

The National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) recognizes that volunteers are inherently valuable and, when properly coordinated, make up an essential part of the human resources needed to respond to disasters of all magnitudes. In times of disaster, people are drawn to help their neighbors physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

After a disaster there is a need for housing for volunteers who come into the area to assist the community in its recovery. There is a short-term need for early response volunteers which may be followed by a long-term need for volunteer work-teams that come in to muck out, repair, and rebuild. Hosting volunteers requires careful planning for facility use and services that may be offered.

Acknowledging that major disasters present significant challenges to those individuals and organizations responding, the National VOAD Volunteer Management Committee has developed this Points of Consensus document to provide best practices in the area of volunteer housing.

1. Volunteer host sites will be respectful of volunteers regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, spiritual/religious practices or disabilities.
2. Volunteer host sites will be established and remain connected to their local community organizations active in the disaster recovery effort.
3. Volunteer host sites will ensure their locations are safe, secure, sanitary and in compliance with any housing codes.
4. Volunteer host sites will ensure they are financially stable and sustainable.
5. Volunteer host sites will provide adequate space per person for sleeping arrangements and gender separation.
6. Volunteer host sites will have sufficient toilets, sinks and showers for volunteers or make suitable arrangements with other facilities in the community.
7. Volunteer host sites will be suitably equipped for meal preparation, food storage and dining.
8. Volunteer host sites will provide adequate space for volunteer leisure time.
9. Volunteer host sites will ensure there is adequate parking space for volunteers' transportation.
10. Volunteer host sites will have a safety plan in place and available to volunteers.
11. Volunteer host sites will provide separation between areas assigned to volunteer groups and normal day to day business activities, e.g. child daycare/education programs, being conducted onsite.
12. Volunteer host sites will provide volunteers with appropriate on-call emergency contacts
13. Volunteer host sites will communicate to volunteers all policies of the host site.
14. Volunteer host sites will maintain records on financial transactions.
15. Volunteer host sites will ensure the facility is ready for volunteers to arrive with attention to cleanliness, supplies and maintenance.