

**Multi-agency Definitions of Mass Care Terms**  
**September 2019**

**Mass Care Committee**  
**National Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster**



**National**  
Voluntary Organizations  
Active in Disaster

COOPERATION | COMMUNICATION | COORDINATION | COLLABORATION

**Purpose:** The National VOAD Mass Care Committee compiled this multi-agency definitions of mass care terms for use as a reference by NVOAD member agencies, emergency managers and mass care practitioners across the nation.

### **Mass Care definitions**

**Mass Care:** Congregate sheltering, feeding, distribution of emergency supplies, and reunification of children with their parent(s)/legal guardians and adults with their families. **Source:** ESF #6 –Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing and Human Services Annex, National Response Framework, June 2016.

**Mass Care:** The term mass care refers to a wide range of humanitarian activities that provide life-sustaining support to individuals and families who are temporarily displaced or otherwise impacted by a disaster or emergency that disrupts their ability to provide for their basic needs. **Source:** The American Red Cross, Respond Program Essentials, May 2015.

**Mass Care Services:** Provide life-sustaining and human services to the affected population, to include hydration, feeding, sheltering, temporary housing, evacuee support, reunification, and distribution of emergency supplies. **Source:** National Preparedness Goal, 2nd Edition, September 2015.

### **Mass Care operational definitions**

**Disaster Relief Operation Headquarters:** DRO headquarters is a temporary organization established to exercise the Command function over a specific operation in the field. DRO headquarters is responsible for providing direction, guidance, and coordination of resources and support to ensure that all responders assigned to the operation and all districts, when established, can accomplish operational priorities and objectives established by the DRO Director. **Source:** American Red Cross, Concept of Operations, December 2017.

**Incident Command System (ICS):** The Salvation Army (TSA) utilizes the Incident Command System (ICS) as its command-and-control structure for all disaster relief operations. TSA ICS is organized according to nine functions. **Source:** The Salvation Army.

**Mass Care Task Force:** A mass care task force is activated in accordance with criteria specified in the respective mass care plan, or upon mutual consent of the MC/EA stakeholders. Once activated, the task force operates at the direction of the State Mass Care Coordinator as a part of a Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS). **Source:** Mass Care Task Force Structure and Function, December 2013.

**State Mass Care Coordinator:** A Type 1 State Mass Care Coordinator is responsible for leading and coordinating mass care and emergency assistance resources in support of those providing care and shelter services to the survivors of a disaster. **Source:** FEMA Position Qualification for Mass Care, 9-509-1083 State Mass Care Coordinator, June 2012.

**Task Force Liaisons:** A member of an agency responsible for coordinating with representatives from cooperating and assisting agencies or organizations. **Source:** Adapted from Liaison definition in National Incident Management System, October 2017.

### Sheltering definitions

**Emergency Evacuation Shelter:** An emergency evacuation shelter is an accessible facility set up in the event of a rapid evacuation or to provide a safe place to congregate while a major storm passes. Emergency evacuation shelters typically allow less space per person in order to maximize the number of clients that can be accommodated. **Source:** ARC, Sheltering S&P, July 2016.

**Evacuation Shelter:** An Evacuation Shelter serves the general population in an existing facility (or facilities), such as a school, community center, convention center, or church that the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) has temporarily converted for use as a shelter for disaster survivors. **Source:** FEMA NIMS 9-508 Evacuation Shelter, November 2017.

**General Population Shelter:** These are facilities which shelter everyone in the community, including people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs (e.g. children and adults) requiring supportive services to maintain independence and utilize the shelter and its programs and services. **Source:** Multi-Agency Sheltering/Sheltering Support Plan Template (MASSPT), Version 4.0, October 2014.

**Long-term Shelter:** A general population shelter typically lasting more than two weeks. **Source:** American Red Cross, Sheltering Standards & Procedures, July 2016.

**Long-Term Shelter:** A Long-Term Shelter is in a safe and accessible location to provide sustained support services to disaster survivors for more than 2 weeks. The Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) establishes shelters when housing stock is not available or is insufficient for intervals longer than two weeks and up to several months. Long-Term Shelters are existing facilities temporarily converted by the AHJ to provide safe, accessible, and secure housing. Soft-sided or temporary structures may be available when existing facilities are unavailable or insufficient, depending on the availability of open space and support services. **Source:** FEMA NIMS 9-508 Long-term Shelter, November 2017.

**Multi-agency Sheltering Task Force (MASTF):** The MASTF operates at the direction of a Task Force Leader and assists the jurisdiction's mass care coordinator with preparedness and operational activities. Operationally, the focus of the MASTF is on future planning, 48 hours from the present and beyond. The Task Force stresses coordination among the various organizations/agencies involved with sheltering operations and determines the best strategies to meet the future sheltering requirements for the disaster. **Source:** Multi-Agency Sheltering/Sheltering Support Plan Template (MASSPT), Version 4.0, October 2014.

**Shelter Management Teams:** coordinate and manage resources in a congregate care facility (shelter) intended to provide a safe and protected environment for populations displaced by an incident or an event. **Source:** FEMA NIMS 9-508-1155 Shelter Management Team, June 2014.

**Shelter Manager:** A shelter manager is responsible for providing supervision and administrative support at a shelter facility, which includes management of supervisors and workers, and is ultimately accountable for all activities and all workers within a shelter. **Source:** American Red Cross, Sheltering Standards & Procedures, July 2016.

**Shelter supervisor:** responsible for providing supervision and administrative support at the shelter, under the direction of the shelter manager. **Source:** American Red Cross, Sheltering Standards & Procedures, July 2016.

**Shelter worker:** responsible for completing the day-to-day activities within a shelter. All workers report to a shelter manager or shift supervisor at the shelter. **Source:** American Red Cross, Sheltering Standards & Procedures, July 2016.

**Sheltering:** Provides life-sustaining services in congregate facilities that provide a safe, sanitary, and secure environment for individuals and households displaced by disasters. Also includes support to survivors sheltering in place and in ESF #8 medical shelters. **Source:** ESF #6 –Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing and Human Services Annex, National Response Framework, June 2016

**Sheltering:** Sheltering is the overall term for the facility and all functions performed to assist clients on the path towards recovery from a disaster by providing a safe place to sleep, eat, get information, maintain personal hygiene, and access core services and situational services in shelters. **Source:** American Red Cross, Sheltering Standards & Procedures, July 2016

**Short-Term Shelter:** A Short-Term Shelter is in an existing facility (or facilities), such as a school, community center, convention center, or church temporarily converted to provide safe, accessible, and secure short-term housing for disaster survivors. **Source:** FEMA NIMS 9-508 Short-term Shelter, November 2017.

**Standard/Short-term Shelter:** A general population shelter typically lasting two weeks or less. **Source:** American Red Cross, Sheltering Standards & Procedures, July 2016.

**Temporary Child Care Support Services Team:** provides child care support in a shelter, assistance center, or other locations designated for that purpose. This team supports families by providing resources and trained skill sets for child care services for children affected by a disaster. Typical services could include: basic living needs, sleeping supervision, activities such as play, music, art, reading, storytelling, and physical activities. **Source:** Draft NIMS 9-508 Temporary Child Care Support Services Team, December 2012

### Feeding definitions

**Canteen:** A generic term commonly used within the Salvation Army to refer to both food service delivery units and mobile kitchens. Canteens come in a variety of designs ranging from catering trucks (also called Rapid Response Units) which are strictly food service delivery units to Disaster Response Units (DRUs) which have limited cooking capability to full-size canteens, which can both cook and serve meals at an average of 1,500 meals per day. **Source:** The Salvation Army.

**Disaster Feeding:** The provision of food, snacks and hydration to the affected population and emergency workers, from fixed sites or through mobile routes. **Source:** Multi-Agency Feeding Support Plan Template, June 2015 (MAFSPT)

**Disaster Response Unit (DRU):** A generic term commonly used within the Salvation Army to refer to mobile feeding kitchen units. Smaller model canteens are referred to as Disaster Response Units (DRUs) while larger canteens are called full-size canteens. **Source:** Multi-Agency Feeding/Feeding Support Plan Template (MAFPT), Version 2.0, June 2015

**Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV):** American Red Cross disaster relief vehicles providing mobile or stationary feedings, distribution of items (transfer of supplies), and casework and communications. **Source:** Multi-Agency Feeding/Feeding Support Plan Template (MAFPT), Version 2.0, June 2015

**Feeding:** Provides feeding services at fixed sites and distribution sites and through mobile feeding units. Feeding services may include hot or shelf-stable meals, infant formula, baby food, snacks, beverages, and food packages, as well as diverse dietary and culturally appropriate meals (e.g., low sodium, low fat, vegetarian/vegan, halal, kosher). ESF #6 works in concert with ESF #11 and local, state, and tribal governments; NGOs; and the private sector to acquire, prepare, cook and/or distribute food and food supplies. Additional support may include the provision of technical assistance for the development of state feeding plans. **Source:** ESF #6 –Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing and Human Services Annex, National Response Framework, June 2016

**Field Kitchen:** A deployable feeding unit, typically a trailer or tractor trailer, which is set up at a stationary location to produce a significant quantity of meals. This kitchen may

prepare and serve food directly to people or may serve as a centralized food production site, which prepares food for distribution by **Food Service Delivery Units**. **Source:** Multi-Agency Feeding/Feeding Support Plan Template (MAFPT), Version 2.0, June 2015

**Field Kitchen:** Field Kitchen Units are deployable feeding units, typically a trailer or tractor-trailer with accompanying personnel, set up at a stationary location to produce a significant quantity of meals. **Source:** FEMA NIMS 9-508-1000 Field Kitchen Unit, June 2014.

**Food Box:** A pre-assembled disaster food box (like what Feeding America provides) typically contains 25 pounds of mixed food items, the equivalent of 20 meals or one week of meals for one person. Food Boxes are intended to provide short term assistance and/or to supplement the needs of the survivors, not to meet their complete nutritional needs. **Source:** Multi-Agency Feeding/Feeding Support Plan Template (MAFPT), Version 2.0, June 2015

**Food Service Delivery Unit:** A deployable feeding unit that includes an operational vehicle and team capable of delivering prepared meals. **Source:** Multi-Agency Feeding/Feeding Support Plan Template (MAFPT), Version 2.0, June 2015.

**Mobile Kitchens:** Mobile/movable kitchen units prepare meals and provide direct service and can be packed up and moved to another location with accompanying personnel as needed. **Source:** Multi-Agency Feeding/Feeding Support Plan Template (MAFPT), Version 2.0, June 2015

**Multi-agency Feeding Task Force (MAFTF):** Operationally, the focus of the MAFTF is on future planning, 48 hours from the present and beyond. However, there may be immediate or tactical situations where they could be called upon to advise. The MAFTF must be aware of the operational situation in order to potentially respond, as well as plan ahead. The Task Force stresses coordination among the various organizations/agencies involved with feeding operations and determines the best strategies to meet the future feeding requirements for the disaster. **Source:** Multi-Agency Feeding/Feeding Support Plan Template (MAFPT), Version 2.0, June 2015.

### **Distribution of Emergency Supplies definitions**

**Distribution of Emergency Supplies:** Acquires and delivers life-sustaining resources, hygiene items, and cleanup items to meet the urgent needs of disaster survivors. Additional support includes transportation, warehousing, equipment, technical assistance, and other mission-critical services. **Source:** ESF #6 –Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing and Human Services Annex, National Response Framework, June 2016

**Distribution of Emergency Supplies:** Provide emergency supplies and/or the resources to distribute them. **Source:** Multi-Agency Distribution of Emergency Supplies Plan Template, 2015 (MADESPT)

**Distribution of Emergency Supplies (DES) Task Force:** The Distribution of Emergency Supplies (DES) Task Force coordinates distribution of critical commodities to the public during and after an emergency. The team supports all fixed-site and mobile distribution efforts to ensure coordination among emergency supplies providers.

**Source:** FEMA NIMS 508 Distribution of Emergency Supplies Task Force, November 2017.

**Drive-Through Point of Distribution (POD) team:** A Drive-Through Point of Distribution (POD) Team establishes a location that the public can access by car to obtain critical emergency supplies during and after an emergency. Government agencies, Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO), private sector organizations, and combinations of these groups can establish and operate these sites. **Source:** FEMA NIMS 508 Drive Through POD Team, November 2017.

**Mobile Distribution Team:** A Mobile Distribution Team distributes supplies to the public during and after an emergency. This resource is useful when survivors cannot access fixed Points of Distribution (POD) or other distribution sites, or when it is more efficient to distribute supplies from a vehicle or other mobile platform. **Source:** FEMA NIMS 508 Mobile Distribution Teams, November 2017.

**Multi-agency Distribution of Emergency Supplies Task Force (DESTF):** The DESTF supports the jurisdiction's Mass Care Coordinator with preparedness and operational activities. Operationally, if the task force is needed and activated for the event, the focus of the DESTF is on future planning, 72-96 hours out. The Task Force stresses coordination among the various organizations/agencies involved with distribution of emergency supplies operations and determines the best strategies to meet the future distribution requirements for the disaster. **Source:** Multi-Agency Distribution of Emergency Supplies Plan Template, 2015 (MADESPT).

**Pedestrian Point of Distribution (POD) Team:** A Pedestrian Point of Distribution (POD) Team establishes a location that disaster survivors can access on foot to obtain critical emergency supplies during and after an emergency. Pedestrian POD Teams service high-population-density areas, areas with damaged transportation infrastructure, or areas where Drive-Through POD sites are impractical. Government agencies, Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO), private sector organizations, and combinations of these groups can establish and operate these sites. **Source:** FEMA NIMS 508 Pedestrian Point of Distribution Team, November 2017.

### Reunification definitions

**Multi-agency Reunification Task Force (MARTF):** When activated, the MARTF operates at the direction of the jurisdiction's mass care coordinator in support of

operational activities relative to the coordination of reunification processes. During operations, the focus of the MARTF is on future planning, 48 hours from the present and beyond. However, there may be immediate or tactical situations in which the task force could be called upon to help. **Source:** Multi-agency Reunification Services Plan Template, March 2015.

**National Emergency Child Locator Center:** The National Emergency Child Locator Center (NECLC) is operated by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and may be activated through a request to FEMA from a state, tribe, or territory during presidentially-declared disasters. **Source:** Multi-agency Reunification Services Plan Template, March 2015.

**National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System:** The National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRLS) activates following a presidentially-declared disaster to reunite families that have become separated as a result of the disaster. **Source:** Multi-agency Reunification Services Plan Template, March 2015.

**Reunification:** The Reunification function provides human and technological resources to reconnect individuals as quickly as possible following a disaster or incident. **Source:** American Red Cross, Reunification Standards & Procedures, January 2017.

**Reunification Services:** Services that provide mechanisms to help displaced disaster survivors, including children, reestablish contact with family and friends. **Source:** Multi-Agency Reunification Services Plan Template, March 2015.

**Reunification Strike Team:** A Reunification Strike Team is a set number or resources of the same kind and type that have an established minimum number of personnel. A Reunification Strike Team is comprised of representatives from FEMA, Health and Human Services, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Red Cross. This team of individuals completes Reunification field work relevant to an operation. This team could become a component of a state-level operation that may expand into a federal operation that could include Department of Education, Health and Human Services, etc. **Source:** American Red Cross, Reunification Standards & Procedures, January 2017.

**Reunification Support Team:** The Reunification Support Team is assembled at the request of the affected jurisdiction to support organizations and agencies engaged in efforts to assess reunification needs, coordinate support and share information to reduce the number of separated, missing, and unaccounted-for adults and children. **Source:** Multi-agency Reunification Services Plan Template, March 2015.

**Reunification Task Force:** A Reunification Task Force is a group of Emergency Support Function representatives that convene to problem solve and share information about reunification on an operation. **Source:** American Red Cross, Reunification Standards & Procedures, January 2017.

**Safe and Well:** The Safe and Well website is a free public reunification tool that allows individuals and organizations to register and post messages to indicate that they are safe, or to search for loved ones. **Source:** American Red Cross, Reunification Standards & Procedures, January 2017.

**Unaccompanied Minor's Registry:** The Unaccompanied Minor's Registry (UMR) is a data collection tool administered by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that allows the public to report information related to children who have been separated from their parents or legal guardians as a result of a disaster. **Source:** Multi-agency Reunification Services Plan Template, March 2015.