



EF 17 – Volunteers and Donations Management

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Tasked Agencies	
Primary County Agency(s)	Health and Social Services
Supporting County Agency(s)	County OES
Primary City Agency(s)	Fire Department
Supporting City Agency(s)	Police Department
Community Partner(s)	American Red Cross Salvation Army Community and Faith-based organizations Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster
State Agency(s)	California Volunteers
Federal Agency(s)	Federal Emergency Management Agency

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Emergency Function (EF) 17 describes how the County and City will coordinate with community and faith-based organizations to:

- Effectively coordinate the activities/management of pre-identified and established affiliated volunteers and solicited donations.
- Coordinate with community and faith-based groups to manage spontaneous and/or unaffiliated volunteers, as well as unsolicited donations (physical and monetary).

Operational priorities for EF 17 include:

- Coordinate efforts by volunteer organizations during response through close collaboration.
- Facilitate efficient and timely use of donated funds to meet unmet human needs.
- Manage efficient storage and distribution of material donations.

Preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities that may be conducted to complete these priorities are listed in Appendix B.

1.2 Scope

The following activities are within the scope of EF 17:

- Coordinate the disaster response activities of volunteers affiliated with County- and City-recognized community and faith-based groups.
- Coordinate and/or provide guidance on the management and/or utilization of solicited donations (physical and monetary) received by County- and City-recognized community and faith-based groups.

- Managing spontaneous/unaffiliated volunteers and unsolicited donations and referring those resources to appropriate community and faith-based groups.
- Providing guidance to community and faith-based groups engaged in the management of spontaneous/unaffiliated volunteers and/or unsolicited donations as requested.

This annex does not supersede the plans, policies, or procedures of voluntary organizations, nor does it affect donations or volunteer assistance offered directly to voluntary agency partners. This annex also does not address organized volunteer resources that have been pre-vetted to support a specific function.

1.3 Policies and Authorities

None at this time.

1.3.1 Policies

The following policies are currently in place:

- None at this time.

1.3.2 Agreements

The following agreements are currently in place:

- None at this time.

2 Situation and Assumptions

2.1 Situation

The following considerations should be taken into account when planning for the coordination and management of volunteers and donations:

- During large-scale incidents, a surge of spontaneous/unaffiliated volunteers and/or unsolicited donations may jam distribution channels, overwhelm government and volunteer agencies, and hamper response operations.
- Despite good intentions, spontaneous/unaffiliated volunteers and unsolicited donations during a disaster are often underutilized and can be problematic for established response agencies.
- The lack of an organized system to manage physical donations (i.e., receiving, sorting, prioritizing, and distributing) has the potential to severely reduce the effectiveness of response operations.
- Careful planning reduces problems associated with spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers.
- The timely release of information to the public regarding needs and collection points is essential to the management of donated goods and services.
- Coordinating the efforts of multiple volunteer agencies is necessary to avoid duplication of effort and redundancy in the provision of services.
- Reducing the potential for unethical management of monetary donations will be important in a disaster.

2.2 Assumptions

EF 17 is based on the following planning assumptions:

- Donations of unsolicited, non-useful, and unwanted goods can be expected.
- Lack of an organized system of management for establishing needs and for receiving, sorting, prioritizing, and distributing donations could result in chaos.
- Careful planning will reduce or eliminate problems associated with unsolicited donations and spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers.
- Volunteer organizations such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, United Way, church groups, and other locally established volunteer groups are the most appropriate organizations to support the management of volunteers and donations.
- The timely release of information to the public regarding needs and collection points is essential to the management of donated goods and services.
- Government and volunteer agencies have access to personnel who can support the operations presented in this plan.
- Personnel from coordinating and cooperating agencies will be adequately trained and prepared to conduct operations.
- Public offers of assistance may be in the form of money, food, clothing, products, equipment, in-kind services, or volunteered time. Monetary donations, staple goods, and items specifically requested best serve the needs of victims.

3 Roles and Responsibilities of Tasked Agencies

See Appendix B for a checklist of responsibilities for tasked agencies by phase of emergency management.

4 Concept of Operations

4.1 General

All EF 17–related activities will be performed in a manner that is consistent with the National Incident Management System and the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

Requests for assistance with volunteer and donations management will first be issued in accordance with established mutual aid agreements; once those resources have been exhausted, a request may be forwarded to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

4.2 Volunteer Coordination

Volunteer coordination matches volunteers with established voluntary organizations and procedures to effectively channel offers of assistance from unaffiliated citizens to meet disaster-related needs. The County and City encourage individuals to affiliate with a local or other recognized organization to facilitate their involvement in relief activities. When implemented, this volunteer coordination system should be supplemental to, and not duplicative of, established volunteer coordination systems in local volunteer centers, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster, Citizen Corps Councils, or other existing programs.

4.3 Donations Management

Donations Management involves coordinating a system that receives and distributes unsolicited, undesignated goods, matching them with victims who demonstrate a need. The County and City look principally to private voluntary organizations with established donations systems already in place to receive and deliver appropriate donated goods to disaster victims. The County and City encourage the donation of cash to these organizations rather than clothing, food, or other goods. Donations management activities include providing guidance to citizens, managing a telephone registration and database system, establishing one or more collection facilities, creating a system to sort and distribute donated items, and storing donated resources until they are needed.

4.4 Access and Functional Needs

Provision of EF 17–related activities will take into account populations with access and functional needs. The needs of children and adults who experience access and functional needs shall be identified and planned for as directed by policy makers and according to State and federal regulations and guidance.

4.5 Coordination with Other EFs

The following EFs support EF 17–related activities:

- **EF 1 – Transportation:** Coordinate transportation of donated goods and volunteers to impacted areas.
- **EF 6 – Care and Shelter:** Identify unmet community needs and coordinate distribution of goods and services to impacted populations.
- **EF 7 – Resources:** Identify resource needs and coordinate with EF 17 to address them.
- **EF 8 – Public Health and Medical:** Coordinate healthcare volunteer (e.g., Medical Reserve Corps) support.
- **EF 15– Public Information:** Inform the public of how to effectively support response and recovery through volunteering and donations.

5 EF Annex Development and Maintenance

CAL FIRE will be responsible for coordinating regular review and maintenance of this annex. Each primary and supporting agency will be responsible for developing plans and procedures that address assigned tasks.

6 Appendices

- Appendix A – EF 17 Resources
- Appendix B – Roles and Responsibilities

Appendix A EF 17 Resources

The following resources provide additional information regarding EF 17 volunteer and donations related issues at the local, state, and federal level:

City

- None at this time

County

- None at this time

State

- California Emergency Plan: EF 17 – Volunteer and Donations Management

Federal

- National Response Framework

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Appendix B Roles and Responsibilities

The following checklist identifies key roles and responsibilities for EF 17 – Volunteers and Donations. It is broken out by phase of emergency management to inform tasked agencies of what activities they might be expected to perform before, during, and after an emergency to support the volunteers and donations function. All tasked agencies should maintain agency-specific plans and procedures that allow them to effectively accomplish these tasks.

Preparedness

Preparedness activities take place **before** an emergency occurs and include plans or preparations made to save lives and help response and recovery operations. Preparedness roles and responsibilities for EF 17 include the following:

- ☐ Develop operational plans for EF 17 activities.
- ☐ Participate in EF 17–related trainings and exercises as appropriate.
- ☐ Conduct planning with cooperating agencies and other EF groups to refine volunteer and donations operations.
- ☐ Encourage individuals interested in volunteering to directly affiliate with a voluntary organization or agency of their choice.
- ☐ Conduct volunteer-related training and exercise that address volunteer and donations management.
- ☐ Prepare and maintain plans and procedures, resource inventories, personnel rosters, and resource mobilization information necessary for the lead agency to carry out its responsibilities.
- ☐ Ensure that key agency personnel are trained in their responsibilities and duties.
- ☐ Coordinate with the Public Information Officer (PIO) to brief the local media so they understand how the donations program will work. This will enable them to advise the public of specific donation needs, discourage donations of unneeded items, disseminate information on the availability of donated goods, and provide information for potential volunteers.
- ☐ Coordinate with the PIO to brief citizen groups on how they can contribute to disaster relief with their donations through volunteer efforts.
- ☐ Establish mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding with local agencies and neighboring jurisdictions that can provide additional resources and assistance.
- ☐ Ensure that systems are in place to identify and validate the credentials of volunteers, particularly medical personnel, who volunteer their services during an incident.

Response

Response activities take place **during** an emergency and include actions taken to save lives and prevent further property damage in an emergency situation. Response roles and responsibilities for EF 15 include the following:

- ☐ Provide situational updates to the EOC as required to maintain situational awareness and establish a common operating picture.
- ☐ Provide a representative to the EOC, when requested, to support EF 17 activities.

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- ☐ Volunteer agency representatives report to the EOC as requested.
- ☐ Appoint members of the volunteer and donations management units.
- ☐ Activate a donations hotline.
- ☐ Identify and prepare specific sites for donations management facilities, and begin assembling needed equipment and supplies.
- ☐ Identify and activate staff for donations management facilities.
- ☐ Encourage individuals interested in volunteering personal services to directly affiliate with a voluntary organization or agency of their choice.
- ☐ Encourage donations from the general public to be made as cash to voluntary, faith-based, and/or community organizations that provide services to disaster victims.
- ☐ Provide the media (through the PIO) with information regarding donation needs and procedures, updating this information regularly.
- ☐ Catalog and update local unmet needs and communicate those needs to volunteer and donations primary support staff.
- ☐ Continually assess donations management operations, and determine when the donations management facilities should close down or be consolidated and when the donations management program can be terminated.
- ☐ Keep records of donations received and thank donors, where appropriate.

Recovery

Recovery activities take place **after** an emergency occurs and include actions to return to a normal or an even safer situation following an emergency. Recovery roles and responsibilities for EF 15 include the following:

- ☐ Demobilize response activities.
- ☐ Maintain incident documentation to support public and individual assistance processes.
- ☐ Participate in all after-action activities and implement corrective actions as appropriate.
- ☐ Transition to demobilization based on indicators, including, but not limited to, immediate needs being met and when donor fatigue becomes apparent.
- ☐ Release volunteers and staff no longer needed to support operations.
- ☐ Close facilities no longer needed to support operations.
- ☐ Properly distribute or dispose of surplus goods.
- ☐ Coordinate with the PIO to update the public on unmet needs.
- ☐ Ensure that public “thank-you’s” are published and broadcast to recognize the generosity of those donating goods and services during the incident.

Mitigation

Mitigation activities take place **before and after** an emergency occurs and includes activities that prevent an emergency, reduce the chance of an emergency happening, or reduce the damaging effects of unavoidable emergencies. Mitigation roles and responsibilities for EF 17 include the following:

- ☐ Participate in the hazard mitigation planning process.
- ☐ Identify agencies and resources that may support volunteer and donations management in the community.

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- ☐ Provide agency and incident data to inform development of mitigation projects to reduce hazard vulnerability.
- ☐ Develop a volunteer and donations management training program.
- ☐ Conduct public information campaigns, and continuously remind and encourage citizens, to:
 - Join recognized community and faith-based organizations' cadre of disaster volunteers before a disaster strikes.
 - Contribute financial/monetary donations rather than physical donations unless otherwise requested.
 - Give charitable donations directly to disaster relief organizations.

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