

Donations Management Task Force Standard Operating Guideline

*Effectively Managing Donated Goods and Volunteer Services in Time of Disaster
May 2012*

INTRODUCTION

This guidance document provides information on planning considerations for a major event to aid local government in: 1) formulating a donations management strategy; 2) developing, activating and demobilizing a donations management operation; 3) managing donated monies, goods and services; 4) managing volunteer resources and government agency assistance; 5) coordinating with the media; and 6) miscellaneous housekeeping issues.

When dealing with a localized event this document may provide some guidance and insight for managing a local donations management strategy and should be integrated into the local plan as a preparedness guide.

Donations Management Objectives and Strategies

The donations management strategy section describes the basic process for managing donated goods and services during a disaster. It identifies the basic assumptions of the management strategy, the concept of operations, important planning considerations, and the roles and responsibilities of the supporting government agencies and donations management organizations.

Planning for Donations Management

This section outlines the operating structure, duties and responsibilities, and the pre-planning and facilities that are established for a donations management organization. The concept of operations portrays how FEMA, State and local governments work together with volunteer agencies in advance to establish an effective management system and how they execute it during a disaster response.

Implementing a Donations Management Plan

This section provides guidance concerning donations of goods, materials, services and cash. Topics addressed include the advantages of cash donations, preparations for receiving, managing and distributing donations, including close coordination with volunteer organizations. Key assumptions include the preference for cash donations rather than goods, and the presence of a cooperative and united effort among the elements of government and volunteer agencies. A possible contribution to this operation is the national AID Matrix program which manages information about donated goods and services

Managing Volunteer and Government Resources

While Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) can be used to assist in management activities (see above), they represent a hugely organized and useful resource that warrants its own discussion for maximum benefit. VOAD assistance is appropriately requested through the County and subsequently through the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Media Considerations

This section provides guidance for donations officials on their agency's interaction with the media. Specific topics include the media's role: coordination of released information, the Joint Information Center, and media access, and using the media early on to both identify the specific number and type of goods or services required at the disaster scene and reduce the level of unsolicited goods arriving.

Other Factors

Specific topics include public sensitivity, redistribution and/or considerations, local economy impacts and environmental impacts.

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Donations Management Objectives and Strategy	Page 5
Goals and Objectives	
Strategy Assumptions	
Planning for Donations Management	Page 5
Preparedness and Mitigation	
Response	
Recovery and Post Emergency	
Implementing a Donations Management Plan	Page 7
Donations Task Force Responsibilities	
Staffing for Small Scale Events	
Staffing for Large Scale Events	
Staffing for Catastrophic Events	
Donations Task Force Facilities for Catastrophic Events	
Warehouse Considerations	
Transportation	
Managing Volunteer and Government Resources	Page 13
Volunteer Resource Assumptions	
Volunteer Resource Types	
National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster	
Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster	
Networking with Local Government Agencies	
FEMA	
Media Considerations	Page 16
Other Factors	Page 17
Risk Management	
Security	
Recycling/Redistribution	
Awareness of the Affected Community	
Local Economy Issues	
Environmental Impacts	
Accountability	
Demobilization	
Call Center Issues	
Cash Donations	
Warehouse Considerations	

I.0 DONATIONS MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

1.1 Goals and Objectives

The goal of Donations Management is to provide victims of disasters with as much support as possible by effectively channeling offers and goods from the public or private organizations. Pre-disaster planning and cooperation among the involved agencies and volunteer organizations is necessary to accomplish this goal.

1.2 Donations Management Strategy Assumptions

Every level of government should develop a strategy for collecting, managing and distributing donated goods and services during a disaster, based on the assumptions below:

1. Local government situated in New York State's geographic location, its natural and built environment, and other high-risk factors create the potential for major natural or man-made disasters;
2. The donations management strategy must be a flexible one: The local and State governments are ultimately responsible for the success of the donations management system---including coordinating with the volunteer community---and can implement those parts of the donations management plan that meet their specific needs, taking into account the location, scale and type of disaster;
3. A primary goal of the County and State government is to assist the activities of local government when disaster strikes; part of that includes managing the flow of solicited and unsolicited donations---volunteers, goods, services and cash---to the disaster scene;
4. Federal government, international and volunteer activities must always support the efforts of State and local governments, and existing volunteer donations management networks or systems are a critical link to an effective program and should be used to the extent practicable;

2.0 PLANNING FOR DONATIONS MANAGEMENT

The Donations Management Plan is active in each phase of emergency management---Preparedness, Response and Recovery---as described below.

2.1 Preparedness/Mitigation

1. Local government will establish, maintain and update annually its donations management plan by canvassing all individuals and organizations that are involved in addressing human service needs before and after a disaster. Primary and Assisting agencies and volunteer organizations will collaborate to develop and maintain a list of available support services, including an inventory of warehouse facilities and their attributes;
2. Volunteer agencies will coordinate with local chapters and groups to maintain an inventory of available resources, personnel and their experience and skills;
3. Local Government should establish a central point of contact for handling inquiries and donations. Where practicable, existing 800-number hot lines and staff trained to deal with

specific issues for disaster victims should be mobilized for this purpose to avoid the lag time associated with bringing a new system on-line and training staff.

4. Local governments should work with local financial institutions and their legal representatives to establish procedures for accepting cash. Local governments will determine on a case-by-case basis whether cash will be accepted or if callers will be encouraged to contact the relief organization or charity of their choice; (cash donations are preferred, but may require special procedures and may not be prudent for all events);

5. The local donations management Task Force will develop and maintain a method for recording offers of donated monies, goods and volunteer services that can be universally used by all involved agencies. Information about these donations and offers will be provided to other government agencies and volunteers, as appropriate.

6. A policy must be developed for distributing those goods remaining after the relief effort ends and disposing of those that have no utility to the community.

7. Local government participants should exercise the Donations Annex during all exercises.

2.2 Response

1. The Operations Section of the EOC will activate the Donations Management Plan, advise affected local and county government, and organizations or individuals.

2. The Operations Section may place the Donations Management Task Force on stand-by; depending on the location, scale and type of event, the Donations Task Force Leader may begin to:

Establish the short- and long-term staffing and support needs for a Donations operation and identify the roles and responsibilities of staff and other assisting agencies that may participate;

Coordinate with assisting agencies to identify warehouse space and staging areas available for donated goods and secure agreements, if necessary.

Search the database and inventories to identify on-hand goods or previous offers that may be useful in this event;

Coordinate with the Public Information Officer (PIO) to encourage the media to request that goods and services be held locally until further notice; and

Initiate central point of contact for donated goods.

3. The Donations Task Force will maintain continuous coordination and communication with all involved and assisting agencies and organizations to ensure a smooth flow of goods and services to stricken areas. Depending on the size and severity of the incident, daily or regular coordination meetings and/or conference calls may be necessary

4. The Donations Task Force will issue press releases to educate the public about the problems associated with unsolicited donations;

5. The Donations Task Force will prepare daily status reports that document the issues and track the inventory in and out of the staging area; and
6. The Donations Task Force will maintain records of all purchases, rentals, loans and agreements to facilitate future reimbursement from FEMA.

2.3 Recovery and Post-Emergency

1. The Donations Task Force will assess the continuing needs of the agencies and organizations involved in the recovery effort, survey the current and soon-to-be-needed flow of goods, services and cash to determine if the operation's scale is appropriate, and work with the Public Information Officer as necessary to communicate those needs;
2. The Donations Task Force will reduce hours of operation and prepare to demobilize; this may entail training and handing off operations to a local government agency or a volunteer organization.
3. The Donations Task Force will correct the data base, making callbacks as necessary, as a first step to assisting with thank you letters to all who volunteered, sent goods, equipment or cash, or otherwise helped the relief effort; and
4. The Donations Task Force, will conduct a post-event evaluation with all involved---including all Donations Task Force staff and those at the phone banks, the warehouses/staging areas and in the field---to determine the effectiveness of the response and revise the plan as necessary to address identified improvements.

3.0 IMPLEMENTING A DONATIONS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Donations Management Plan will operate in accordance with the NIMS-ICS System which has been adopted by New York State Executive Order 26 of 1996 as the standard command and control system that dictates how State agencies conduct operations and respond to emergencies.

3.1 Donations Task Force Responsibilities

The State of New York does not wish to micro-manage the process by which donations are collected: volunteer organizations are considered the experienced primary receivers, managers and distributors of donated goods and services. However, while the State is ultimately responsible for managing disaster response and recovery, including management of donations and volunteer assistance, initial management will begin locally. The State has the oversight responsibility to ensure that transportation arteries are not clogged, that volunteers are not overwhelmed, that its citizens receive every opportunity to recover, and that useful goods and materials donated out of generosity are matched with those in need and not wasted. The State's goal is to support the affected community as needed. With this in mind, local government must be prepared to:

1. Communicate with the involved agencies and volunteer organizations to determine those goods and donations most needed for disaster relief;
2. Work with the Public Information Officer to communicate clearly to the public that unsolicited goods can overwhelm an already-stressed infrastructure and create "the second disaster;"

3. Publicize, in concert with the involved agencies and volunteer organizations, the items needed and provide a means for those who wish to donate;
4. Facilitate a prompt response to donors and the prompt allocation of donated equipment, goods, services and cash to the victims of the disaster; and
5. Where necessary and appropriate, train the government entities and/or a VOAD in anticipation of handing over donations management responsibilities as the incident grows.

While a Donations Management Plan is clearly needed for very large or catastrophic events, disasters of a lesser scope can also trigger an outpouring of donations that must be managed. This plan is designed primarily for large-scale disasters but is flexible and can be scaled back for moderate or small events that result in fewer donations. Conversely, the concepts behind this Donations Management Plan can be expanded for extremely catastrophic or long-term disasters.

Local Government must determine activation and staffing levels based on the location, scale and type of event and the ability of the affected community to manage donations.

Staffing for Small-Scale Events

Events small, limited or localized in nature, where donations are few and sporadic may be handled by a limited contingent of the Task Force including a local agency or organization to provide guidance and it is unlikely that additional staff or agencies will be needed. Volunteers may be called or consulted as needed. The Donations Task Force Leader should brief the appropriate the Local Operations staff and the Public Information Officer for coordination and information purposes.

Staffing for Large-Scale Events

These events occur when a State and/or Federal disaster declaration is likely. Depending on the disaster, donations activity could be significant but may not require the activation of most components of this plan: some functions will be used and others will be combined.

The Local EOC Operations staff will determine appropriate staffing levels based on the Donations Task Force Leader's reports regarding donations activity and staff, space and other requirements. The Donations Task Force Leader will manage the donations function in coordination with the Human Services Functional Group and the Logistics Section, with additional staff added for support as necessary.

During a large scale or long term event, at some point in time the local Donations Management Task Force may decide to or be required to hand off operation of the donations management function to a regional or State task force due to limited resources or staffing.

The Task Force Leader may designate individual job responsibilities to individuals on the task force or assisting the Task Force such as;

Phone Operator/Data Entry: answers calls and inputs data regarding offers or requests for donations, status reports, shipment tracking, etc. Canvasses volunteers

and agencies regarding the need for donations, assists in compiling status reports for disaster management agencies. May also facilitate communications and provide basic information to donors (e.g. which transport routes are preferred or closed);

Coordinator/Facilitator: If activity levels warrant, supervises phone and data functions and oversees coordination between donors and receiving agencies or organizations and. Coordinates with local, county, State and Federal government agencies and other emergency management, private, voluntary and support organizations.

Staffing for Catastrophic Events

Disasters of large magnitude or catastrophic events generate significant media attention or public interest. Donations can be overwhelming and may not correspond to the needs of the victims or the community. This plan is generally written to manage the donations triggered by events of this magnitude. Local Government staffing requirements may parallel the staffing positions outlined below.

Catastrophic events will require full implementation of the State's Donations Management Plan and full activation of the State's Donations Task Force upon request of the local government through their respective County emergency management agency. The State's Donations Task Force is responsible for integrating donations management into the larger local, State and Federal disaster relief effort.

During a catastrophic event, local, and regional Donations Task Force may be required and a State wide Task Force may operate from the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). The Regional or County Donations Task Force will:

1. Need to make an assessment of the needs of the affected victims, local government and agencies; this may include collaborating with the Statewide Volunteer Coordinator to collect donations intelligence;
2. Assess the capacity of volunteer agencies to help implement the Donations Management Plan, and how that function can be facilitated;
3. Establish a needs list for a phone bank and staff that operation;
4. Coordinate with warehouses and staging facilities established to handle donations;
5. Coordinate press releases with the Public Information Officer, ensuring that timely and appropriate information is disseminated.

The EOC staff will determine appropriate staffing levels based on the Donations Task Force Leader's reports regarding donations activity and staff, space and other requirements. Staffing for Catastrophic Events will include:

Donations Task Force Leader: a designated staff person who oversees all volunteer and donations efforts; this person may have other duties when there is no event to respond to, but should have knowledge of local, State, and Federal emergency management systems, as well as the services and capabilities of a variety of volunteer and social service agencies. During the activation of the EOC, the Leader will serve as

the Donations Task Force's liaison to the Logistics staff. The Donations Task Force Leader will:

1. Represent the Task Force in all EOC coordination issues and speak on behalf of volunteer and donations policies in all operational decisions;
2. Communicate all policy decisions to the Task Force and communicate the Task Force's needs to the Logistics staff;
3. Coordinate with all other groups involved in the donations management process at all levels;
4. Provide the Public Information Officer with information appropriate for news releases.

Following State EOC deactivation, the Leader may continue to manage the Donations Coordination Task Force.

In a federally declared disaster, the Task Force leader may coordinate with state liaisons to the FEMA/State Disaster Field Office.

Phone Bank Group: The Phone Bank Group will consist of phones and operators whose numbers will depend on the magnitude of the disaster and the available facilities. There should be a separate donations management 1-800 line dedicated to incoming donations calls to facilitate their tasks, which include:

1. Answering incoming donations calls and entering basic data about the caller's name, address, phone number and their offer to donate goods, equipment, services, volunteer labor or cash into the donations database;
2. Refer all donations to a Coordination Group (see below) for prompt evaluation and follow through; and
3. Refer calls from persons requiring counseling to the appropriate Human Services staff.

The Phone Bank Group should have one Coordinator and may have several managers, depending on total staffing, shifts, hours of operation, etc. The Coordinator will prepare a daily report of donations and human services referrals.

DM Task Force Liaison: serves as point of contact for requests from Operations and VOAD groups (and possibly the community), maintains record of donations and needs requests, and makes connections or referrals to fulfill those requests. The Group will match a donation of goods and/or services with an existing need or anticipated need, or refer a donation to another location, agency or organization where it can be used. The Local Task Force should determine on an event-by-event basis whether it will refuse donations of goods for which there is no need (for example, accepting used clothing--- which is rarely needed in a disaster---places unnecessary labor, storage and transportation burdens for any donations management organization). The liaison will keep a running report of requests for assistance and referrals of donated goods. The task force should be working closely with the logistics section. When requests are

received by logistics the donations management resource list shall be reviewed for available commodities or services.

The liaison will mission request through the County EOC to mission task NYS-OEM Operations for any identified shortfalls. The Donations Management Task Force should include the positions below if established locally:

Supervisor: oversees the Warehouse, IT and Volunteer Coordinators;

Warehouse Coordinator: responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the warehouse or staging facilities;

Volunteer Coordinator: manages donated volunteer labor.

The Task Force may also include representatives of the VOAD groups who give advice, perform tasks, or both. The Task Force should conduct regular meetings---or a daily conference call---to discuss donations and volunteer issues, strategies and new ideas and to anticipate potential problems. The Donations Task Force Leader should chair these meetings or calls. For large events requiring more than one warehouse or staging area, a daily warehouse conference call chaired by a Warehouse Coordinator is also helpful.

Cash Group: serves as point of referral for callers offering cash donations and should consist of representatives of the entity accepting cash contributions. This may be contained within the Phone Bank Group. Callers who identify a specific volunteer organization for cash donations will be referred directly to that group. Callers with no preference will be provided (through the media or web page) a list of volunteer organizations accepting cash. The Cash Group will compile a daily report.

Support Group: provides or coordinates all logistic, technical, administrative, and security assistance for the Donations Management Task Force, for the warehouse and staging areas. The size and specific functions of this group will depend on the needs of the Task Force and the size and scope of the disaster.

3.5 Donations Task Force Facilities for Catastrophic Events

The number and type of facilities will be determined by the location, scale and type of event and the ability of the affected community to manage donations in a catastrophic event, the local donations management task force will be required to coordinate their activities on a regional or county wide basis. The County(s) will likely coordinate the donations management and volunteer labor missions or requests through the State EOC.

3.6 Warehouse Considerations

Any established warehouse will be located outside (e.g. 2 to 3 miles) the disaster area to keep the anticipated traffic congestion in the disaster area to a minimum, and should be located close to highways, air, rail, and water transport routes when possible. Signs directing vehicles and trucks to the reception center should be properly placed and clearly understandable. (In large-scale disasters, or those in congested or rural areas, a checkpoint system may be desirable to inspect, turn back unwanted or needed goods, or direct goods to a designated warehouse or local distribution center.)

Warehouses should be equipped with ramps, lifts and other equipment, covered storage space, flood lights, and conveyor belts to expeditiously transload, unload, sort, store, and/or dispatch goods on a 24-hour basis---if need be---to the disaster area and/or local distribution centers. Trucks will not remain at the site more than 24 hours. The center can be co-managed by State and Voluntary Agencies. The management of donations management programs is an international mission of the Seventh Day Adventist. Warehouses, small air fields, and county fairgrounds may be possible sites. Covered storage (e.g. tents, convention center, or gymnasium) may provide additional storage where weather and security issues are not critical. (Approximately 1/4 million square feet of covered space was needed for the Hurricane Andrew relief effort; more than 1.1 million square feet of warehouse space was required for the World Trade Center incident---these figures should be useful for planning a similar facility.)

Depending on the scale of the event and the anticipated and duration of the warehouse function, the Donations Task Force may want to consider the access to local labor sources and the availability of parking, shuttle buses, billeting and feeding for warehouse staff. The site should have a first aid station, security plan and a safety officer responsible for monitoring all activities, including those involving heavy equipment. Adequate sanitation facilities for volunteers and staff is a must.

Waste disposal operations and procedures should be defined since there may be considerable amounts of cardboard, paper, metal, and spoiled or unsafe containers of goods that require proper disposal.

The warehouse's organizational structure of the center reflect the Incident Command System (ICS) whereby operations, logistics, planning, and finances are structured functions so that anyone familiar with the NIMS structure can enter the system at any time.

Points of Distribution: (if needed) should be a church, community-based organization or volunteer agency facility, or local, State or Federal government site from which goods are dispersed directly to disaster victims or service agencies. These are generally managed locally and resupplied by parent organization and may be directly supplied by unexpected or corporate donors. PODs can be designed to be either drive through or walk up facilities.

3.6 Transportation

New York State's geography, road, rail and water systems, and the location, type and scale of the disaster will determine how goods are transferred. Logistics will coordinate closely with the New York State Department of Transportation, the Thruway Authority, the State Police, and Federal officials to see that critically needed items are not delayed, less critical items with a designated recipient or use are transferred, and unsolicited goods are directed to those areas of the State or region where they can be used.

In the optimum scenario, all shippers and donors will heed the advice of early press releases, web-page advisories, radio stations, weigh stations or toll booths and call the Donations Center 800# before travelling into the State or the disaster area; with this call, the State's Donations Center can advise if the goods are needed and either direct the trucker to a designated warehouse or another destination that can use the donated goods.

Volunteer groups sponsoring the shipment of goods into the disaster area should ensure that the goods are needed, that they (and not a third party) are the recipient in the area, that

they have labor sufficient to unload the goods, and that drivers know how to reach their facility. These goods should be clearly marked with the agency's name.

State control over traffic traveling to the disaster area will affect vehicles shipping donated goods. If local government is aware of donations coming to their location, the County and State should be notified with a description of the transportation asset being used to deliver the goods; including tractor and trailer license plate, vehicle description, driver description, and any vehicle identification numbers. Control or check points and weigh or toll stations can be used to regulate trucks, inspect the manifest and determine if the goods are expected by a particular agency or volunteer group. Drivers should have contact personnel at their destinations and should carry supporting documents, escort support may be desirable.

4.0 MANAGING VOLUNTEER AND GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

In a disaster related event, government must take full advantage of qualified volunteer organizations and Federal government resources to the extent that they are consistent with other stated goals. The purpose of this section is to provide guidance for coordinating and utilizing local spontaneous volunteers and taking advantage of the resources of FEMA. This guidance is not meant to be all-inclusive, but should provide advice for the efficient use and management of these under-used resources. To be effective, many of the elements of this plan must be undertaken before a disaster occurs.

4.1 Volunteer Resource Assumptions

The following assumptions guide the use and management of volunteers in disaster situations:

1. There is an established and verified need for volunteers and successful recovery efforts in a community impacted by a disaster require their use;
2. Communities in need and agencies using volunteers should have equal access to this important resource;
3. Because VOAD groups must be collaborative and depend on one another for resources and referrals, a strategic and coordinated distribution of volunteers is preferred;
4. VOAD groups accept and manage their own volunteers and should not discriminate in their employment practices;
5. All volunteers must be screened as part of an on-going process; screening is done by individual agencies to various degrees, using a range of methods;
6. Volunteers come from within the affected area---as well as from regional, state, national, and international origins---and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, recognizing the competence and spirit they bring to the response and recovery effort; and
7. All offers of volunteer services not accepted by the original recipient of the offer should be referred to a central point for wider consideration.

4.2 Volunteer Resource Types

It is helpful to recognize that each of the four primary volunteer groups should be approached and managed in different ways.

Professional: This group includes emergency personnel from jurisdictions outside the response area. They may be attached to emergency operations in their home regions. Professional personnel are certified or licensed, and include physicians, EMTs, nurses, and fire fighters. Often regulatory agencies within the affected area may waive or relax local certification requirements when there is a need for these people.

Traditional Affiliated: These volunteers are attached to a recognized voluntary agency. They are pre-trained for disaster response by the agency with which they are affiliated and form the core cadre for para-professional and non-professional volunteers.

Spontaneous From Within the Affected Area: Living in the affected area, these volunteers feel motivated by a degree of community ownership of the disaster. They have no association with recognized voluntary agencies and may have no formal training or relevant skills. The ideal situation is to refer them to traditional affiliated organizations that are already established.

Spontaneous From Outside the Affected Area: These volunteers are not from the impacted area and have no prior affiliation with recognized voluntary agencies. They may or may not have relevant skills. A pragmatic approach dictates whether local volunteers or outside-the-area volunteers are used in a given situation. The ideal situation is to require these volunteers to register, verify their skills and contact them if they are needed.

(Note: There are two “new” categories of disaster agencies: long-standing organizations without a specific history of disaster relief works, and ad hoc groups that spring into existence after a disaster. Long-standing agencies with 501(c)(3) [not-for-profit] status should be referred to the State VOAD for inclusion in relief operations and mentoring. New ad hoc organizations should not be relied upon as the problems associated with spontaneous groups may include: misusing equipment, misappropriating funds, lax safety and security, and attracting a criminal element. These problems, if present, would reflect poorly on the volunteer community in general and on your efforts in particular.)

4.3 National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD)

NVOAD is the national consortium of recognized Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). Its mission is to foster cooperation in mitigation and response and more effective service to people imperiled or impacted by disaster. It does this through cooperation, coordination, communications, education, mitigation, convening mechanisms, and outreach. The New York State VOADs are chartered by NVOAD and collaborate in accordance with national precedents.

Local VOAD groups with national affiliations are especially helpful and can form the core of an effective Donations Management Task Force. There are more than 20 recognized agencies, with decades of experience, using volunteers in emergency response and recovery. Each agency has established procedures for managing, recruiting, training, and using volunteers and common among them are systems that include: written enrollment, liability arrangements, formal training programs, command and supervision, and reserves planning and organization. Some agencies have developed special abilities in screening, recruiting, and

placing volunteers, while others have specialized in service delivery and organizing significant numbers of volunteers.

The FEMA Regional Volunteer Agency Coordinator (VOAD) and the FEMA Donations Coordinator should also be included in the planning and organizational efforts to lend expertise and assure interface with all aspects of the Federal relief program and the Federal Response Plan, including reimbursement. Regular meetings and specific tasks assigned to a variety of agencies are important for continuity and active participation and will help to ensure a consistent and coordinated response when disaster strikes. In addition to NYS-OEM, the team may include Adventist Community Services, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, local and regional food banks and shelters, Mennonite Disaster Services and the National Catholic Disaster Relief Committee.

It should be policy to encourage the use of voluntary agencies that have a responsible method for covering the liability related to volunteers (such as a liability clause in their corporate insurance policy) and ensure that they are signing-in unaffiliated volunteers (obtaining a signature for each) to document liability. A standing policy of not working with organizations that do not have a sign-in procedure is appropriate. It may be prudent to arrange for a letter from each voluntary agency, documenting that the agency provides liability coverage for all of its volunteers. The Donations Task Force should be familiar with the State's Good Samaritan Law and applicable volunteer liability laws.

Agencies prefer to use **affiliated volunteers** because they have a demonstrated commitment of time and effort as well as the orientation, training, and expertise in response and recovery procedures. They are also disciplined and highly responsive to direction from the organization's managers, and they are generally loyal, protective, and supportive of their agency.

Nonetheless, managers should expect that **unaffiliated volunteers**---who are generally driven by the same altruistic motivations that move affiliated volunteers---will present themselves for service in the affected area. Managers should also remember that unaffiliated volunteers may include highly competent, skilled individuals capable of providing quality service. As a result, discouraging this class as a whole is not recommended, and planning and organization are suggested for taking full advantage of this resource. It should be recognized that it takes an organized staff effort to determine skill sets and competency standards for each one of these volunteers.

4.4 Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (VOAD)

It should be policy that VOADs bringing donated goods into the disaster area or accepting donations on behalf of the disaster victims are responsible for:

1. Accepting only donations needed, or for which they have an identified use;
2. Securing warehouses and distribution centers;
3. Off-loading, sorting, repackaging, storing, and distributing any donations accepted by the VOAD; and
4. Informing the local government of any needs and unexpected shortfalls they experience.

4.5 Networking with Local Government Agencies

It is the State's policy to assist Local Government, as requested through the County and as appropriate. The Local Government's role, based on available resources, is to:

1. Assist the VOADs in reporting the needs to the Donations Task Force;
2. Assist with security at local distribution centers;
3. Communicate with community-level initiatives;
4. Inform Donations Task Force of donations problems in the field.

4.6 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The Federal government's role is to assist the State with additional Federal resources, to facilitate coordination among the State and the VOADs, and to discourage in-kind donations and urge cash donations. Specifically, FEMA's role is to support the State, as requested and required, in:

1. Assessing existing/proposed warehouses and other operational facilities, helping to establish a donations management system after disaster strikes, and supporting the Disaster Field Office donations coordination team;
2. Providing technical assistance, managerial support, enhanced voluntary agency coordination, donations intelligence, facility support, and international donations; and
3. Communicating and reinforcing to the public through the media the donations policy of State government, FEMA, and NVOAD to avoid unwanted appeals of goods and services.

The FEMA Donations Program maintains many valuable contacts in the non-profit sector and disaster voluntary agency communities, in business, labor, and industry and with past donors and several experienced disaster donations individuals. All of this information is available to the Donation Management Task Force and is part of the FEMA Donations Coordinator's contribution.

The network can provide possible assistance such as road and rail transportation (Gifts In-Kind, America; American Trucking Association; American Association of Railways), guidance (the U.S. Conference of Mayors; Sister Cities, International) and spontaneous volunteers support (Points of Light Foundation, Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; National Jaycees; Rotary International).

5.0 MEDIA CONSIDERATIONS

Controlling and managing the information output is critical. It is always helpful to develop a relationship with the media prior to a disaster event and provide information on points-of-contact ahead of time. The media can help by broadcasting useful information in public service announcements, affairs shows, and specials. Donations spokespersons must know what they want to say, pass along key messages and provide frequent access to informed officials.

While facilitating media interviews with victims can help relief agencies, interviews limited to those individuals with particularly traumatic or dramatic experiences can distort the larger picture. Attempting to stonewall, whitewash, or minimize obviously negative situations will destroy credibility for the current event and those in the future. The media are generally responsible and act in the public interest: they can stimulate donations and help insure that donations are appropriate to the needs of the affected community. Don't ask for it unless you absolutely need it, because you may become overwhelmed quickly and then not receive donations that *are* required.

The local, county or state and affiliated relief agencies should be specific and coordinated in their initial reports to best shape and temper the immediate public response: footage showing the flood of donations helps disseminate quickly the message that cash is preferred. A major disaster is treated as fast breaking news, so plan to answer questions fast. While printed news releases are good for background, situation reports and updates, live interviews are preferred and it is best if the person interviewed is an official and informed source. Because the same questions and areas of interest are generally repeated by the media in every disaster, Public Information Officers (PIO) should plan some responses and be available prior to the various media deadlines with candid answers.

Messages to the media need to be coordinated by the appropriate personnel at each level before they are released to the press. It is best if the story is consistent at all levels of government. An effective method in dealing with the media is to establish a Joint Information Center (JIC), where representatives of the various voluntary and government agencies meet to coordinate media relations. Although each voluntary agency remains responsible for its own media relations, the Joint Information Center makes it possible to have accurate and consistent information for the public.

The Donations Task Force Leader should maintain contact with the JIC Coordinator..

Maintain a regular schedule of information releases to State and local governments, to the volunteer agencies, and to local, State and Federal elected officials, with the understanding that the frequency of these releases will depend on the location, type and scale of the event. Make provisions to provide multi-lingual and hearing impaired capabilities in the area of information dissemination.

Helping the media meet their deadlines is important and will assure more effective use of the media to present your message. TV, radio, local press, national press, and wire service requirements are all different. For large events, expect requests from foreign media for interviews. Millions of dollars in cash donations were received from foreign sources during the World Trade Center collapse, and foreign media shares the credit for that generous response.

6.0 OTHER FACTORS

While others in the organization may have primary responsibility for the items below, the Donations Task Force Leader should be aware of them, understand their importance, and be prepared to assist others with collecting information or maintaining records relating to them.

6.1 Risk Management

The Donations Task Force should be in compliance with State and local laws and understand how flexibility in these laws can be used to support the operations. Subjects such as insurance, medical coverage, bonding of workers handling cash, workers' safety, workmen's

compensation, and other liability issues are important. Similarly, consider local or State laws applicable to disposal of waste, sanitation facilities on site, feeding facilities on site, storage of food and hazardous materials on site, and child labor practice. The most effective method of monitoring these factors is to coordinate with the appropriate government agencies or officials with the authority to find quick answers and waive requirements, if possible. Be very aware of accepting donations that may result in high disposal costs at the time of demobilization.

6.2 Security

Prepare for security of all personnel and each donations management facility. Each facility is likely to be a 24-hour operation and will require commensurate security.

Special security for certain incoming goods such as medicines and syringes, hazardous materials, and firearms may be necessary. Security measures include monitoring of staff so that valuable commodities are not removed from warehouses and sold on the on the street.

6.3 Recycling/Redistribution

There will be an abundance of goods that simply cannot be used in the immediate disaster situation, and arrangements must be made for managing these items. Recycling or redistribution to other needs is the first option to be considered. Contact the VOADs, NVOAD, and/or a voluntary organization with an international assistance focus.

6.4 Awareness of the Affected Community

Representation on the response Task Force should reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the affected community. To reach each segment of the community, use appropriate communication mechanisms (e.g., church, synagogue, mosque, established community programs, and leaders). Material translated into local languages should be available for all steps in using volunteers (recruitment, training, maintenance, and follow through). Sensitize volunteers to respect local customs, sensitivities and religious traditions.

6.5 Local Economy Issues

One goal of disaster relief and rehabilitation is the restoration of the local economy. Care must be taken to ensure relief contributions do not impede recovery. Large quantities of donated goods have a negative impact on local businesses working to re-establish their pre-disaster vitality. Demobilize the donations program as local business comes back on line. The donations program can then be utilized to fulfill unmet needs.

6.6 Environmental Impacts

Disposal of donated goods and environmental concerns are very much matters of public concern that must be taken into account in establishing a Donations Center. Know local laws that apply. Disposal of some items may require a contract with a hazardous material company. In isolated situations a request for waiver of a particular law may be necessary. Center managers must remain aware of environmental cleanup work that remains after a disaster has passed.

6.7 Accountability

Accountability is key. While a record of goods dispatched on a daily basis to the disaster area should be maintained, it is understood that perfect accountability may not be possible in

situations where there is high volume throughput. The top priority is always to immediately deliver critically needed items to where they are needed.

6.8 Demobilization

Demobilization is the downsizing of the donated goods and services operation, which should be shorter than the involvement of the voluntary agencies. Demobilization involves stepping back in terms of facilities, coordination, and other activities that can be transitioned to the affected local government or a particular voluntary agency group.

Demobilization should be planned for soon after the operation is underway, and implemented when there are signs of donor fatigue---that is, when the flow of goods starts to ebb. Close consultation with the voluntary agencies will help to determine this critical point in time. Demobilization should begin once the affected volunteer groups are able to handle the flow of goods and services, and the affected local government can oversee all aspects of the donations management program.

Generally, transitioning control of a major donations operation back to the voluntary agencies should be straightforward. Voluntary agencies are very familiar with all aspects of donated goods and services and only needed assistance because of the size of the event. If the flow of goods continues, consider requesting and supporting a single (or partnership) organization to handle a certain product. Certain organizations have a traditional interest and much experience in managing any given good (e.g. Goodwill Industries or Adventist Community Services and clothes), and take advantage of their expertise and in-place systems.

6.9 Call Center Issues

Call centers would be initiated in a large scale event and would normally be staffed by state government employees such as the Department of Taxation and Finance. But, in a small scale, local event, a single point of contact number for the public to access to answer questions on donations management issues, will serve to solve many issues for local government.

Any call-center should include user-friendly equipment and training for operators. Multi-lingual phone operators will be required. Hearing impaired capabilities should be built into the system.

The phone operator should know when to flag a supervisor. There will be extremely determined donors, Congressionally-driven initiatives, large or unique donations that may require special attention, or donations that include urgently needed items. "Special attention" simply means by-passing the 800-number temporarily and directly informing a member of the donations coordination team of the circumstances of the case. The donor should be assured that direct contact with a donations team member is being made on his behalf but that his information should still be entered into the database. The team member, being fully aware of policies, the needs, and other pertinent information should always be the person negotiating directly with the potential donor. One advantage of having an official script prepared by the Donations Management Task Force is that an official position backed up by fact will help convince a persistent donor that his goods and services may **not** be needed.

6.10 Cash Donations

There are many advantages to making cash contributions to aid the disaster relief effort. Cash helps agencies meet the precise needs of the disaster victims in the community.

Spending money in the disaster-affected community will help with the local economy whereas many free donated goods will compete with local businesses struggling in the post-disaster economy. Sending cash rather than truckloads of goods avoids the often difficult, labor-intensive logistical tasks such as off-loading goods, sorting, storing, repacking, and re-shipping the goods.

Consistent with one of the most important underlying principles in donations management, the government role is to support, strengthen, and build upon the existing network or capacity of the voluntary organizations active in disaster response and recovery. The donating public calling a government sponsored phone bank should be given the full list of the well-established voluntary organizations active in disaster that are confirmed to be fully involved in the disaster operation so that it can choose the organization it will support.

Cash Donations to a VOAD

The government may also accept the donation in a fund strictly for disaster response and recovery. It will be important to plan carefully how funds can be equitably distributed **before a disaster occurs**. It should always be remembered that the development of a highly visible fund for disaster relief may compete directly with the efforts of the traditional voluntary agencies which depend largely on donations of all kinds from the American public.

It is imperative that accurate accounts be kept of monies received and spent. Maintaining a strong sense of public trust is extremely important for all involved in the donations management effort, and the public trust can quickly be eroded if it appears that officials are implementing poor financial practices. Public trust must be maintained to earn the continued generosity of cash donors.

All cash matters should be handled by a financial manager for the facility. From the beginning, it is beneficial for that manager to have an understanding with the Donations Task Force concerning who is responsible for the bills in operating the facility and generally what are eligible costs, and verbal understandings may have to suffice initially. For example, an elected official may say "Do whatever has to be done to manage the donations," but clear documentation will always be useful later. Maintain all receipts for expenditures.

6.11 Warehouse Considerations

An effective system of receiving and unloading goods needs to be managed by experienced logistics personnel. It may not be reasonable to expect someone to learn this task on the job. Logistics coordinators may come from a VOAD group, a State agency or the National Guard if available.

The facility should include a staging area for trucks ready to unload, and for staff to inspect the cargo to determine the requirements and strategy for unloading. If the goods are critically needed, be prepared to give the driver directions to the proper distribution center in the disaster area or transload the goods onto a more appropriate vehicle. When designated goods intended for a specific voluntary agency or purpose arrive at the warehouse site, the goods should be dispatched as quickly as possible unless the cargo is clearly in an unacceptable form or the driver does not have adequate documentation that the cargo includes needed goods. Ideally, a representative from the sponsoring voluntary agency should be working with the Task Force at the warehouse site to advise the agency's facilities of the arrival.

It will be critical to maintain an inventory listing of available goods at each center so that the Donations Coordination Task Force can match the goods with requests from the affected community. The inventory also needs to be shared with the County and State EOCs so that requests for donated goods can be matched with regional needs.

Equipment is needed at the warehouse site to unload trucks, sort, reship and temporarily store goods, and to manage waste. The following is an important but partial list of those goods:

1. Telehandler (Lull)
2. Forklifts
3. Floodlights
4. Pallet jacks or motorized dollies
5. handtrucks
6. Ramps
7. Boxes - various sizes
8. Shrink-wrapping equipment
9. Extra pallets
10. Work Gloves;
11. Signs and means to post them
12. Markers
13. Tables for sorting
14. Fuel and oil supply for forklifts
15. Empty trailers, or storage containers, modular container
16. Refrigeration truck or trailer
17. Hand carts, hand dollies
18. Refuse handling equipment, dumpsters, recycling containers
19. Sanitary facilities for staff

An organized floor plan will be necessary as well as segregated storage of commodities. Locked and secured areas will be needed for controlled items like medicines, syringes and firearms, and hazardous substances like paint and chemicals. Low-priority goods should be stored in such a manner that they are not in the way of item for which there is a high demand.

Volunteer agencies may provide further guidance.

Truck escort service may be required, even if a particular jurisdiction does not require it. This may involve the police and/or local people who know the area. Taxi drivers may also be suitable for this assistance. Appropriate maps and handouts should be made available at the reception center.