

Disaster feeding is a “Mass Care” function under “Direct Services” - those that deal directly with the disaster victim in providing disaster relief. These services sustain human life, reduce the harsh physical and emotional distress that prevents victims from meeting their own basic needs, and promote the recovery of victims when relief assistance is not available from other sources.

**1. Mass Care.** Mass Care is the function and process by which Red Cross provides for immediate emergency needs of disaster victims or emergency workers in a disaster-affected area in the most expeditious manner, without identifying specific needs of individuals or families on a case-by-case basis. Mass care assistance is provided through any necessary combination of three integrated elements—individual or congregate temporary shelters, fixed or mobile feeding operations, and the direct distribution of relief supplies. Mass care services must be initiated upon notification of an impending disaster or immediately following a disaster event.

**a. Sheltering.** Sheltering may include congregate sheltering or the use of commercial facilities, such as motels and hotels, as shelters for individuals or families. Shelters may be open in anticipation of a disaster, during an evacuation, or after a disaster occurs. Shelters are intended as a safe haven from impending disaster and/or short-term emergency housing until disaster victims can return to their homes or locate alternate housing after a disaster. Whether before or after a disaster, shelters will be located in safe areas and will provide appropriate services.

**b. Feeding.** Feeding operations will provide regular meals in shelters and appropriate food service at additional fixed sites or via mobile distribution for victims and workers in the affected area. Food will meet public health and nutritional requirements, and to the extent possible match the religious and cultural sensitivities of those being served. Food service may be provided for levee workers, rescue workers, or other groups of emergency workers if they are working under conditions in which normal feeding facilities are not available or if they have no other resources to meet their feeding needs. Mobile canteen service may be provided from vehicles for families cleaning up or repairing their homes. Special arrangements may be made to airdrop or otherwise provide food for isolated families and emergency workers. Whenever practical, arrangements will be made to use U.S. Department of Agriculture commodity foods to prepare mass care meals before Red Cross funds are committed to purchase commercial products.

**c. Direct distribution.** Red Cross may obtain, through donation or purchase, products needed for disaster relief, and distribute these products to the affected population requiring them. Items may include clean-up kits and comfort kits, food, water, ice, fuels, and similar items that can be effectively distributed directly to disaster victims. On those disasters where normal channels of trade are not available, clothing and household items may also be provided through direct distribution.

**d. Public health inspection.** Public health inspection is required for Red Cross shelters and feeding operations. Local public health regulations are followed unless a written waiver is granted by local health authorities. The Red Cross will comply with applicable public health standards pertaining to sleeping areas, sanitary facilities, health care areas, aid stations, and the preparation and handling of food. (See *Mass Care*, ARC 3041.)