



ing disaster relief organizations
 the National Voluntary Organizations
 Disaster (NVOAD).

Community Services
 Radio Relay League, Inc.
 can Red Cross
 Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team)
 arities USA
 Disaster Response
 eformed World Relief Committee
 he Brethren
 rld Service
 pal Church
 aster Service
 al Relief Friendship Foundation
 isaster Response
 Disaster Service
 mergency Response Team
 rganization for Victim Assistance
 Disaster Response
 Medical Teams, International
 x Society
 of Light Foundation
 n Church (USA)
 ernational, Inc.
 on Army
 rvest National Food Bank Network
 St. Vincent de Paul
 aptist Convention
 ation of North America
 odist Church Committee on Relief
 es Service Command
 of America
 on

ted: August 4, 1999



FEMA



NVOAD

L-217 / September 1999



*When Disaster
 Strikes...*



**Donated Goods
 and
 Volunteers May
 Be Needed...**

*HOW YOU
 CAN HELP*





Contributions to voluntary agencies also for other reasons. The voluntary often spend the money in the local area thus helping the local economy get a boost. Cash donations rather than donated goods avoid the complicated, time-consuming process of collecting, packing, transporting, unloading, storing, repackaging, and distributing. Cash donations to voluntary agencies meet peoples' needs more precisely as the agency is in a better position to know what the people need or can provide for people to purchase what they need. Contributions to recognized relief organizations are tax deductible.

CLOTHING IS RARELY A USEFUL ITEM TO COLLECT FOR DISASTER RELIEF.

Clothing is rarely a useful item to collect for the disaster area because it is hard to sort, pack, transport, store, and distribute. Boxes of clothing take up valuable space and frequently end up being discarded. *Constructive things to do with used clothing are to have a yard-sale to raise money for disaster relief organizations that provide services that the disaster survivors need. Used clothing and other small items can be donated locally to help community organizations in the local area.*

FORM THE NEED BEFORE BEGINNING A COLLECTION OF DONATED GOODS.

An effective way the public can assist is to contact an experienced disaster relief organization for either financial contributions or in-kind services that the organizations need. Many of the experienced agencies involved in disaster relief

have toll-free numbers for the public to call in order to learn what kind of donated goods might be needed in the disaster area. Often, when large-scale disasters occur in a State, that State's Office of Emergency Management, working closely with the voluntary agencies, will establish a toll-free Donations Coordination Hotline for the public to call in order to find out what donated goods and services are needed, if any.

It is often a mistake to assume what is needed in a disaster. Over the years, there has been considerable waste of countless tons of clothing because it was collected and sent with no prior coordination. *Donors should be wary of anyone who claims that "everything is needed" in a disaster. Try to get more precise information before collecting any donated goods.*

4. DONATE THROUGH AN ORGANIZATION.

It is never a good idea to collect goods for disaster relief without a firm plan in place that confirms the goods are needed and that addresses who will receive the goods, how they will be transported and how the goods will be distributed. Experienced disaster relief organizations base their disaster relief activities on overall disaster situation assessments and detailed needs assessments. Many relief groups, if interested in the donated goods, have some infrastructure in place to store and distribute the goods. Coordination with the relief group is essential so that the right goods are collected, the right amount is collected, and that the logistics issues of transportation, warehouse and staging area coordination, and distribution are fully discussed.

Donors will find that it is often most practical to focus on one or two items that an organization says is needed rather than collect a variety of items and have boxes filled with mixed goods.

5. TRANSPORTATION MUST BE PLANNED IN ADVANCE.

Transportation is frequently a major challenge for donors. It must be planned for in advance otherwise a donor can easily be stuck with large amounts of donated goods and no means to bring it to the recipient agency in the disaster area.

Do not assume unsolicited relief supplies will be transported at no charge or at government expense. The donor has the primary responsibility to find transportation for the donated goods. Local trucking firms may be willing to help in times of disaster, if funds are available to cover part of the expense. *Often times donors raise money themselves to put towards the transportation of the donated supplies.*

6. DONATED GOODS MUST BE WELL PACKED AND LABELED.

After confirming that the goods are needed and there is a plan to receive, store, and distribute them be sure that the goods are properly sorted, packaged and labeled. If unsure, discuss these steps with an experienced disaster relief organization. Specific content lists should be taped to the side of each box sent. This allows the receiving officials to determine what is in the box without opening it, and gets it to the proper distribution location in a timely manner. *Put yourself in the shoes of the person on the receiving end of the shipment and think about making the unloading, unpacking, warehousing, and distribution as simple as possible.*

7. VOLUNTEERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO AFFILIATE WITH A VOLUNTARY AGENCY INVOLVED IN DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY.

Before the next disaster strikes, get some disaster training. You will be in a better position to find meaningful volunteer work at the time of a disaster. Volunteering through an organization

