

## Annex F - Mass Care

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to discuss the actions that are taken to protect evacuees and other disaster victims from the effects of a disaster, including providing temporary shelter, food, medical care, clothing, tracking of injured victims and other essential needs. This annex addresses:

- Shelter locations outside the hazard’s vulnerable area.
- Structural survivability requirements for building in the hazard vulnerability zone and the application of mitigation measures.
- Protection of shelter occupants from the effects of the hazard.
- Special medicines and/or antidotes for shelter occupants.
- Food and water stocks to support extended shelter stays.
- Capability to decontaminate people exposed to hazardous materials.
- Identify the organization(s) and/or individual(s) (by title) responsible for coordinating the various mass care services for victims (registration, emergency housing, feeding, clothing, waste management, counseling, inquiry and referral, etc.).

**THERE ARE NO HOSPITAL/EMERGENCY MEDICAL FACILITIES LOCATED WITHIN HOUSTON COUNTY. The nearest hospital is in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The nearest hospital in Minnesota is in Winona. Other hospitals currently utilized by responders include Mayo Clinic in Rochester.**

The overall responsible parties for implementing and amending this annex are the Human Services Department, Public Health, and the Southwest Wisconsin chapter of the American Red Cross.

### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

<sup>[33]</sup>Standard mass care will be provided as able by Human Services and Public Health, and will be taken over as able by the American Red Cross and other voluntary services as necessary.

Primary mass care in the direct aftermath of an incident will be handled by Human Services until such a time that voluntary agencies can assist or take over.

- a. Registration of people refusing to evacuate or sheltering in a properly run shelter will be handled by Human Services. This includes tracking, information, and referral of possible victims who have been separated from others.
- b. <sup>[34]</sup>Emergency housing will be provided by appropriate shelter facilities listed in the [Resource Manual](#) in direct correlation with the location of the incident. Houston County has a cache of Red Cross supplies which can be accessed with a code by calling 1-800-236-8680 opt 9. This includes around 17 cots (15 regular, 2 large), blankets, shelter set-up supplies, and more. The southeast Minnesota region 1 has a cache of shelter supplies as well that can be brought to Houston County to be used in shelters. The Emergency Management Director will contact the appropriate regional contact to secure supplies if

necessary. Other supplies may be needed and may need to be acquired through the Logistics Branch in the EOC.

- c. Feeding of displaced persons will be provided through Human Services and the Salvation Army, as able. The Logistics Branch in the EOC may be utilized to assist in acquiring food and food supplies from local stores as able, including convenience stores, grocery stores, and food banks.
- d. Waste management is a large concern for sheltering operations. Ideally trash management will be handled by the regular business that provides the service; however, if the regular service is interrupted, it may be necessary to contact mutual aid to provide these services as able. If transportation of trash vehicles is unable to retrieve trash at a shelter, a designated area separate from the shelter may be utilized as a trash pile until such a time as the trash can be picked up.
- e. Initial behavioral health response in a shelter can be provided by local clergy and religious leaders as they are able to respond. Those with access and functional needs who may already be identified with Human Services as possibly requiring additional behavioral health may need to be separated from a regular shelter and given additional behavioral health attention. This may require using mutual aid to perform.
- f. Security of shelters will be provided as able by local law enforcement and the American Red Cross when able.
- g. Persons with access and functional needs should not be placed in a regular shelter with others, as they may require more attention or may not be allowed to be in a shelter with specific populations. As such, there should be given attention to the possibility of a shelter that can be open specifically for those with access and functional needs. Ideally this shelter would be able to house different groups in different areas, such as unaccompanied minors, assisted living patients, and institutionalized people.
- h. Health and medical care will be provided as able by first responders initially and then can be offset as able by public health and the Red Cross on a case-by-case basis. If necessary, injured persons should be taken to hospitals by first responders, as able.

## Situation and Assumptions

### Situation

- Based on the county's hazard analysis, there are several emergency situations for which emergency sheltering and/or mass care may be required including fires, floods, hazardous materials accidents, severe storms, tornadoes, WMD incidents, etc.
- There are currently no hospitals within Houston County. Current hospitals being used for emergency care include Gunderson Health in La Crosse, Wisconsin; Community Memorial in Winona, Minnesota; and Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Other nearby hospitals include the Winneshiek Medical Center in Decorah, Iowa.

### Assumptions

- Sufficient in-county emergency shelters exist to meet the needs of an evacuation during most emergencies.
- The American Red Cross Director – SW Wisconsin Chapter will manage emergency shelters for the County, and the surrounding municipalities, if required.
- If emergency shelters are full, emergency shelter facilities may be provided by neighboring counties, if available.
- Under most circumstances, a high percentage of evacuees will seek shelter with friends or relatives, rather than go to public shelters.
- Many persons will elect to leave the area before the official order to evacuate is issued and broadcast.
- During an emergency situation, private nursing/rest homes and domiciliary facilities will continue the protection of residents under their care. If necessary, these facilities will arrange for the evacuation of residents under their care to a safe area.

## Concept of Operations

### General

Support services will be provided through the coordinated efforts of Human Services and other groups. Shelters will be utilized based on their location in proximity to the hazard event and whether the demand requires more than one or two open at any given time.

In the event it becomes necessary to occupy emergency shelters, the primary modes of transportation will be at the discretion of the parties seeking shelter.

The following criteria are recommended when selecting buildings/shelters for public use.

- For tornado shelter, use basements of concrete construction that have a minimum number of windows.
- For flood/storm shelter, consider elevation, surrounding topography and structural integrity.
- For chemical and biological shelter, consider the location of the hazard, the wind direction, the hazard duration, as well as the ability to "seal off" the structure from the outside hazard combined with the structure's internal ventilation system's capability to operate over long periods of time.

### Shelters

Human Services, in coordination with the American Red Cross, is the primary agency responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive emergency shelter program for Houston County. They are also responsible for acquiring supplies either locally or from external sources.

Houston County recognizes that communities have the ability to open shelters without the assistance of the county or the Red Cross, and the Emergency Management Director will provide assistance to the shelters are requested or needed.

The Human Services Director will coordinate with the ARC Director to support emergency shelter operations during a large-scale event. In an emergency situation, the Human Services Department may expand their day-to-day operations.

All shelter owners will cooperate as able with Human Services and the Red Cross in the operation of their facilities when activated as emergency shelters.

The Emergency Management Director and other county agencies, as necessary and appropriate, will assist with mass care and emergency shelter operations during emergency situations.

Emergency shelter safety and security will be provided on an as need basis by local law enforcement, fire, and EMS/rescue personnel, as required.

Houston County does not have the capability for permanent auxiliary power at all designated shelters. Therefore, some shelters may have to rely upon rental generator units when the primary power source has been disrupted.

#### *Unauthorized Shelters*

Houston County will not assume responsibility or liability for unauthorized shelter openings during emergency situations.

## ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

### *Assignment of Responsibilities*

Mass Care will be coordinated by Houston County Health & Human Services. They will provide the following:

- A complete shelter program. This includes an in-place plan for sheltering local residents and emergency shelter plan for displaced persons in the event of natural disaster or technological accident
- In coordination with other mass care representatives (Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc), will organize, establish, direct, and monitor the shelter reception
- Activating reception centers for registration, lodging, feeding and sheltering of the local population
- Providing volunteer staff and staff training to run the shelters
- Providing shelter management kits and basic supplies including cots, water, food, clothing, and other supplies (in conjunction with Red Cross when able)
- Register all persons in shelters or Registration Centers
- Identify facilities and resources to be used for mass feeding. Notify participating agencies of mass feeding locations, when operational
- Refer person(s) in need of medical care to appropriate facilities
- Establish procedures to receipt and account for supplies procured
- Keep all emergency management EOCs informed of welfare service activities in conjunction with the Red Cross

- Requesting activation and deactivation of shelters as needed
- [\[51\]](#) Provide and/or coordinate long term housing needs for those displaced after a disaster, in coordination with supporting agencies.

Red Cross, Southwest Wisconsin Chapter will (when available):

- Approve suitable locations for shelters including ADA accessible shelters
- Provide assistance to Houston County Human Services when shelter activation is required
- Supply shelters with water, food, bedding, clothing, and other supplies as able
- Coordinate activities with state and federal agencies as necessary, request assistance from the State of Minnesota Department of Emergency Management Emergency Operations Center (EOC) when local resources are depleted
- Maintain communications with other emergency service organizations and operating emergency management EOCs
- Coordinate welfare service planning with Shelter Managers and EOC Shelter/Mass Care Officers
- Assist in shelter management and control

Superintendent(s) of Schools will:

- Ensure contracts or memorandums of agreement are prepared with county representatives for the use of buses for transport of evacuees as requested by the Transportation Officer

County Human Services Director will:

- Assist in reception and registration of relocated/displaced persons, within capabilities
- Assist ARC in staffing and operation of temporary shelters/congregate care facilities in the event of natural disaster or other emergencies requiring evacuation
- Provide individual assistance
- Identify sources of clothing for disaster victims when authorized.
- Referral for financial assistance as needed

The Salvation Army is a key, independent agency in the county and should be utilized when mass care services are required. County representatives should make full use of their capabilities and experience to:

- Support shelter operations
- Collect and distribute in-kind donations
- Provide direct aid to disaster victims through case management programs
- Provide liaison to the county EOC
- Organize and provide food services through fixed sites and mobile units
- Support disaster communications via amateur radio

Houston Volunteer Disaster Response Organizations can respond with:

- Food
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Equipment and goods
- Communications
- Cleanup and reconstruction assistance
- Damage assessment assistance
- Transportation
- Notification
- Counseling
- Follow-up care after the emergency
- Advocacy for victims (To assure that existing services and help are available to all who need them and qualify)

#### County Public Health Director

- Coordinate public health issues and health prevention measures in shelters
- Work with access and functional needs population during emergencies

#### County Engineer/Municipal Public Works

- Inspect emergency shelter sites for serviceability
- Assist with maintaining water supplies and sanitary facilities at emergency shelter sites during an emergency situation, if required

#### SEMCAAC

- Provide assistance for persons with special needs that have been evacuated or displaced to Adult Care Homes in the County

#### County Sheriff/Municipal Police

- Provide security and law enforcement for emergency shelters located in unincorporated areas of the County
- Provide backup communications for emergency shelters located in unincorporated areas of the County

## ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

### Shelter Management

Shelters opened by the Red Cross and by the county will be operated in accordance with the standard American Red Cross procedures.

### Communications

The primary communications link between shelters and the EOC will be by telephone. In the event telephones are inoperative or overloaded, law enforcement personnel assigned to each shelter will provide radio communication using portable radios.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The Human Services Director is responsible for maintaining and updating this Annex. They must closely coordinate changes with the American Red Cross Chapter Executive serving Houston County and the Emergency Management Director.

## AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

FEMA, Guidance for Development of an Emergency Shelter Stocking Plan, CPG 1-19.

FEMA, Sheltering and Care Operations, CPG 2-8.

FEMA, Guide for Increasing Local Government Civil Defense Readiness During Periods of International Crisis; State and Local Guide (SLG) 100. Section 6 is Illustrations of Shelter Upgrading Techniques. Section 13 is Actions to Increase Inventory of Public Shelter. Section 17 is Actions to Increase Operations Readiness of Public Shelter.

FEMA, Shelter Supplies, CPC 83-1.

FEMA, Architectural Design Techniques for Emergency Protection and Energy Conservation, TR 86.

FEMA, How to Manage Congregate Lodging Facilities and Emergency Shelters, SM-11.

FEMA, Shelter System Officer Course, SM-355.

FEMA, Shelter Management Handbook Houston, FEMA-59.

## Attachment 1

### TORNADO/SEVERE WEATHER SHELTERS

#### GENERAL.

Since a function of the Emergency Management Director is to maintain a list of tornado shelters, evaluate new construction for suitability and answer questions from the public concerning tornado shelters, the following criteria are listed for tornado shelters:

- Only space located in fully or partially below-grade basements or subbasement must be concrete.
- Two types of potential tornado space are distinguished.
  - Primary: The basement must be fully buried, and the floor over the basement must be concrete.
  - Secondary: The basement may be either:
    - Fully buried but with a wood floor over the basement, or
    - Partially buried with a concrete floor over the basement but with no more than approximately 25% of the wall height exposed at any point other than at occasional stairwells, window wells, or area ways. No above ground wall may be of wood or metal stud construction.
    - In secondary tornado shelter basements, areas not shielded from exterior windows by interior walls will not be considered as shelter space.
- The number of shelter spaces can be calculated from the useable floor area divided by six square feet per person.
- Citizens should be advised to plan for and prepare emergency shelters in or near the home. Local government facilities should not be relied upon for shelter because of liability issues and the difficulty of obtaining access after normal business hours. Many private shelters exist throughout the county.