



National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

COOPERATION | COMMUNICATION | COORDINATION | COLLABORATION

Volunteer Wellness Guidelines

The National VOAD Disaster Health Committee identifies and promotes leading practices and initiatives that support a holistic approach to health for members, partners, volunteers and the communities we serve throughout the disaster cycle.

The Volunteer Wellness Guidelines offer guidance for voluntary organizations active in providing disaster response and recovery services as they implement high quality support to volunteers to serve individuals, families and communities affected by disaster. These guidelines will assist National VOAD member organizations in encouraging wellness for volunteers.

- National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (National VOAD) member agencies promote physical and emotional health for their volunteers prior to disaster response assignment.
 - National VOAD member agencies are encouraged to conduct volunteer physical and emotional health checks before assignment.
 - As much as possible, the National VOAD member agency provides situational awareness of current conditions and services available in the assignment area, whether a volunteer will be assigned (in-person or virtually), or serving locally.
 - Whenever possible, the National VOAD member agency provides assignment-specific training prior to the assignment.

- National VOAD member agencies inform volunteers of known environmental, physical and emotional characteristics of the disaster response environment before assignment.
 - Presentation of this information may be written or verbal.
 - National VOAD member agencies are encouraged to use trusted, verified sources to inform and equip volunteers prior to and during assignments.
 - Volunteers are made aware of necessary attributes for the expected tasks, including procedures or protocols to maintain safety, physical health (i.e. immunizations), and mental health during the service period.
 - National VOAD member agencies determine if Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and/or special qualifications may be required in a particular assignment/service location and ensure this information is communicated effectively so those assigned are appropriately prepared and equipped.
 - National VOAD member agencies make available to volunteers contact information for physical, emotional, and/or spiritual care providers to access as needed during the period of service.

- National VOAD member agencies work with volunteers to determine their physical and emotional ability to accept an assignment.
 - Volunteers freely determine their own ability to respond within the disaster environment and function within their assigned role.

- Strategies for implementing site-specific training are pre-planned by voluntary organizations to the greatest extent possible, with consideration given to different training materials necessary to meet expected physical and emotional health and safety hazards.
- National VOAD member agencies have a process in place to support the physical, emotional and/or spiritual health of volunteers during assignment.
- National VOAD member agencies provide an opportunity for volunteers to discuss their assignment prior to its conclusion, and/or have a process for outreach to volunteers after the conclusion of an assignment to offer support and/or trusted resources for physical, emotional and/or spiritual needs the volunteer may encounter post-assignment.
 - Contact with volunteers are made in a manner that respects confidentiality.