



## Working with the American Red Cross and Assistance Overview



**For Red Cross Disaster Assistance 24/7/365, please call 1-800-RED-CROSS**

### Why call the Red Cross?

When individuals experience a disaster, they face many new unknowns. We can help with the immediate disaster-caused needs of individuals, families and communities. You should call us when those impacted by disasters are in need of:

- A safe place to stay
- Food and clothing replacement
- Assistance with lost eyeglasses, medications and medical equipment
- Mental health and/or spiritual care support

Red Cross services can be helpful for anyone who has experienced a home fire; the home doesn't have to be a complete loss. We will quickly respond to assess their immediate needs and provide help. This includes facilitating access to community resources and financial assistance when eligible, and stepping in as an advocate for families/individuals on their road to recovery.

### What to Expect

Red Cross Disaster Action Teams are available 24/7/365, in person or virtually. Please call us *any time* a family/individual has a home fire. We will dispatch the closest available Red Cross Disaster Action Team to meet with them and assess their immediate needs. The following information will help us expedite our assistance:

- Household information: address; household members (including adults, children, pets); names
- Current status: information regarding injuries or fatalities; extent of damage to the home; whether or not they have a safe place to go
- Contact information: phone number for member of household; contact info for on-scene responder

Red Cross services are free and available to everyone who has experienced a disaster including a home fire. As part of our humanitarian mission, we provide support regardless of race, religion or citizenship status.

**During a disaster, including home fires, floods, and storms, the American Red Cross focuses on providing safe shelter, food, emergency relief supplies, health services, emotional support, and recovery assistance.**

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**Shelter:** Red Cross regions across the country are prepared to open shelters in pre-identified facilities within hours of a disaster. We create a safe and welcoming environment for all, including individuals with and without disabilities who may need additional support to fully take part in Red Cross disaster programs and services. We partner with groups which regularly provide support and services to meet these needs in their communities. We encourage people who plan to stay in a Red Cross shelter to bring prescription medications, extra clothing, pillows, blankets, hygiene supplies, other comfort items and important documents. Don't forget to bring any items needed for children, such as diapers, formula and toys, or for family members who use personalized sensory kits and/or other comfort items.

**Food:** The Red Cross serves food at fixed sites, such as disaster shelters, and in hard-hit neighborhoods using emergency response vehicles designed to deliver meals and snacks. Many of our feeding missions are made possible through collaboration with national and local feeding partners who stand up alongside the Red Cross when disaster strikes.

**Relief Supplies:** The Red Cross provides a variety of relief items to help people recover from disasters. The Red Cross has warehouses stocked with millions of items, such as cots, blankets and cleaning supplies. In addition to our nationwide warehousing network, the Red Cross works with corporate partners who may provide bulk donations of much needed supplies when large disasters strike.

**Health Services:** A nationwide network of thousands of Red Cross health services workers is trained to provide health-related support and care after disasters. Health service workers support affected communities in a variety of settings, including shelters, emergency aid stations and home visits, by providing health and functional needs care, illness and injury surveillance, and the replacement of lost medications and medical equipment.

**Mental Health:** A nationwide network of Red Cross disaster mental health workers are trained to work

collaboratively with local mental health resources to provide emotional support to disaster victims and responders.

**Disaster Spiritual Care:** Professional chaplains, faith-based partners and locally endorsed faith professionals provide services across the country to people, regardless of faith tradition. The program is scalable from a single-family home fire to a major mass casualty disaster and represents excellent community care and condolence support, while respecting the fundamental principles of the Red Cross movement of neutrality and impartiality.

**Reunification:** The Red Cross supports requests for reunification which includes emergency welfare inquiries, family reunification requests and military welfare inquiries. Red Cross disaster apps feature a one-touch "I'm Safe" button that helps people use social media outlets to let family and friends know they are OK.

**Recovery Casework:** The Red Cross casework system is flexible and can be mobilized to help a single family after a home fire or to help hundreds of families after a flood. Every disaster is different, and so are the needs of each affected community and family. The Red Cross assesses the individual needs of each impacted household and provides recovery assistance, including financial assistance, recovery planning, and/or referrals to community partners. After most disasters, our goal is to provide assistance to those who are most vulnerable and people who need extra help. Red Cross also provides services to support the community as they organize long-term recovery planning. Services may include providing technical guidance, coordinating information sharing, and acting as a convener to engage partners in community recovery efforts.

**Disability Integration:** A nationwide network of Red Cross volunteers who provide advocacy, outreach, and coordinate accommodations for people with disabilities impacted by disaster. The team also helps clients with getting connected to disability resources in their local community.

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**If you've been affected by the recent storms and need help, please call 1-800-RED CROSS.**



Disaster Action Team