



Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency
645 New London Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920
www.riema.ri.gov/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VOLUNTEERS AND DONATION MANAGEMENT

RIEMA advises how to volunteer or offer donations during times of disaster

Cranston, RI – “An influx of resources that are not requested, while well-intended, can significantly slow down response and recovery operations and can actually create a burden on the state and local officials engaged in response.” stated FEMA Administrator R. David Paulison.

“The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency is reiterating the FEMA directive of how to volunteer or donate goods during times of disaster,” states Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Executive Director J. David Smith. “You help is always needed and appreciated. Volunteering or donating through planned channels will significantly increase the impact of your offer.”

Donating in Times of Disaster Facts:

1. Financial Contributions Are Preferred

Cash donations help to avoid the labor and expense of sorting, packing, transporting and distributing donated goods, and relief agencies can use cash to meet survivors’ specific needs more quickly. Check to see if your company has matching gifts, and be sure to follow their requirements.

2. Donate through an Experienced Disaster Relief Organization

Relief agencies prefer the versatility of cash donations; however, some have the infrastructure in place to store and distribute donated goods. To prevent waste, donations of goods should be made only to agencies that have requested specific items. Some un requested donated goods get delivered to parking lots with no plans for distribution and then become additional waste piles to be dealt with by public works and disaster workers.

3. Confirm the Need before Collecting

Donors should be wary of anyone who claims that "everything is needed." Many groups have been disappointed that their efforts and the goods they collected were not appreciated. A community hit by a disaster, however, does not have the time, manpower or money to dispose of unneeded donations. Get precise information and confirm the need before collecting any donated goods.

4. For more information about donating goods and services or making a cash gift please visit www.aidmatrix.org/fema. This site works for most states and most disasters.

Volunteering in Times of Disaster:

1. The best way to volunteer is to affiliate with an organization and learn how to help BEFORE a disaster.
2. Volunteer through an experience disaster relief organization
 - a. Volunteer with your local municipality’s emergency management office- <http://www.riema.ri.gov/numbers/local/>
 - b. Volunteer with the American Red Cross – Rhode Island chapter - <http://www.riredcross.org/>
 - c. Volunteer with Citizen Corps - <http://www.citizencorps.gov/programs/>
 - d. Volunteer Center of RI will coordinate spontaneous volunteers during emergencies – www.vcri.org

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Never self deploy. Only federal organizations and state Emergency Management Agencies deploy first responder and volunteer organizations.

Gustav affected states specific contact information for donations:

ALABAMA

- www.servealabama.gov
- Nationwide toll-free number for donations of cash, goods and volunteering:
1-877-273-5018

GEORGIA

- <http://www.gema.state.ga.us/>

MISSISSIPPI

- www.volunteermississippi.org
- Another website to access resources and information is the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service <http://www.mcvs.org/>
- Nationwide toll-free number for donations of cash, goods, and volunteering:
1-866-472-8265

TENNESSEE

- Nationwide toll-free number for donations of cash and goods: 1-866-586-4483

LOUISIANA

- www.volunteerlouisiana.gov
- From outside of the State, callers may dial 1-800-755-5175 to donate goods.

OKLAHOMA

- <http://www.ok.gov/>

TEXAS

- www.texasresponds.org