

LDR VOLUNTEER RECOMMENDATIONS

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) provides this information as a resource for those wishing to volunteer 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. Volunteers should follow all recommendations and restrictions from the volunteer manager, Emergency Management Agency, and Health Department.

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.ded.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html>

How to Protect Yourself and Others

Before you Arrive

1. For two weeks (14 days) prior to your volunteer work, monitor and record your health and temperature. If you, or anyone around you, has experienced a fever of 100°F or above or has been diagnosed or presumed to have COVID-19, do not volunteer.
2. Do not volunteer if you have been in an area considered to be a COVID-19 “hot spot” or traveled outside of your state/country of residence, two weeks (14 days) prior to your first volunteer day. This recommendation is also applicable if you have been around anyone else that has traveled out of your state/country of residence and/or to a COVID-19 “hot spot”.
3. Clean and sanitize any tools, equipment, coolers, and water coolers prior to loading and upon arrival at volunteer hosting or work site.
4. All required paperwork needs to be returned to volunteer site prior to being scheduled or placed on any worksites.

General Guidelines

1. Update group leaders/ liaison **immediately** if you start experiencing any symptoms (coughing, fever, shortness of breath, etc.).
2. Please be flexible to changing protocols due to COVID-19.
3. Volunteers should consider offering their service as close to their home as possible to limit the necessity of overnight stay.
4. Refrain from touching your eyes, nose, and/or mouth with unwashed hands.

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5. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue every time and put in the trash. If a tissue isn't available, sneeze or cover coughs into your elbow.
6. Volunteers should not frequent public places beyond the worksite or host site. that goes against state or local health department recommendations, this will significantly reduce potential exposure.
7. Volunteers are expected to follow all safety protocols and guidelines recommended by the volunteer hosting or work site.
8. If a volunteer needs to leave the site for any reason, a group leader needs prior notification – no exceptions. Individuals going off-site will be required to wear a mask and take necessary social distancing precautions while away from the site.
9. There may be circumstances in any volunteer experience that require a volunteer to return home. COVID-19 adds to the list of reasons that volunteers may need to return. Volunteer teams should be prepared to handle this situation should it arise.
10. Develop a plan if anyone reports a temperature at or above 100°F, such as relocating to a designated “quarantine room” at the host site, until other arrangements can be made off-site. If a volunteer tests positive for COVID-19, it will affect everyone that has encountered that volunteer, usually requiring self-quarantining for a period of two weeks (14 days) for all that were in contact, including members of the family unit^{1*}.
11. Every volunteer should supply their own thermometer for their own use. Prior to work each day, volunteers will be required to check and report temperatures of each team member.
12. Develop a plan if anyone reports a temperature at or above 100°F, such as relocating to a designated “quarantine room” at the host site, until other arrangements can be made off-site. If a volunteer tests positive for COVID-19, it will affect everyone that has encountered that volunteer, usually requiring self-quarantining for a period of two weeks (14 days) for all that were in contact, including members of the family unit^{1*}.

Masks

1. Use cloth masks or surgical masks according to the guidance of CDC and local authorities.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a face mask when around others or while in a communal area (outside of a work site).
3. When using cloth masks, bring 1-2 personal cloth face masks (more if you are working multiple days) + Ziploc bags. Masks should be double-lined, fit snugly but comfortably, and secured with ties or ear loops.
4. Soiled masks should be Ziploc bagged and stored with your personal items until returning home or laundered.

¹ 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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Hand Washing

1. Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds with hot soapy water, especially before eating, after using the restroom, sneezing, etc.
2. Please bring personal hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol.
3. Use hand sanitizer when handwashing is not an option, especially on build sites.

Hosting Site and Meals

1. Family units* ² should work and eat together, if possible.
2. Food preparation and serving must be done with service gloves and face masks (outside groups providing food must do the same). Food safety orientation will be provided and updated as needed.
3. Volunteer clusters are limited to 3-5 people (or a family unit*) when eating together; remain with this family unit* for the duration of the trip, if possible.
4. When arriving or returning to the hosting site, immediately wash your hands with soap and hot water.
5. Maintain proper social distancing of at least six feet in common areas. Avoid gathering or hanging out in high traffic areas: restrooms, kitchen facilities, sleeping areas, etc.
6. Sleeping quarters may be separated with dividers or may be grouped into smaller clusters.
7. Keep personal items neat and tidy in your personal space only (put soiled items in plastic or paper bags).
8. At the host site, volunteers should disinfect all hard surfaces each morning before leaving to travel to a work site. All accommodation areas need to be left clean, neat, and tidy at the end of the stay.
9. Shower areas need to be cleaned/sanitized by each volunteer before exiting the shower area. Clean and sanitize all surfaces touched with disinfectant wipes or spray (i.e. door handles, hard surfaces, etc.). Please bring your own toiletries, towels, and washcloths.
10. You are encouraged to bring your own bed linens, pillows, and cots/air mattresses. If bed linens are provided by the host site, please strip your own bed and place in the container/bag provided.

²Family 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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Work Sites

1. All shared work tools should be disinfected at the end of the workday.
2. When using power tools, it is preferable to assign the power tool to one person for the workday (i.e. one person is assigned to make all cuts for lumber in order to minimize spread of germs among volunteer team members).
3. If power tools must be shared, disinfect power tool between users. When disinfecting power tools, you must unplug the tool BEFORE disinfecting.
4. When disinfecting power tools, use disinfecting wipes rather than disinfecting spray.
5. Personal protective equipment (PPE) used on site such as gloves, respirator masks, and/or hardhats will be assigned to an individual and will remain with that same person for the duration of the trip. Volunteers will be responsible for keeping track of his/her own PPE.
6. When working on job sites with or outside your family unit^{*3}, plan work to include social distancing according to state and local requirements (currently six feet of physical distance).

After Returning Home

1. Take your temperature daily for two weeks (14 days) after returning home. Immediately contact the volunteer coordination point of contact from the host site if you experience COVID-19 symptoms or a temperature of 100 °F or higher.
2. Clean, disinfect, and/or dispose of all items that were used while you were volunteering.

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.

³ 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.