

Coordinated Group Volunteer Opportunity for Employees: Deploying During Major Disasters

Coordinator Guide for Members

***Updated* August 2025**

When disaster strikes, the American Red Cross responds immediately — sending trained staff and volunteers to provide food, shelter, relief supplies, emotional support, recovery planning and other assistance to those affected.

Major disaster operations that last for weeks or even months may need the help of thousands of volunteers over time to deliver critical services. If there are needs for additional volunteer support on a major operation, Annual Disaster Giving Program (ADGP) and Disaster Responder members will be invited to identify up to 15 employees willing to deploy to impacted areas to volunteer with the Red Cross for 7-14 days.

To participate, your organization will first want to identify a Volunteer Coordinator who will be the liaison between your Red Cross Relationship Manager, the Red Cross National Employee Engagement team and your employee volunteers — helping to ensure a safe and streamlined recruitment and deployment experience. While it is not guaranteed that there will be a need during a given year, there are steps you can take now to ready internal teams to more seamlessly leverage the opportunity should it be extended.

This Deployment Guide provides start-to-finish instructions for your Volunteer Coordinator to pursue the employee deployment opportunity, to include important steps to notify, inform and support your employees who wish to provide hands-on support for our disaster response. To begin, please read through this entire guide — and contact your Relationship Manager with any questions or for more information.

Document Contents

➤ About the Opportunity	Pages 2-3
➤ Getting Started: Preparing Employees to Deploy	Pages 4-5
➤ Deploying Your Employees	Pages 6-7
➤ Post-Deployment	Page 8
➤ Attachment A – Ex. Deployment Roster Template	Page 9
➤ Attachment B – Recruitment Email Templates	Pages 10-11



About the Opportunity

Given the difficult and evolving nature of major disasters, active disaster relief operations are unlike any traditional volunteer efforts often experienced by our corporate partners and their employee volunteers. Where traditionally we offer our corporate partners more controlled and choreographed experiences, active relief operations are truly the Red Cross in its most essential mission of sheltering and feeding people immediately after a disaster. They are often challenging, exhausting, and unrefined. During major disasters, needs on the ground are evolving — and as a result, volunteer needs and assignments may also be fluid.

If volunteers are needed for an operation, the opportunity will typically be extended by the Red Cross within 2-3 weeks of impact. Your employees would be helping to fill our volunteer pipeline during a longer-term operation.

Again, while **it is not guaranteed that there will be a need during a given year**, there are steps you can take now to ready internal teams to more seamlessly leverage the opportunity should it be extended.

We are proud and grateful that you are open to having your employees join us to help deliver help and hope when it's needed most. We will stay in touch throughout the planning process to keep you informed of new developments. We appreciate your willingness to help and your patience!

Volunteer Requirements:

Your participating employees must have these qualifications:

1. Be at least 18 years old.
2. Be in good health and able to work in stressful conditions.
3. Commit to travel for 7-days minimum/14-days maximum full-time support (average daily shift is 10 hours).
4. *Be registered in the American Red Cross Volunteer Connection System. This registration is essential since all logistics will be coordinated for your employees using information in this system and includes a background check or a completed Corporate Partner background exemption letter.
5. *Complete minimum disaster volunteer training requirements. There are 5 required online training courses totaling 3 hours 35 minutes, and 1 recommended online training that is 90 minutes.

**Steps 4 & 5 can be completed either now, or after the volunteer invitation has been extended by Red Cross.*

Travel & Lodging Arrangements:

- The Red Cross **will pay for and make all travel & lodging arrangements** for your employees within our normal volunteer deployment process.
 - Complete a Deployment Roster (Attachment A). You will receive a separate Excel spreadsheet file for the Deployment Roster.
 - Deployed volunteers will be provided travel arrangements (flights, train or rental car) within 24 to 48 hours prior to deployment.
 - Lodging: Prior to deployment lodging will be identified as one of the options below.
 - **Commercial Lodging:** A hotel or motel room that may be shared by **two to three people**.
 - **Dormitories:** Rooms with one to four beds and one to four roommates.
 - **Staff Shelters:** Congregate living with large groups of people in the same area. Congregate living often involves sleeping on cots or pads placed on the floor.

- Your employees will each individually hear from and work directly with Red Cross travel representatives to coordinate arrangements.
- Due to the nature of disaster, employees should expect logistics to be confirmed 24-72 hours prior to departure.
- Travel Logistics: We will evaluate whether to support flights or train transportation for deployments depending on the disaster scope.
 - Car Travel: The Red Cross will coordinate a rental car for individuals or your team to travel to the operation for volunteers that are within driving distance. Rental cars are the preferred method of travel for individuals to the operation.
 - Flight/Train Travel: Red Cross will book air travel to and from the operation for your employees. The flight/train to and from the operation is booked 24-48 hours prior to arrival day. The Red Cross will book rental cars, if available, for your team members to share and drive to the arrival point location. If rental cars are not available, the Red Cross will coordinate travel to the arrival point location.
 - Lodging: Our ability to safely house our disaster workers is as important as providing safe shelter for those who have been directly impacted by the disaster. Our primary focus will be to work with local partners to provide hotels or dormitories for individual sheltering. In cases where that may not be an option, we have put additional safety protocols in place following the guidance of public health officials and the CDC for operating staff shelters.
- Partner covering travel and lodging options:
 - The partner will cover any requests for lodging or travel outside the normal Red Cross. Example: When hoteling is available Red Cross will assign 2 people per room. If you would like your team members to have their own hotel room the partner would be responsible for the cost of the team lodging.

While Onsite:

- Once arriving, your employees will check in to the operation, where they will receive their volunteer assignment, lodging instructions, Mission cards for incidental expenses and volunteer ID.
- There will be a volunteer on the operation who will be assigned to support your team while they are on the operation, to help answer any questions or address issues.
- We recommend that your employee team nominate a member to serve as the Team Leader so there is a central point of contact between all coordinating parties.
- There will be needs in a variety of areas throughout the disaster operation. Your employees may not have an opportunity to “request” where they serve and what volunteer positions they serve in.
 - Most likely, we would ask your employee volunteers to serve as shelter workers. Responsibilities may include checking in new arrivals; answering questions; providing food, beverages and other necessities; or supporting other services like childcare, custodial services, or healthcare.
- We appreciate that your employees may wish to remain together throughout their deployment. However, our first priority will be filling critical open positions on operation.

Liability and Insurance:

The American Red Cross Corporate Insurance Plan provides insurance for the entire organization, including employees and volunteers. In general, the Red Cross insurance covers:

- Red Cross employees and volunteers, for defense and for liabilities they might incur while acting as agents of the Red Cross.

- The Red Cross corporation, for defense and for liabilities it might incur.
- Replacement of Red Cross-owned property damaged or destroyed.
- Red Cross employees who sustain a work-related injury or illness.


If you have any questions about the opportunity that are not covered in the above, please reach out to your Red Cross Relationship Manager.

Getting Started: Prepare Employees to Deploy

Key Action Items:

- ✓ Confirm interest in pursuing this type of deployment opportunity for your employees, if offered, with your Red Cross Relationship Manager.
- ✓ Line-up interested employees.
- ✓ Get them registered as volunteers in Volunteer Connection.
- ✓ Ensure they complete required trainings.

Follow This Check List to Complete:

Step	Action	Completed
1	Confirm interest in working with Red Cross to deploy volunteers, if invitation is extended, so we are aware of your interest.	
2	Recruit interested employees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain your custom Volunteer Connection unique entry point URL and Volunteer Connection Registration Instructions from your Relationship Manager. Add the URL where prompted into the Employee Recruitment Email Template (Attachment B). Customize and send recruitment email with the For Employees - Volunteering on a Disaster Relief Operation document and the Volunteer Connection Registration Instructions document as attachments. Ask interested employees to review the documents to fully understand how to deploy. Ensure that employees have received any necessary approvals from their hiring manager to participate. 	
3	Have your interested employees reference the Volunteer Connection Registration Instructions to complete a volunteer profile . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recommend asking employees to completed within 5 days of receiving the information. At minimum, this profile must be completed within 5 business days prior to deployment. 	
4	Obtain the Volunteer Connection number from each of your interested employees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer Connection Member # is found under their "My Profile" tab. <div> HOME MY PROFILE MY CHAPTER MY NHQ MY GROUPS MY SHIFTS </div> <div> Personal Info Qualifications </div> <div>  <div> Clara Barton Member #: 785983 </div> </div>	

Step	Action	Completed
5	<p>Have interested employees complete minimum required trainings for deployment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 5 required online training courses 3 hours 35 minutes total, and 1 recommended online training that is 90 minutes. • Courses can be found by your employees in Volunteer Connection and are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disaster Cycle Services: An Overview (60 minutes) ▪ Deployment Fundamentals for Responders Traveling Away from Home (30 minutes) ▪ Everyone is Welcome (45 minutes) ▪ Shelter Fundamentals v2 (60 minutes) ▪ Mission Cards – Cardholder Overview (14 minutes) ○ Recommended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Psychological First Aid (60 minutes) • At minimum, these trainings must be completed <u>at least 3 business days</u> prior to deployment. 	
6	<p>Complete your Deployment Roster to track the staff and enter their Volunteer Connection number.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all of these employees may opt-in to volunteer if/when a disaster happens, but this gets you ready to reach out when the opportunity presents itself. • A sample of the roster is found in Attachment A. 	
7	<p>When all registrations and training are complete, notify your Red Cross Relationship Manager.</p>	

Deploying Employees

Key Action Items:

- ✓ Confirm employees who will deploy as volunteers to the specific operation with the Red Cross.
- ✓ Ensure all employees have completed required steps to deploy.
- ✓ Join 30 minute-planning call between your employees and Red Cross representatives.
- ✓ Employees receive their deployment assignment notice via email from Red Cross.
- ✓ Employees travel to operation and check-in to receive assignment, lodging and other information.
- ✓ Employees follow Red Cross instructions to schedule travel home from operations 24 hours prior to departure date.

Follow This Check List to Complete:

Step	Action	Completed?
1	Reach out to interested employees to line-up participation . <ul style="list-style-type: none">If you have not yet lined up interested employees, complete steps 2-7 in the previous section, Getting Started – Preparing your Employees to Deploy.	
2	Ensure that all employees planning to deploy have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Read the <i>For Employees - Volunteering on a Disaster Relief Operation</i> document.Received any necessary approvals from their hiring manager to participate FOR THIS SPECIFIC DEPLOYMENT.Completed their profile in Volunteer Connection.Shared their Volunteer Connection member # with you.Completed the required training.	
3	Create a version of your Deployment Roster for all volunteers who want to deploy for this disaster and submit the roster to your Red Cross Relationship Manager. <u>NOTE:</u> The roster ensures that the corporate volunteers are managed as a group for the deployment process. ALL FIELDS MUST BE COMPLETED. The volunteer information must be filled out completely, including Volunteer Connection Member numbers, for each employee planning to deploy. If it is not, it will be returned to you to complete.	
4	Work with the employee team deploying to identify a Team Lead . <ul style="list-style-type: none">This role is important as he/she will serve as the primary point of contact between you and the Red Cross team on the ground.Share the Team Lead name with your Relationship Manager.	

Step	Action	Completed?
5	<p><u>At least 3 days prior to deployment date</u>, work with your Red Cross Relationship Manager to schedule a 30-minute planning call with you, your employees and coordinating Red Cross leads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This call will review deployment information, travel logistics and answer questions your employees may have about deployment. 	
6	<p><u>At least 1-2 days prior to deployment date</u>, your employee volunteers will each receive a deployment assignment notice via email or text message directly from the Red Cross, with instructions for travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder that plane/train/car rentals reservations are usually made 24-48 hours before deployment by Red Cross. If your employee has not received their travel information within 24 hours of departure, contact your Red Cross relationship manager immediately to correct. 	
7	<p>Deployment Date! By this point, all travel has been booked, employees have completed all activities for deployment.</p>	
8	<p>Upon arrival at the operation, and throughout deployment, the Red Cross volunteer assigned to your team on the operation will be available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure your employees get checked-in to the operation. Ensure your employees receive lodging, Mission cards and Red Cross IDs. Ensure your employees receive their volunteer assignments. Direct employees when they need assistance throughout their deployment. Respond to questions or concerns, as needed. <p>The Red Cross volunteer assigned to your team will primarily communicate with and through your employee Team Lead.</p>	
9	<p><u>At least 24 hours prior to departure date from operation</u>, employee's check-in with their airline or train for their return home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Red Cross volunteer assigned to your team on the operation will ensure your team is out-processed from the operation. 	

Post-Deployment

Key Action Items:

- ✓ Get feedback from your employee volunteer about their experience.
- ✓ Complete post-deployment meeting with your Red Cross Relationship Manager.
- ✓ Thank employees that deployed.


Follow This Check List to Complete:

Step	Action	Completed?
1	<p>Welcome home! Obtain feedback from your employee volunteers about their experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider asking (or setting up a confidential survey to ask):<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How was your experience:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pre-deployment▪ On the ground at the operation▪ Out-processing from the operation○ What process updates would you like to see for future deployments?○ Share what you liked about your experience?○ Would you recommend this volunteer opportunity to others?• Request pictures and share with your Red Cross Relationship Manager.	
2	<p>Complete post-deployment meeting with your Red Cross Relationship Manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share employee feedback.• Discuss worked well, and what could be improved for next time.	
3	<p>Share a thank you message with your employees that deployed.</p>	



Volunteer Coordinator Disaster Deployment Guide

ATTACHMENT A – Example of Deployment Roster Template

 American Red Cross	Deployment Roster													
Organization Name			DRO Number											
Roster Name														
Title	Name	Phone Number	Email											
RED CROSS POC for Roster														
23 Digit Account Code (required)	xxx-xxxxxx-xx-xxxx-xxxx-xxxx													
Please use Traveler's Legal Name - As it appears on driver's license or passport														
Last Name	First Name	Volunteer Connection Number	DOB MM/DD/YYYY	Gender M/F	Departure Date	Departure Time Frame	Departing From	Traveling To	Return Date	Return Time Frame	Traveler Email (required to email confirmed itinerary)	Traveler Phone (required to contact in event of reservation changes)	TSA Pre-check number (if applicable)	
1 Jones	Susan	123456	12/12/1987	F	09/30/18	after 9:00 AM	Orlando, FL	Wilmington, NC	10/07/18	after 8:00 AM	susan.jones@gmail.com	703-555-5555	123-4567	
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Volunteer Coordinator Disaster Deployment Guide

ATTACHMENT B – Employee Recruitment Email Template

IF RECRUITING NOW/AHEAD OF DISASTER

When disaster strikes, the American Red Cross responds immediately — sending trained staff and volunteers to provide food, shelter, relief supplies, emotional support, recovery planning and other assistance to those affected.

Big disaster operations that last for weeks or even months may need the help of thousands of volunteers over time to deliver critical services. As an annual donor to the Red Cross, **COMPANY** will be among the first organizations asked to help provide additional volunteer support to address those longer-term needs – and we are pleased to invite you to become part of a cadre of employees that could deploy to provide that volunteer support if requested.

If you feel this is work you would like to do to help others, and can meet the requirements below, then you are the type of person the Red Cross is looking for:

- ✓ At least 18 years old.
- ✓ In good health and able to work in stressful conditions.
- ✓ Commit to travel for 7-days minimum/14-days maximum full-time support (average daily shift is 10 hours).
- ✓ Willing to register as a volunteer in the American Red Cross Volunteer Connection System.
- ✓ Complete minimum disaster volunteer training requirements. There are 5 required online training courses totaling 3 hours 35 minutes, and 1 recommended online training that is 90 minutes.
- ✓ **Customize how employees will take the time to deploy (i.e. personal time off or company will provide)**
- ✓ **Insert additional company policy criteria**

This would be at no cost to you. **If you meet the above criteria, and have permission from your manager, please review the attached *Volunteering on a Disaster Relief Operation* and confirm interest with **NAME/EMAIL** by **DATE**. Additional steps to participate may be found in the box on page 1 of the attachment.**

Thank you so much for your consideration. With our help, families will have the hope and help they need to recover.



IF RECRUITING UPON RECEIVING DEPLOYMENT INVITATION FROM RED CROSS:

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Many of you have reached out since **MAJOR DISASTER** asking how you can help.

Our disaster partner, the American Red Cross, is on the ground, providing much-needed comfort and support to those affected. Given the scope of this disaster, thousands of volunteers will be needed to support the **MAJOR DISASTER** relief operation on the ground in the weeks and months to come.

The Red Cross has asked us to identify employees who might be willing to deploy as volunteers to this disaster operation for a 7-14 day period. This would be at no cost to you. While specific volunteer needs and duties are still being confirmed, we are working to determine who would be interested in deploying **over the next several weeks**.

If you feel this is work you would like to do to help others, and can meet the requirements below, then you are the type of person the Red Cross is looking for:

- ✓ At least 18 years old.
- ✓ In good health and able to work in stressful conditions.
- ✓ Commit to travel for 7-days minimum/14-days maximum full-time support (average daily shift is 10 hours).
- ✓ Willing to register as a volunteer in the American Red Cross Volunteer Connection System.
- ✓ Complete minimum disaster volunteer training requirements. There are 5 required online training courses totaling 3 hours 35 minutes, and 1 recommended online training that is 90 minutes.
- ✓ **Customize how employees will take the time to deploy (i.e. personal time off or company will provide)**
- ✓ **Insert additional company policy criteria**

If you meet the above criteria, and have permission from your manager, please review the attached *Volunteering on a Disaster Relief Operation* and confirm interest in joining other **COMPANY employees with **NAME/EMAIL** by **DATE**. Additional steps to participate may be found in the box on page 1 of the attachment.**

Thank you so much for your consideration. With our help, families will have the hope and help they need to recover.