

## LDR VOLUNTEER HOST SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) provides this information as a resource for those wishing to utilize volunteers for disaster response. It is our hope that this information results in meaningful service opportunities. Neither Evangelical Lutheran Church in America nor Lutheran Disaster Response assumes liability for your participation in any of these opportunities. Please follow all recommendations and restrictions from your local state Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and Community Health Departments continuing to stay up to date with any changes as they occur. Any forms or use of equipment or facilities should be discussed and/or reviewed by legal counsel or insurance provider.*

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Facts**

- *Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.*
- *Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19.*
- *There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.*
- ***The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.***

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html>

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### **General Guidelines**

1. **Consider local volunteers** (i.e. volunteers who do not require overnight accommodations away from their place of residence) as a best practice. Housing for volunteers will require very specific protocols to be set in place, before scheduling any volunteers.
  2. Stay up to date with local and state health department and CDC recommendations.
  3. Post volunteer safety and site protocols visibly and in multiple locations, such as hand washing procedures and social distancing practices. Update as necessary.
  4. Request volunteers limit visiting large public gatherings as much as possible for two weeks (14 days) prior to and during their trip to help limit potential exposure.
  5. If a volunteer needs to leave the site for any reason, a group leader needs prior notification – no exceptions. Individuals going off-site should be required to wear a mask and take necessary social distancing precautions while away from the site.
  6. Request that each volunteer has their his/her own thermometer to check his/her own temperature daily while on site.
  7. At the beginning of each workday, every volunteer should be required to check and report temperatures.
  8. Develop a procedure for a volunteer to self-quarantine. If the volunteer is staying at a host site, they will need to stay in a designated “quarantine room” until other arrangements off-site can be made. In the case of a volunteer exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms, the volunteer team leader and/or volunteer coordination team should contact the local health department immediately. Every person that the symptomatic volunteer has encountered will need to be notified so they are able to take appropriate steps, which may require self-quarantining.
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9. Think outside the box on possible funding streams, grants, and partnerships to support various types of projects and/or the need to pay for contractors or other professional services.

### **Before Volunteers Arrive**

1. Communicate with volunteer teams prior to their arrival, especially if your area changes travel, shelter-in-place, and other guidance that would affect their trip.
2. Request volunteers to begin monitoring their health and temperature two weeks (14 days) prior to their arrival.
3. People who have experienced a fever of 100°F or above in the last two weeks (14 days) should not volunteer. This also includes people who have been in contact with anyone that has been diagnosed or presumed to have COVID-19 in the previous two weeks (14 days).
4. Volunteers should be asked if they or anyone on the team has been around anyone that has traveled outside of their state/country, or an area that has been considered a “COVID-19 hotspot” two weeks (14 days) prior their first volunteer day, including the arrival day. They should not volunteer.
5. Ask the volunteer or volunteer group team leader to develop a plan in case someone has a fever at or above 100°F during the trip.
6. Volunteers should be asked to clean and sanitize any tools, equipment, coolers, and water coolers prior to loading and upon arrival at volunteer hosting or work site.
7. Volunteer forms should be received prior to assigning any task(s). This includes the volunteer release of liability. This release should also include volunteer acknowledgment that they may encounter people who may have COVID-19.
8. Develop a volunteer agreement stating the volunteer agree to abide by the site rules especially as pertains to COVID-19, including things like making daily temperature checks, utilizing required PPE, etc., and acknowledging that they have not participated in any activities prior to arrival (such as visiting hot spots or attending large gatherings, or whatever the current recommendations may be) that would deem the volunteer ineligible to volunteer. Consult your legal counsel as well as insurance carrier before you use the agreement form(s).

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

1. Request volunteers supply their own personal cloth face masks, recommending 1-2 per day they plan to be working. It is also advised they bring Ziploc bags to store soiled masks.
2. There is a variety of different PPE that may be needed by the volunteers other than their personal cloth face masks, depending on the assigned tasks. It is important that you have a good supply of the specified PPE; for example, food service gloves, N-95 respirators, Tyvek suits, goggles, heavy boots, and gloves will be needed for demolition/muck-out work.

## **LDR VOLUNTEER HOST SITE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Hand Washing**

1. Post detailed hand washing procedures in multiple locations.
2. Hand cleaning is essential and must be available at project locations and host site(s). It is preferred that hot water be available, but some projects may only have cold water available. Provide paper towels to dry hands, and a location to dispose of the trash.
3. Provide hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol in multiple locations at the project and host site(s) and request the volunteers also bring a supply of hand sanitizer (60% alcohol).

### **Hosting Site and Meals**

1. Food preparation and serving must be done with service gloves and face masks (outside groups providing food must do the same). Develop a food safety protocol checklist, following your local area's recommendations. Post this checklist and provide an orientation to all volunteers working in this area, update as needed per local health department requirements and restrictions.
2. Food preparation needs to allow for social distancing of six feet between workstations
3. Buffet style food service is strongly discouraged.
4. All hard surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized every two hours.
5. Family units\* <sup>1</sup>should be limited to 3-5 people and should remain together the entire time, including for breaks and meals.
6. Require staff and volunteers to immediately wash their hands with soap and hot water when arriving or returning to host site.
7. It is important to maintain proper social distancing of at least six feet in common areas. Ask the volunteers to refrain from gathering or hanging out in high traffic areas: restrooms, kitchen, and dining facilities.
8. Sleeping quarters should be separated with dividers or may be grouped by the family unit\* ensuring six-foot social distancing requirements.
9. Communicate with the volunteer(s) that they need to contain their personal items neatly and bring plastic bags for soiled clothing.
10. All areas will need to be routinely cleaned and sanitized, daily. The volunteers can assist in this, being required to disinfect all hard surfaces in the sleeping areas and bath/shower rooms. Disinfectant wipes and sprays will need to be provided for the volunteers' use.
11. Volunteer should be requested to bring your own toiletries, towels, and washcloths.
12. Encourage volunteers to bring their own bed linens, pillows, cots/air mattresses. If beds/cots are provided the volunteers should strip their bed linens and place in provided container or plastic bag. When a plastic container is used, it must be sanitized after every use.

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<sup>1</sup> Family Unit is defined as the immediate family members that are volunteering and traveling together, or the individuals that are members of a volunteer team, traveling/arriving in the same vehicle. In most instances these individuals will eat and work together at the same site.

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### Work Sites

1. Recommend the client(s) have alternative housing available while work is being done on their residence, if possible. If the client cannot secure alternative housing, try to secure funding for a time-limited hotel stay or other alternative housing.
2. When completing interior repairs on a client's home and alternative housing cannot be obtained, secure the areas being repaired with plastic and tape them off.
3. When using power tools, assign the power tool to one person for the workday.
4. All shared work tools should be disinfected at the end of the workday. If power tools must be shared, disinfect between users. When disinfecting power tools, they must be unplugged first and then disinfected.
5. When disinfecting power tools, use disinfecting wipes rather than disinfecting spray.
6. Personal protective equipment used on site such as gloves, respirator masks, and/or hardhats will be assigned to an individual and remain with that same person the entire time (volunteers will be responsible for keeping track of their own PPE).
7. When working on job sites outside your family unit\*<sup>2</sup>, plan work to include social distancing according to state and local requirements (currently six feet of physical distance)

### First Aid and Emergency Planning

1. Develop a risk management plan that addresses possible accidents, safety, natural and manmade disasters.
2. Stay current with any recommendations that may change from your local and state health department.
3. When an individual is wearing a mask, they can easily be overcome with CO<sub>2</sub> or heat.
4. Develop sheltering/evacuation plans for the of natural disasters that are common for your area, such as tornado, flash flood, fire, earthquake for the volunteers while they are under your supervision.
5. Supply a first aid kit in areas where volunteers/staff are working, or meeting.
6. Provide fire extinguisher(s) for kitchen and sleeping areas.

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<sup>2</sup> Family Unit is defined as the immediate family members that are volunteering and traveling together, or the individuals that are members of a volunteer team, traveling/arriving in the same vehicle.

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## LDR VOLUNTEER HOST SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

### After Returning Home

1. Require the volunteers to continue monitoring their own temperature daily for two weeks (14 days) after volunteering or returning home and immediately contact the volunteer point of contact if they experience COVID-19 symptoms or a temperature of 100 degrees or higher.
2. Thank your volunteers for their service. The more a volunteer feels valued the more likely that volunteer will continue/return.
3. Continue to communicate with the volunteers on what is still needed or has been fulfilled.

### Suggested Supplies

Hand sanitizer (large containers to refill smaller bottles)

Hand soap

Disinfectant Spray

Disinfectant Wipes

Trash containers

Various sizes of trash bags

Various sizes of Ziploc bags

Extra cloth masks

Forehead Non-contact Infrared Thermometer

Extra thermometers

Tissues (multiple boxes)

Paper towels (multiple rolls)

General rags for cleaning

Disposable food service gloves

Variety of cleaning gloves

### References and Author Notes:

Lutheran Disaster Response-US (LDR) is the domestic disaster response program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). LDR-US represents 65 ELCA synods and 30+ LDR-affiliated social ministry organizations across the United States.”

\*Family Unit is defined as the immediate family members that are volunteering and traveling together, or the individuals that are members of a volunteer team, traveling/arriving in the same vehicle. In most instances these individuals will eat and work together at the same site. We recommend the team size to be 3-5 individuals, to enable safe social distancing.