Once we're directed to halt registration activities, the Hurricane Evacuation Shelter braces for the oncoming storm. During this time shelter staff is expected to remain at the shelter for the duration of the storm pending an "all clear".

In mega shelters, there may be heightened security set up at the entrance

Step 2.3 focuses on setting up the dormitory and welcoming clients who will be sleeping in the shelter.

Shelter workers lay out the dormitory providing space for all clients, including those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. Shelter workers assign cots based on the needs of each client. Some may need to be closer to the restroom for example, or some may need special cots. **In mega shelters and other large shelters, it is often helpful to section the dormitory into zones and assign dormitory workers to specific zones. This allows staff to get to know the clients in their zone and provide more personalized customer service.**

In standard shelters **and mega shelters**, each client will receive a cot, blankets, and a hygiene comfort kit. In a hurricane evacuation shelter, cots and hygiene kits are not provided for every client but are available for individuals who have a disability or access and functional need requiring those items.

Some cots are taller or have rails. These cots are for clients who may be heavier, have mobility issues or need to have a portion of their body raised as they sleep.

Some clients will need to be near an electrical outlet if they have assistive medical devices that require power. Clients with service animals may be more comfortable away from main traffic flow areas.

In **both standard and mega shelters**, workers should make a map of the dormitory with cot numbers and client names to make it easier to locate clients for messaging and to facilitate shelter counts.

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Feed Clients & Workers

- Assess the feeding needs
  - Consider special dietary needs based on health issues, religious restrictions, age related issues
- Arrange for and obtain appropriate meals
- Collect and report accurate meal & snack counts for inclusion in the daily reports

Step 2.4 - Feed Clients and Workers

Provide clients and workers with food in a sufficient quantity to meet their cultural and dietary requirements. Ensure that a worker assigned to feeding completes the following tasks, according to guidance in the **Feeding Standards and Procedures**.

- ☐ ***Assess feeding needs.*** Identify client and worker meal requirements, including those related to dietary and cultural requirements. Identify resources to meet access and functional needs including disabilities.
- ☐ ***Arrange for and obtain appropriate meals:***
  - ☐ Determine if Feeding function needs to be activated.
  - ☐ Arrange for and obtain meals to meet identified feeding needs.
  - ☐ Adhere to local safe food handling standards.
- ☐ Orient clients and workers to the feeding area, meal options, and 24-hour snack table, making sure clients and workers are provided with a tour of or otherwise direct to the feeding area.
  - ☐ If anyone self-identifies as having an allergic reaction in the presence of certain foods, ensure that those foods are not served in proximity to the meal or snack area and that all workers are aware of the allergy.
- ☐ ***Collect and report accurate meal and snack counts for inclusion in the daily reports.***
- ☐ If clients have any other immediate or anticipated needs, return to the *Identify and prioritize clients' immediate needs* item in *Step 2.2 – Welcome Clients Into Shelter* step above.
- ☐ Ensure clients understand available services, what they can expect in the sheltering environment, and how to get additional information or assistance.

The focus of Step 2.4 is feeding in the shelter.

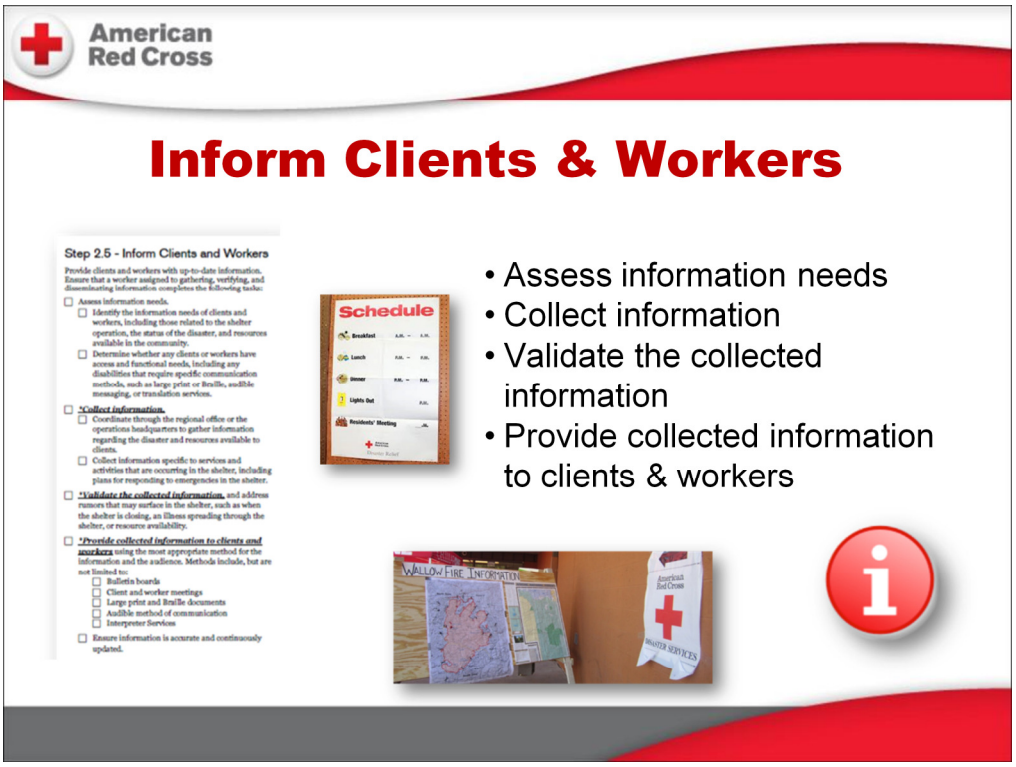
Shelter clients receive all meals in the shelter and dietary needs should be considered. **In standard shelters,** meals are usually delivered to the shelter rather than prepared on site. In hurricane evacuation shelters, meals may not be delivered due to extreme weather conditions. Shelf Stable Meals and meals prepared onsite are used in these situations. **In mega shelters, the meals may be prepared on site if the venue has facilities and staff to support it.**

Shelter workers serve meals following safe food handling guidelines. Meals are generally served cafeteria style.

In addition to meals, a snack area is set up, stocked, and available to clients 24/7.

All meals and snacks must be counted and the count is given to the shelter manager who will relay the information to their Sheltering Lead.

When planning and requesting meals, think about: diabetic meals, religious dietary restrictions, soft meals, children and toddlers, ethnic, cultural, or regional preferences, etc.



Step 2.5 concerns the sharing of information with clients and staff in the shelter.

For clients: Every shelter should have an information area set up where information is posted for clients. Ensure all information is validated before it is posted or shared. The shelter manager should conduct shelter client meetings to hear client's concerns and keep them informed about services being provided.

For staff: The shelter staff should write in the shelter log and read it at the start of every shift to keep current on what is happening in the shelter. This is not for client use. The shelter manager should conduct shift change meetings to keep staff informed of happenings, needs, plans, etc.

Information might need to be shared in the shelter includes information about the current disaster, the emergency evacuation plan, times of caseworkers coming to the shelter, times of children's activities, partner organizations offering assistance, shelter concerns (such as doors being propped open), community offers of help, etc.

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Provide:

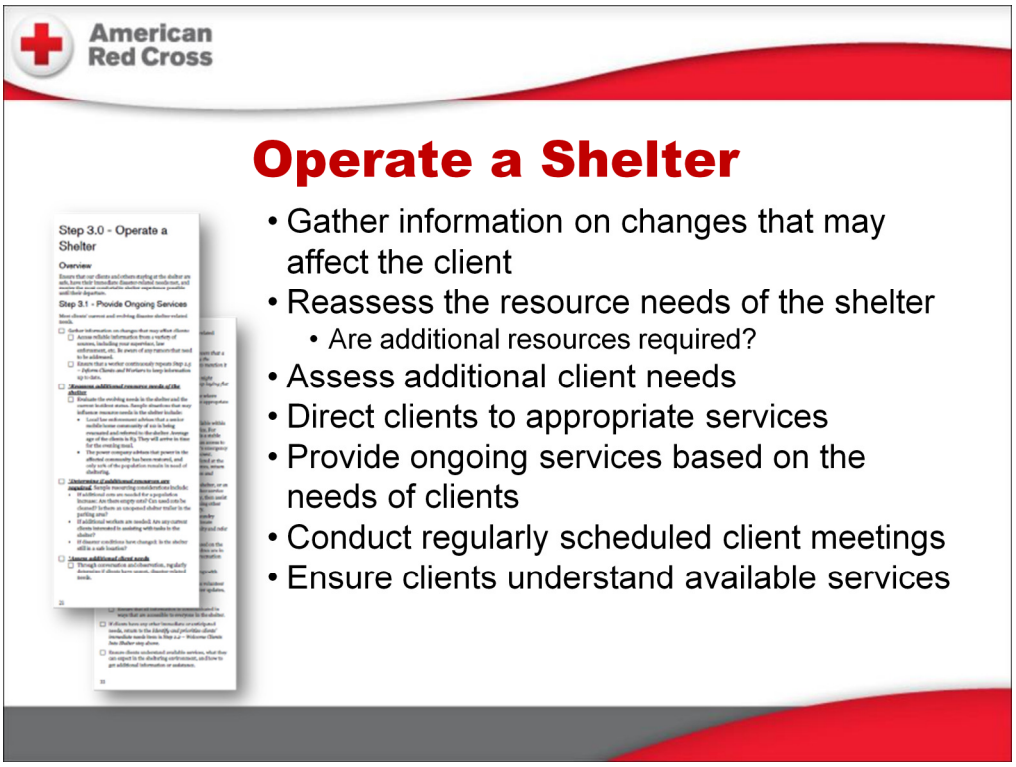
- Disaster Mental Health Services
- Disaster Health Services
- Disaster Spiritual Care

Step 2.6 - Provide Disaster Health, Disaster Mental Health, and Disaster Spiritual Care Services

Provide clients and workers with necessary services, including those offered by the Disaster Health Services, Disaster Mental Health, and Disaster Spiritual Care functions. Ensure that a lead worker from each function completes the following tasks.

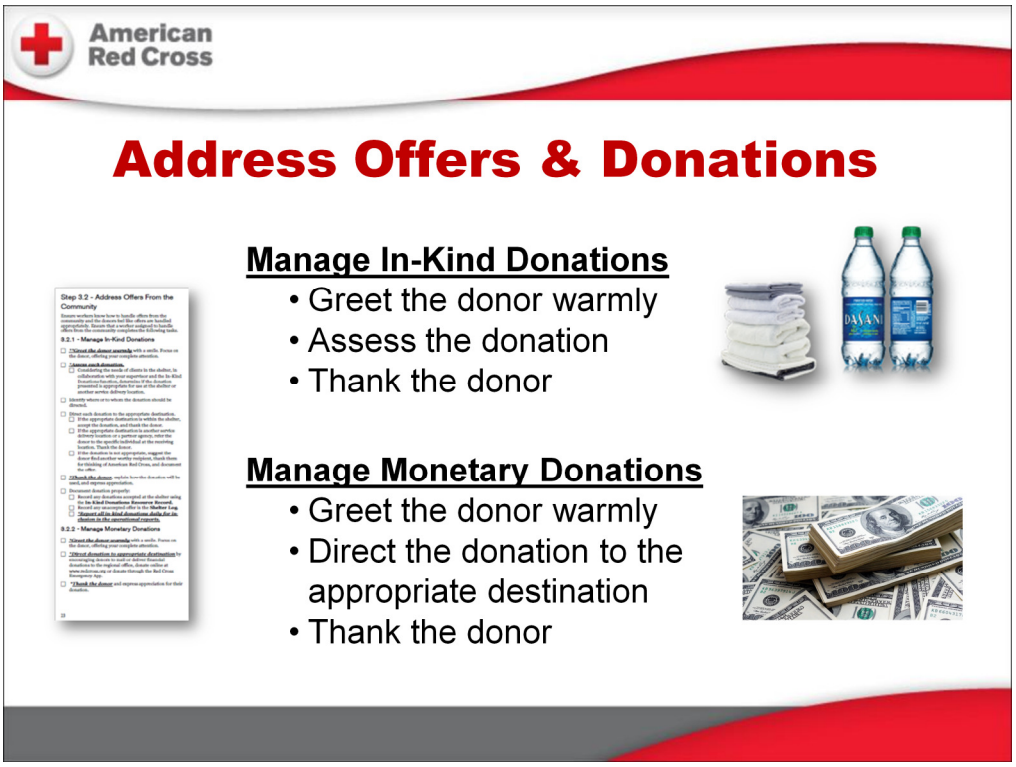
- ☐ ***Assist clients in identifying health, mental health, and spiritual care needs.***
  - ☐ Use **Shelter Rapid Needs Recognition Cards** to make observations and ask questions to assist clients in identifying immediate medical, emotional, behavioral, and access and functional needs including any disabilities.
- ☐ ***Direct clients to the appropriate service.***
- ☐ If clients have any other immediate or anticipated needs, return to the *Identify and prioritize clients' immediate needs* item in *Step 2.2 – Welcome Clients Into Shelter* step above.
- ☐ Ensure clients understand available services, what they can expect in the sheltering environment, and how to get additional information or assistance.

Step 2.6 focuses on providing disaster health, mental health, and spiritual care services. These services require special qualifications and licensure, but every shelter worker assists clients in identifying needs and making proper referrals. Logs for recording these referrals are located at the Reception and Registration desks. These workers may not be available at every hurricane evacuation shelter, but will be available by phone to provide support. **In mega shelters, these services may be provided by a combination of Red Cross workers and partners trained and qualified in these areas.**



Page 20 in the Checklist –

Once the shelter is open and services are being initiated, Step three covers operating the shelter. At this stage, workers continue to assess client needs and provide services. Regular meetings help address any evolving needs **and coordination with partners remains critical.**

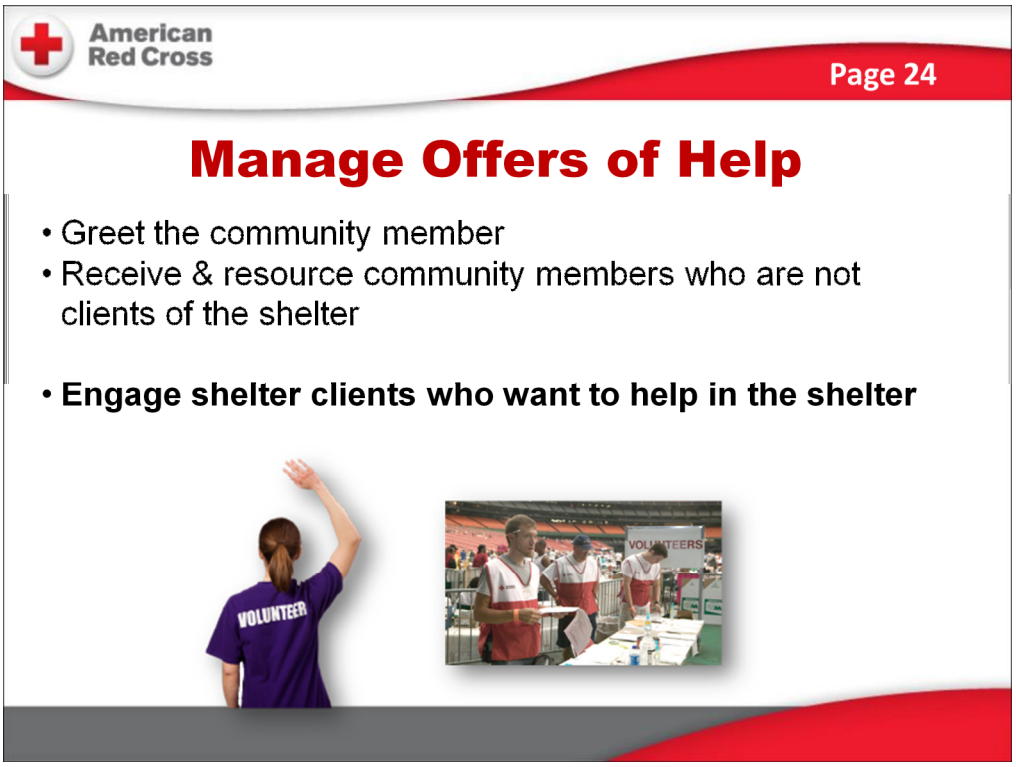


Step 3.2. addresses offers from the community. In a time of disaster, people want to help. Some people will come to a Red Cross shelter with offers of assistance.

We NEVER accept donations of money in the shelter. Provide the donor with options for their financial donation including offering donation envelopes for mailing donations, donating on line at Redcross.org, sending a donation by text if that feature is activated, or taking the donation to a Red Cross office.

If community members bring unsolicited material donations, welcome the donor warmly, and escort them to the individual assigned to accept donated items at the shelter. The person receiving donations will follow the procedures in the Unsolicited Donations Management Doctrine Bulletin, explain what can and cannot be accepted and how the donation will be managed on the specific disaster operation. They will thank all persons seeing to donate whether we can accept the donation or not.

We are typically unable to accept donations in a hurricane evacuation shelter due to the extreme weather conditions and the design of the shelter – with a lot of people secured in a small, safe location inside the facility. **In mega shelters, the plan for unsolicited donations management will be coordinated with the managing partner.**



Some people will come to the shelter or to a Red Cross office wanting to volunteer to help those in their community affected by disaster. We call these workers Event-Based Volunteers or EBVs and there are many things EBVs can do to help during a disaster response. Event-Based Volunteers are sent to Staff Services for in-processing, including an electronic background check. EBVs are then sent to the shelter or to other activities to as needed.

EBVs may be used to fill staff requests made by the shelter manager.

EBVs should be treated with respect as our partners.

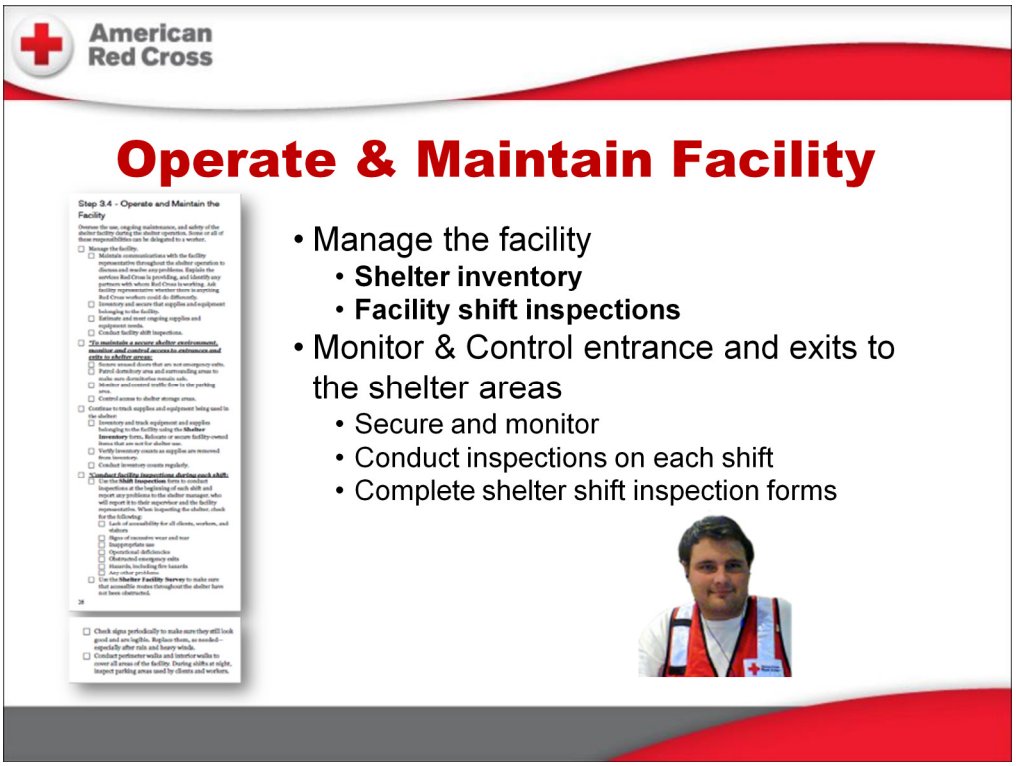
EBVs should be paired with more experienced and trained staff as much as possible.

EBVs are may be given an abbreviated training before working in a shelter or they may be assigned work on a task basis.

Remember, EBVs may bring much needed skills and can be slotted into positions in the shelter to meet their talents and abilities.

Step 3.3 provides guidelines for maintaining staffing schedules, conducting staff meetings, and supervising workers.

Part of a shelter manager's job is making sure all staff are providing quality service for our clients and tracking resources. They ensure that staff feel valued and have a positive experience in the shelter. Team building is also part of the manager's job.



Step 3.4 provides information on operating and maintaining the facility. This includes managing the facility by maintaining communication with the facility representative, inventorying and securing supplies and equipment that belongs to the facility, and conducting a facility inspection every shift using the Shift Inspection form.

We keep the shelter safe and secure by: limiting entry and exit to one entrance, limiting access to storage and kitchen areas, routine inventory of supplies, and ordering resources in a timely manner. Every shelter worker should be watchful for cleanliness and safety concerns.

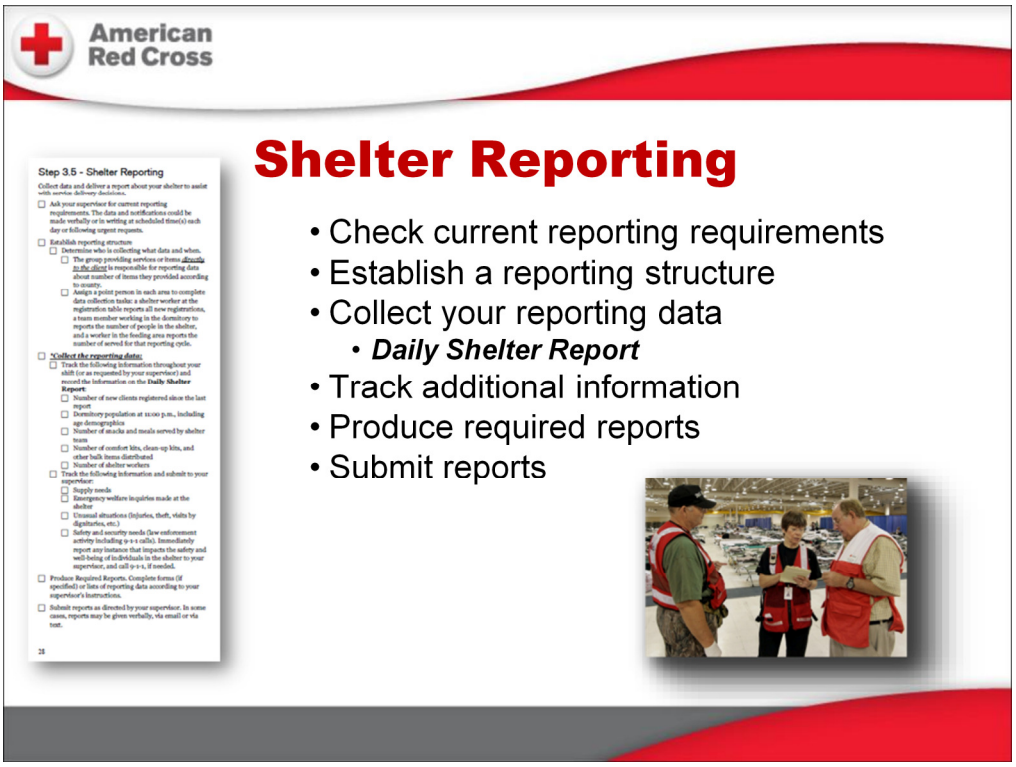
In addition to operating the shelter, we have to collect data and report on activity in the shelter in order to support service delivery decisions.

The primary report is called the daily shelter report and it includes information about registrations, dormitory population, the number of workers, number of meals and snacks served, and the number of material resources used and needed in the shelter.

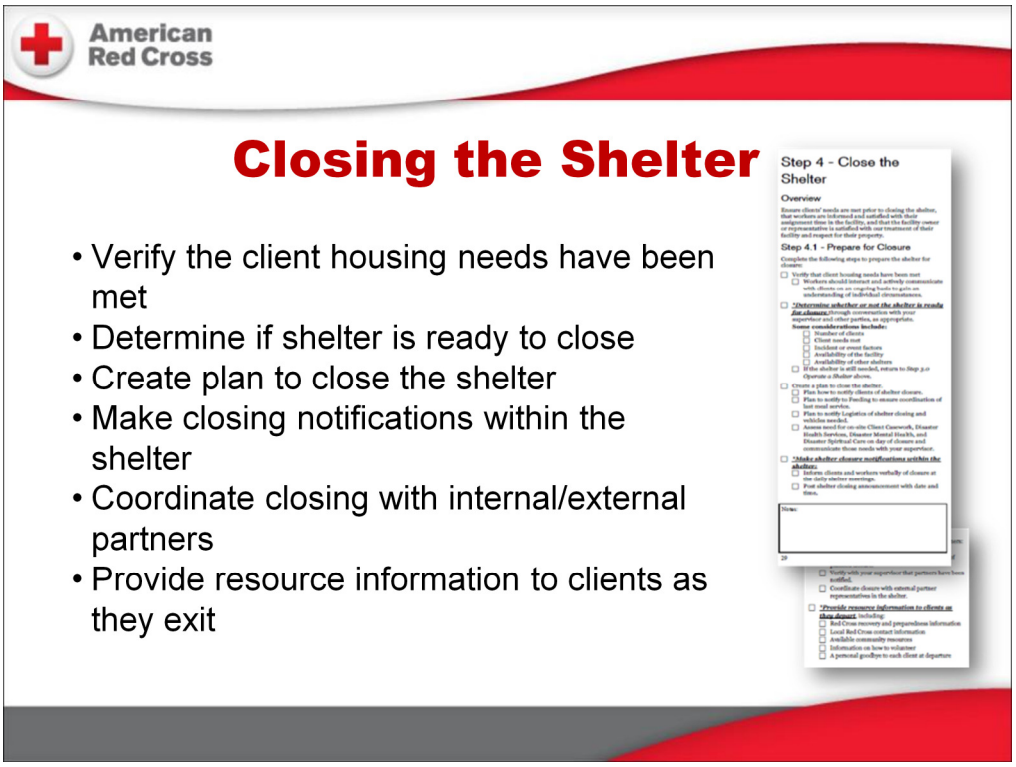
The exact report time and what material resources are tracked can vary, so if you are tasked with collecting data, ask your supervisor exactly what needs tracked, what time it is due, and to whom.

There are other reports that are made as needed such as logging and reporting donations, information disclosure, unaccompanied minors, and other unusual situations. If you are in a position that requires you to complete any of these forms, you will be trained on them on the job. All of our forms also include line by line instructions and a quick-sheet with bubble style instructions.

We also have a remote support team called FROST who focuses on collecting shelter population counts and entering them into our national shelter system database every night, and occasionally at other times. The required overnight count is due into the National Shelter System by midnight, so the physical counts are usually taken between 10-11pm and include all clients present and receiving services in the shelter at the time of the count as well as any registered clients who will be coming back to sleep after the count time (for example, shift-workers who



Whether or not you are tasked with a specific role in reporting, it is important to understand what information is needs to be captured, how and when that information is to be reported, and to whom. Using the checklist will help you in this respect.



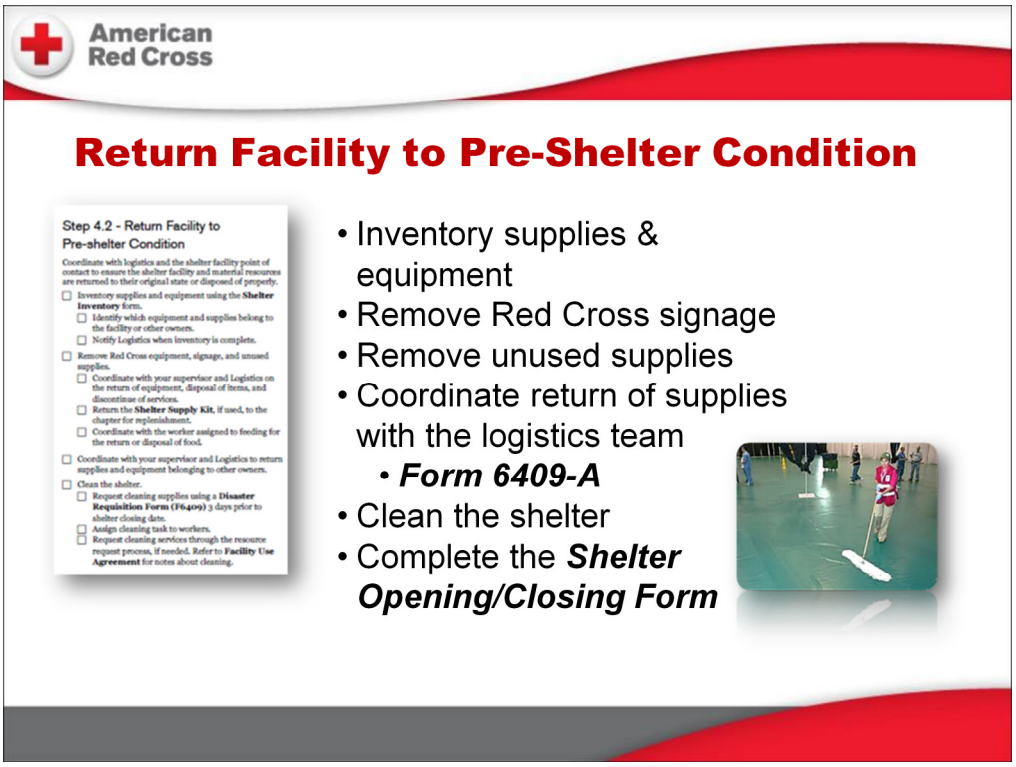
In step four we prepare to close the shelter.

Before a shelter is closed, we verify that all of the clients' housing needs have been met. This may be because the storm has passed and people are able to return to their homes or because they receive assistance that allows them to move to different, more permanent housing. The formal decision to close the shelter happens outside the shelter. The shelter manager will coordinate with the operation headquarters who works with our government and community partners when deciding whether or not to close.

Some considerations for whether or not to begin closing include how many clients are left, what their needs are, the status of the situation, and ongoing availability of the facility. Once the decision to close is made, all partners and activity leads need to be made aware of the shelter closing plan.

Notifications are made in the shelter both verbally and in writing. We typically post closures 24-48 hours before closure. Red Cross provides resource information to clients as they depart.

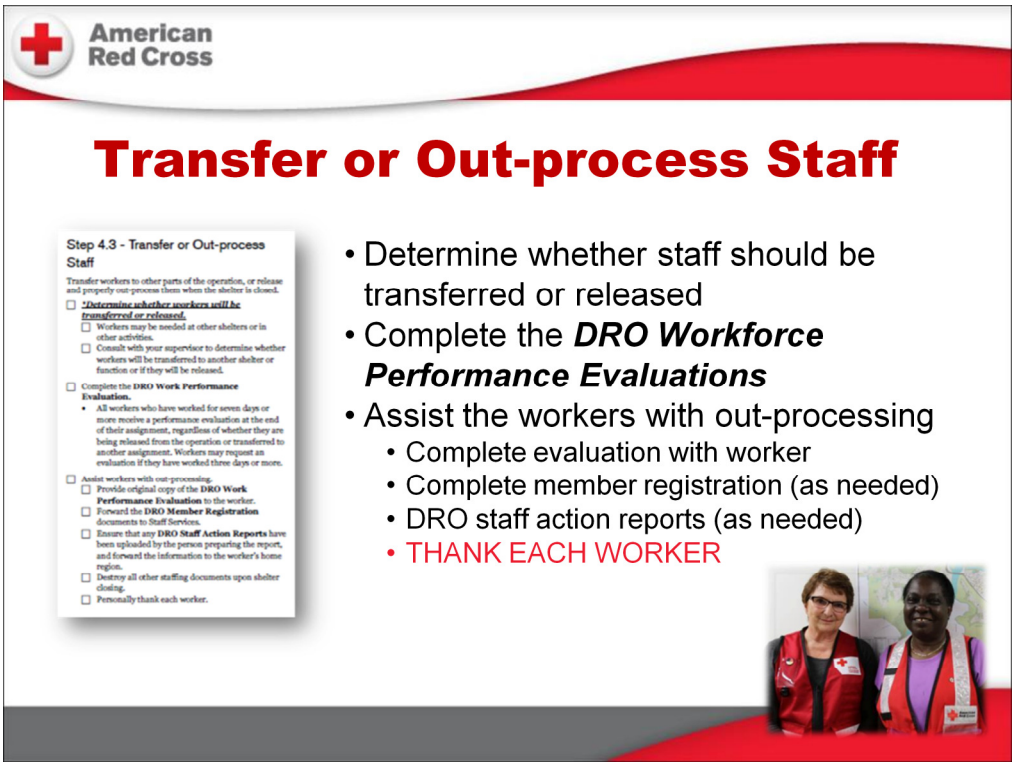
We complete final inventories, coordinate with the logistics activity to support removal of supplies and equipment, and clean the shelter. The snack table stays up and stocked until the last client leaves.



We want our partners to welcome us back if we should need to use their facility again in the future. To that end, we clean the facility well and replace any facility-owned resources we have used in the running of the shelter.

Final inventory is completed and workers coordinate with Logistics on procedures for returning supplies.

Logistics and the Shelter Manager are responsible for completion of the Shelter Facility Opening / Closing form during a final walk through with the facility representative.



Step 4.3 covers transferring or releasing staff.

Staff who are no longer needed on the operation will out-process through Staffing. All staff members who have worked for a minimum of seven days receive performance evaluations from their direct supervisor. Staff working between three to six days should be given an evaluation upon request. If you are responsible for providing an evaluation to another worker, ask your supervisor for the DRO Work Performance Evaluation form.

Staff who are still needed on the operation and still have time on their deployment should be reassigned to another shelter or another activity based on operational needs.

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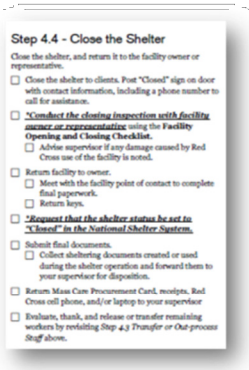
Close The shelter

- Close the shelter to clients
- Conduct closing inspection with facility representative
- Return the facility to the owner
- Ensure the facility is “closed” in the NSS
- Submit your reporting documents
- Return your Mass Care Procurement Card
- Return unused supplies
- Evaluate, thank, transfer, or release your workers



Step 4.4 - Close the Shelter

Close the shelter, and return it to the facility owner or representative.

- ☐ Close the shelter to clients. Post "Closed" sign on door with contact information, including a phone number to call for assistance.
- ☐ ***Conduct the closing inspection with facility owner or representative*** using the **Facility Opening and Closing Checklist.**
  - ☐ Advise supervisor if any damage caused by Red Cross use of the facility is noted.
- ☐ Return facility to owner.
  - ☐ Meet with the facility point of contact to complete final paperwork.
  - ☐ Return keys.
- ☐ ***Request that the shelter status be set to "Closed" in the National Shelter System.***
- ☐ Submit final documents.
  - ☐ Collect sheltering documents created or used during the shelter operation and forward them to your supervisor for disposition.
- ☐ Return Mass Care Procurement Card, receipts, Red Cross cell phone, and/or laptop to your supervisor
- ☐ Evaluate, thank, and release or transfer remaining workers by revisiting *Step 4.3 Transfer or Out-process Staff* above.

Finally, we close the shelter.

We mark the shelter as closed in the National Shelter System.

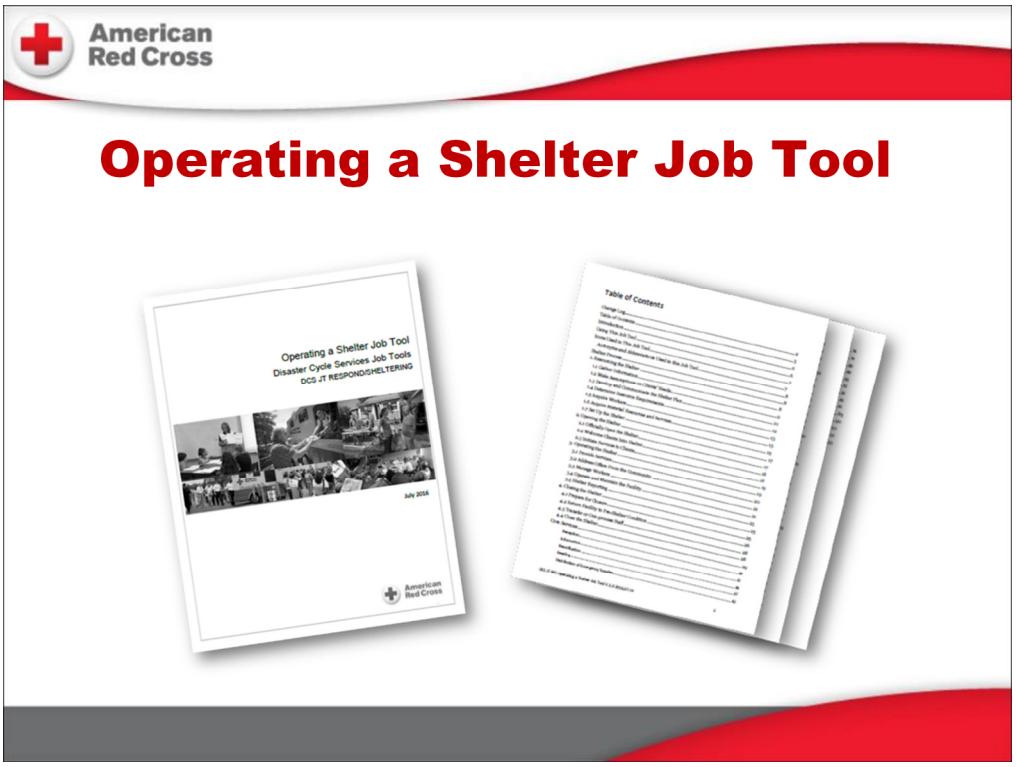
We release or transfer all staff after thanking them and providing evaluations.

We leave contact information on the door.

We return the facility to the facility representative, again with many thanks.

All documentation is turned over to the operation headquarters.

We complete the Shelter Facility Opening / Closing Checklist using the same form that was used to open the shelter for a few reasons. Based on the Facility Use Agreement, the Red Cross will repair any damages caused by Red Cross use of the facility or equipment belonging to the facility. The facility representative signs off at the end of the closing walkthrough agreeing to damages or lack thereof.



If you open the Operating a Shelter Job Tool and look at the table of contents, you will notice that the first part of it is identical to the contents of the checklist. This is by design. If you have questions about a task in the checklist or need more details, come to the same location in the job tool.

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Icons

Icons Used in This Job Tool

Icon	Target Audience
	Indicates a responsibility specific to the shelter manager or their designee
	Indicates a responsibility typically assigned to a worker

Icon	Area of Interest	Icon	Area of Interest
	Directly Related to a Sheltering Standard		Registration
	Feeding		Dormitory
	Disaster Health Services Disaster Mental Health Services		Information
	Shelter Staffing		Logistics, Facilities, or Material Resources

Icons are used throughout the job tool to make it easier to find activities you may be looking for and to identify who is responsible for tasks involved in those activities.

If you are assigned to feeding, for example, you'll pay special attention to areas where the fork-knife-spoon icon are located. The vest indicates tasks and responsibilities of a worker while the manager icon indicates tasks for the manager and supervisors

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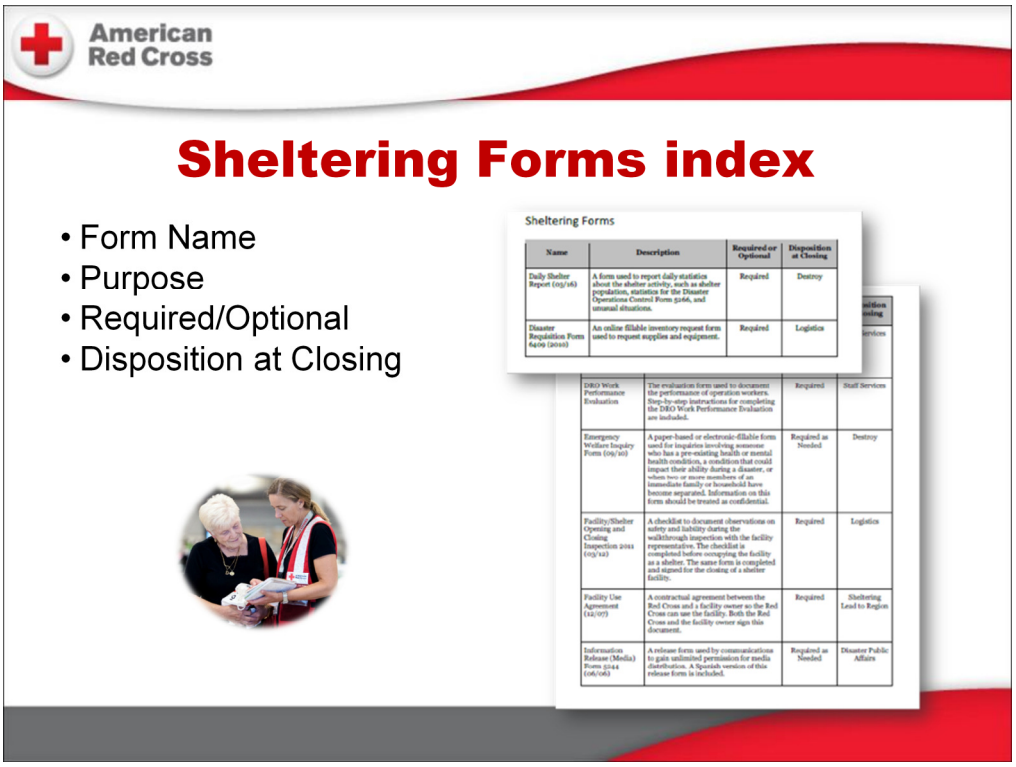
Core Services

- Reception
- Information
- Reunification
- Feeding
- Distribution of Emergency Supplies
- Dormitory
- Dormitory Registration
- Disaster Health Services
- Disaster Mental Health
- Disaster Spiritual Care
- Security

Near the end of the table of contents, below the Closing the shelter steps, you will see additional sections that are not included in the checklist. Each of these sections give detailed tactical instructions on how to deliver those services. Core services are those services that are provided every time in every shelter regardless of size or duration. Some of the core services, such as Disaster Mental Health, Disaster Spiritual Care are provided remotely in hurricane evacuation shelters. Situational Services are those services that are provided as needed.

You will also see an item called *Respond to Issues and Concerns*. This section of the job tool provides steps on how to address some of the more common situations that arise in some shelters. It begins with some basic guidance on resolving conflicts and problem solving and then has a section for each issue.



At the end of the table of contents you'll see that there is a section on sheltering forms. This section is where all of our forms are listed, including a brief description of the form, whether it is optional or required, and what happens to it at the close of the shelter. Forms can also be found on the Sheltering Toolkit on the Red Cross Intranet (*The Exchange)*. If you do not have access to the documents, ask your supervisor for the forms.

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Pages 69 - 85

Responding to Issues

- Clients with Animals
- Concealed Weapons
- Disclosing Client Information
- Erratic Behavior
- Gender Identity & Transgender Individuals
- Human Trafficking
- Unaccompanied Minors
- Separated Children
- Verbal Altercations/Verbal Abuse
- Individuals Required to Register with Government Agencies
- Media in Shelter
- Missing Children
- Pandemic Outbreak
- Physical Altercations/Violence
- Pre-Disaster Homeless
- Registered Sex Offenders
- Suspicious Activity
- Weapons

When looking at the Operating a Shelter Job Tool, make a note of pages sixty-nine through eighty-five – These pages provide information on specific issues that may arise in the shelter and suggest steps to take in managing those issues. This section gives some basic pointers on resolving conflicts and solving problems and then covers Issue resolution beginning on page seventy.

A common issue is clients with animals. Red Cross always accepts service animals in shelters. While we do not allow pets in standard Red Cross shelters due to hygiene, allergy, and fear concerns, pets may be allowed in partner managed shelters, during hurricane evacuation shelters and mega shelters. In hurricane evacuation shelters there often is no time or space to set up a co located pet area or to have clients take their pets elsewhere, so the best service to the clients is to allow the pets in with their owners. Partners may allow pets into the shelters they manage, including mega shelters. In this case, we provide our standard services and cooperate with their pet policy.

Before you get started, you'll want to know about some recent hot topics in sheltering. These are covered in the Focal Points for Sheltering Leaders & Managers document, which is customized for each disaster operation. This document may be located on the Exchange.

This includes the following reminders:

- "Get to Yes" - find a way to help people solve their problem with positivity.
- Everyone is Welcome – ensure that the facility and all of the services are accessible to all clients, including individuals with disabilities or access and functional needs.
- Service Animals are always welcome.
- Other hot topics and links to additional resources on the Red Cross' intranet, The Exchange.

Another tool you will find helpful is the handout on GREAT Customer Service. The guidelines in this handout reflect our core values and remind us to greet people, respect everyone's differences, evaluate and clarify expectations, address the needs, and thank people.

In addition to the flyer, the handout includes some more detailed information on each of the GREAT reminders.

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You Are Never Alone

MassCare@redcross.org **Sheltering@redcross.org**

You are not alone in these situations, and these tools are not your only resources. You should know who your supervisors are and reach out to them with any questions or uncertainties. You should also ask them who to reach out to if they are unavailable – who or what is your next line of support and how do you escalate urgent requests.