

State of Rhode Island

Regional Disaster Shelters Coordination Plan



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Lead Agencies:



**American
Red Cross**

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I. Introduction

Many disasters and emergency situations cause Rhode Island residents to seek shelter. Local municipalities execute sheltering activities in coordination with the American Red Cross, Rhode Island Chapter (ARC-RI - RI) with the assistance of other organizations and agencies. Disasters that affect multiple municipalities have the potential to cause a great need for sheltering..

Local and state government, nonprofit organizations and other partners have determined that there is a need to more closely coordinate sheltering resources. They have looked at the human and material resources available during a large-scale disaster, the historical data regarding those who seek shelter in New England, and the duplication of resources that occurs when opening shelters in each jurisdiction. Coordination will improve the services available to residents in shelters and increase the capacity to sustain sheltering operations that may last for an extended period of time.

The *Regional Sheltering Coordination Plan*, developed with input from local and state government agencies, as well as non-government agencies who are stakeholders in sheltering, has been developed to bring a better understanding of the coordination needed to build capacity and to provide the best possible service to Rhode Island residents in the most efficient manner.

A. Purpose

This plan outlines the operational concepts, responsibilities, procedures, and organizational arrangements necessary to support regional sheltering throughout the state of Rhode Island. It is designed to supplement the overarching procedures and responsibilities outlined in the *State of Rhode Island Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP)* and the Mass Care-specific guidance outlined in the *Emergency Support Function 6- Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services Annex (ESF 6)*

B. Situation

A disaster occurs or threatens Rhode Island that causes hundreds of residents to seek shelter. The disaster will affect multiple municipalities. There is an anticipated need for sheltering in multiple regions throughout the state. Emergency Managers are expecting the need to coordinate efforts in multiple areas. Transportation routes may be affected. There is a potential to lose power in many areas. This may cause residents who are dependent on power to provide life-sustaining needs to seek shelter.

C. Assumptions

1. The Governor has declared a State of Emergency.
2. The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) has been activated.
3. Local Emergency Operation Centers have been activated.
4. Municipalities have plans in place to allow shared resources across jurisdictions (i.e. mutual aid plans for police, EMS, and other support services).
5. Pre-determined facilities will be available for sheltering. Facilities have a functional generator and are ADA compliant.
6. Other shelter locations are available should regional shelters reach capacity or become unsafe.
7. American Red Cross has surveyed the shelter facilities prior to event that will be utilized for regional shelters.
8. Preparedness Messaging has been put into place to alert residents to the locations of regional and/or local shelters.
9. Emergency Managers on a state and local level will alert residents as they see fit.
10. American Red Cross has staged sheltering equipment to ensure resources are available throughout the state.
11. Local ARC-RI/town/animal care/volunteers are not heavily impacted and are able to assist.
12. Spontaneous “pop up” shelters may open and will be integrated into coordinated strategies and objectives as the SEOC has awareness of them.

II. Concept of Operations

A. General

1. Upon the determination that an event is expected to affect Rhode Island with an anticipated need to shelter residents in multiple areas, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) will coordinate a conference call with the American Red Cross and local Emergency Managers in impacted areas to assess the need to open regional shelters based on any or all of the triggers defined below.

Triggers to Activate Regional Coordination Plan

- Anticipation of a large-scale catastrophic event such as a hurricane.
- Events that affect more than two municipalities within a Region where local resources are expected to be insufficient to meet the need.
- Events affecting more than one Region where a significant sheltering need is anticipated.
- When impacted municipalities and responding agencies determine that if the needs for response can be best met by consolidating resources.

2. Regional Shelters should first be considered based on pre-agreed upon locations (See Attachment 2). RIEMA will coordinate with ARC-RI and impacted municipalities to monitor and adjust region-wide shelter capacity and locations based on one or more of the following:
 - Number of residents seeking shelter for the event vs. capacity of the designated shelters.
 - Post-disaster impact and proximity of those most affected.
 - Change of status of the predetermined shelter (i.e. safety of the shelter).
3. Host municipalities will open shelters as determined on the conference call. American Red Cross will manage all regional shelters and provide American Red Cross paid or volunteer staff to manage each facility. Staff for the shelter will be made up of American Red Cross paid and volunteer staff, ARC-RI - trained municipal volunteers and/or staff, municipality and local partners, state agency partners with specific responsibilities (i.e. mental health) or other shelter trained partners. Host municipalities will provide a liaison to assist ARC-RI with local EOC communication and to address municipality related challenges.
4. All impacted municipalities will coordinate police, EMS, and other municipal resources to support Regional shelters. RIEMA will support municipalities to coordinate resources within the Regions.
5. All Regional shelters must be open to everyone and must include all of the following:
 - i. Meet ARC operational standards,
 - ii. Meet ADA guidelines,
 - iii. Have generator capability (Preferably generators will power areas of the shelter open to residents and outlets that can be used to power equipment for those on electrically dependent assistive devices),
 - iv. Allow service animals ,and
 - v. Provide assistance based on FEMA Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) Guidance.
6. Municipalities will coordinate with residents who do not have any means of transportation to provide transport to the Regional shelters.
7. Feeding support to Regional shelters will be coordinated by American Red Cross based on ARC-RI Standard Operating Procedures.
8. ARC-RI will coordinate with Emergency Support Function 8 (ESF 8) to address the public health, medical and behavioral health needs of individuals in the Regional shelters. Through ESF 8, ARC-RI can request that RI DMAT/MRC provide medical control to Regional shelters for ARC nurses, as they will for DMAT/MRC/FAST team medical providers. ARC-RI may request material and human resources to address the functional and access needs of individuals in the Regional shelters, as needed.
9. State and local government resources will be used to coordinate animal sheltering activities.

10. Triggers for Transitioning of Regional Shelters:

The closing or transitioning of regional shelters affects multiple municipalities. To ensure that needs of municipalities are met:

- a. The Shelter Manager will contact the American Red Cross, American Red Cross Operation Headquarters (ARC-RI HQ) with the desire to close a shelter when all of the following conditions have been met:
 - It is anticipated that the shelter population will drop below 25.
 - Plans are in place for current residents to have somewhere to go.
 - No immediate hazard that will potentially cause a greater need for residents in the impacted area to seek shelter.
 - b. ARC-RI HQ will work through ESF-6 to gather essential elements of information in order to determine the status of emergency needs in surrounding municipalities, the anticipated need for sheltering in surrounding municipalities, and any situations that may prohibit the closing of the regional shelter.
 - c. Once all municipalities have been contacted, the SEOC, in coordination with ARC-RI and the municipalities, will determine that the shelter will close.
 - d. Notification of shelter closings should be made with enough notice for the partners, general public, and shelter residents to effectively plan for their recovery. Host Municipalities and ARC-RI will aim to provide 24 hours' notice when closing a shelter.
11. Municipalities may decide to open shelters and or evacuation centers separate and apart from those outlined in the *Regional Sheltering Coordination Plan*; however, Regional shelters will have priority for ARC and State of Rhode Island resources. These resources will ONLY be provided to support local municipality sheltering efforts once resources are determined not to be needed in support of regional shelters and if municipalities agree to follow shelter guidelines established above. (See #5).

B. Organization

1. The State is divided into Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) regions for multiple preparedness and response activities. Regional shelters are predetermined based on those regions, the presence of bridges, and other potential impediments for residents to seek shelter.
2. As the lead agency for ESF-6, RIEMA is responsible for providing coordination and support of the full scope of ESF-6 activities as defined in the ESF-6 annex in the SEOP. ARC-RI serves as the lead support agency and will coordinate activities specific to sheltering and feeding.
3. ARC-RI will set up a headquarters (ARC-RI HQ) to support ARC operations. Shelter and feeding support will be established at ARC-RI HQ to assist in coordination of shelter activities.
4. Shelter managers will seek guidance, provide shelter counts at pre-established intervals or as requested, and seek material and human resources by contacting ARC-RI HQ. ARC-RI HQ will be responsible for reporting and coordinating with the ESF 6 Desk at the SEOC. Shelter Managers are also responsible for maintaining communications with the Host Municipality Liaison and ensuring that local emergency managers are kept apprised of potential shelter issues that may affect their municipality. This information will be entered into Web EOC by ARC personnel either at ARC HQ or ESF 6.

5. ARC-RI HQ and or the assigned ARC-RI ESF-6 representative will be responsible for updating the National Shelter System and Web EOC. ESF-6 will also be responsible for monitoring and updating WebEOC and providing shelter openings, closings, counts, and other essential elements of information to the SEOC.

C. Notifications

Notifications will be conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in the ESF-6 Annex. Communication methods will be further defined in the communications section of the Incident Action Plan and the redundant sources established with the SEOC Operations.

D. Actions

Local and State government agencies and non-profit organizations will work together to coordinate sheltering activities in preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Agencies will respond based on the roles and responsibilities outlined in the ESF-6 Function Annex. This section refers only to response needs specific to regional sheltering.

1. Preparedness

- a. Maintain Regional Sheltering Coordination Plan and implement coordinating procedures through periodic engagements with stakeholders in planning, training, exercises, and after action review.
- b. Identify areas of improvement and execute revision to plans and procedures.
- c. Maintain a list of regional assets and identify gaps and shortfalls.
- d. Build human and material resource capacity within government and nonprofit agencies to support and respond to regional sheltering needs.
- e. Work with municipality leaders to develop an understanding for the need for regionalization and coordination.
- f. Maintain agreements with all stakeholders.
- g. Work with residents to build awareness around regional sheltering and self-preparedness.

2. Response

- a. Activate the plan and related components based on conference call and other triggers outlined in the Concept of Operations portion of this plan.
- b. Coordinate within regions to provide regional sheltering for all impacted persons that require a shelter.
- c. Provide Functional Needs Support Services based on FEMA Guidance.
- d. Ensure at least 2 meals per day are provided in all regional shelters. Snacks and drinking water should also be provided for use in shelters.
- e. Coordinate opening, closing or transition of regional shelters to provide support and meet the needs of all impacted municipalities.

3. Recovery

- a. In an effort to facilitate the shelter residents' return home, assist in assessing whether the homes of people sheltering in the regional shelter(s) are habitable.
- b. Provide case management through established agencies as necessary to facilitate client recovery.
- c. Work with RIEMA and other agencies to facilitate transition to transitional sheltering via available Federal, State and non-governmental disaster assistance programs.

4. Mitigation

- a. Determine priority needs and roles in each region prior to an event through outreach to lead agency and municipalities emphasizing the importance of collaboration in pre-disaster planning.
- b. Develop media and public education campaigns that encourage the public to undertake preparedness activities in their homes.
- c. Develop standardized public education and media messaging to use before, during, and after disaster events.
- d. Provide public notification in conjunction with all agencies as early possible prior to event so that residents and visitors can make alternate plans for sheltering.

III. Responsibilities

A. Lead Agency

Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency

- a. Coordinate activities in accordance with ESF-6 policies and procedures.
- b. Support Regional sheltering operations with ARC-RI, ESF 6 partners and municipal officials.
- c. Coordinate and facilitate human and material resources between Regions.
- d. Acquire State and Federal assets as needed to support Regional operations.
- e. Support ARC-RI and other volunteer agencies to recruit and maintain volunteers to support Regional sheltering effort.
- f. Work with municipality leaders to understand responsibilities with regard to hosting a Regional shelter.

B. Lead Support Agency

American Red Cross

- a. Build capacity by increasing resources needed for regional shelters.
- b. Maintain and coordinate distribution of ARC-RI resources to Shelters.
- c. Manage Regional Shelters by appointing a Shelter Manager that reports into ARC-RI HQ at each site.

- d. Coordinate feeding to regional shelters.
- e. Provide volunteers to staff shelters.
- f. Work with municipality leaders to understand responsibilities with regard to hosting a Regional shelter.
- g. Open an ARC Headquarters to facilitate support to sheltering and feeding operations.
- h. Provide a liaison to the state EOC for ESF-6 activities.
- i. Partake in the process of determining the closing and opening of ARC-RI shelters.
- j. Provide information on shelter counts, opening and closings and other essential elements of information.
- k. Report numbers on Web EOC and in the National Shelter System.
- l. Coordinate communication operations between shelters and with the State Emergency Operation Center.
- m. Assist with decision-making in the opening, closing and transition of regional shelters.

C. Municipal Responsibilities

Host Municipalities

- a. Open shelter as determined by regional shelter coordination Plan.
- b. Maintain operation of shelter to ensure closing only after all district sheltering needs are met.
- c. Provide police, EMS, and other support services necessary.
- d. Facilitate distribution of 800 MHZ Radios to shelter managers as necessary
- e. Work with municipality leaders to understand responsibilities with regard to hosting a regional shelter.
- f. Ensure that integrity of facility generator remains in place to include ensuring a plan in place for routine generator testing.
- g. Work with ARC-RI to recruit and maintain volunteers to support regional sheltering effort .
- h. Provide volunteers to staff shelters
- i. Assist with decision-making regarding opening, closing and transition of regional shelters.
- j. Provide a liaison to assist ARC-RI with access issues, local communication, etc.
- k. Maintain plan for sheltering pets per Federal policy.

Impacted Municipalities

- a. Coordinate transportation of residents who do not have any means of transportation to and from the regional shelters as the Regional shelter opens and closes.
- b. Work with community leaders to better understand regional sheltering concepts.
- a. Provide police, EMS, and other municipal resource assistance as necessary.
- b. Work with ARC-RI to recruit and maintain volunteers to support regional sheltering effort .
- c. Provide volunteers to staff shelters. Maintain facilities that can be utilized as back-up and overflow shelters as needed.
- d. Maintain plan for sheltering pets per Federal policy.
- e. Assist with decision-making regarding opening, closing and transition of regional shelters.

IV. Financial Management

Financial Management of regional shelters will be handled through generally accepted practices as directed by municipal guidelines. All agencies/departments will maintain records of any costs associated with the incident following activation. Voluntary agencies should maintain documentation of expenses incurred in any disaster relief activities.

V. Authorities and References

- The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206, as amended. Federal Disaster Assistance, 44 C.F.R. pt. 206.
- The Homeland Security Act of 2002, 6 U.S.C. §§ 101-557, as amended.
- Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006
- Title VI of the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2007, Pub. L. 109-295, 120 Stat. 1355 (2006)
- Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (“Fair Housing Act”), as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3601-3631. Discriminatory Conduct Under the Fair Housing Act, 24 C.F.R. pt. 100
- The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4151-4157. Construction and Alteration of Public Buildings, 41 C.F.R. pt. 101-19.
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8: National Preparedness
- Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006
- Public Health Service Act, as amended
- Social Security Act of 1935, as amended
- Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990
- The Congressional Charter of 1905, 36 U.S.C. §§ 300101-300111 (2007), establishes the American Red Cross and its chapters as a corporation responsible for maintaining a system of domestic and international relief
- R.I.G.L. Chapter 30-15, Rhode Island Emergency Management Act
- R.I.G.L. 42-12-1
- Rhode Island Executive Order 34
- Rhode Island State Emergency Operations Plan ESF #5, Emergency Management
- Rhode Island State Emergency Operations Plan ESF #8, Public Health and Medical Services
- Rhode Island State Emergency Operations Plan ESF #11, Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Rhode Island State Emergency Operations Plan ESF #15 External Affairs

Attachment 1

Definitions

Comfort Center – a designated location where the public can utilize showers, charge electrical items, use wi-fi (if available), and other comforts as available

Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) – a 501(c)(3) surge capacity team of licensed medical volunteers who respond to medical needs in times of disaster

Evacuation Center – a designated location where the public can go when an evacuation order has been declared. Demobilization of this facility takes place once the hazard has been removed and the Regional Shelter can be accessed and utilized

FAST Team – The purpose of the FAST program is to provide staff to conduct functional assessments of people with access and functional needs who are in shelters. This assessment will evaluate the needs of the vulnerable population and determine whether they can be supported within the general population shelter.

FEMA Functional Needs Support Services– Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) are defined as services that enable children and adults to maintain their usual level of independence in a general population shelter.

Host Municipality – the municipality where the Regional shelter is located

Host Municipality Liaison – a dedicated individual(s) identified to be a point of contact for visiting municipalities and ARC to assist with access issues, communications, logistics and etc.

Impacted Municipality – a municipality that has experienced physical, psychological, and or economical ramifications as a result of a disaster.

Medical Control - Physiological and artificial systems that control one or more physiological variables or functions of the human body.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) - MRC consists of medical and non-medical volunteers who contribute and provide support to local health initiatives.

Region – A geographic area established along current Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) lines that serves to facilitate resource sharing and efficiency in shelter operations.

Regional Shelter An emergency shelter established in a large-scale, multi-jurisdictional event that is ARC managed with support from surrounding municipalities

Shelter Manager – a dedicated individual(s) responsible for maintaining smooth shelter operations including communications and reporting. They have been trained by ARC-RI in all aspects of shelter operations.

WebEOC – an on-line tool that facilitates a common operating picture throughout the event and serves as an information repository.

Attachment 2

American Red Cross –Rhode Island Chapter

Regional Primary Shelter List

REGION 1:

- Cumberland High School
2602 Mendon Road
Cumberland, RI 02864

PRIMARY

NSS: 75873 - Capacity: 900

REGION 2:

- Providence Career & Technical Academy
41 Fricker Street
Providence, RI 02903

PRIMARY

NSS: 136699- Capacity:400

REGION 3:

- Veterans Memorial High School
2401 West Shore Road
Warwick, RI 02886

PRIMARY

NSS: 54622- Capacity: 384

REGION 4:

- Chariho High & Middle School
453 Switch Road
Wood River Junction, RI 02894

PRIMARY

NSS: 55206 & 55208

Capacity combined - 600

REGION 5:

- Joseph H. Gaudette Middle School
 1113 Aquidneck Avenue
 Middletown, RI 02842
PRIMARY
 NSS: 10680 – Capacity: 549
- Melrose Elementary
 76 Melrose Ave
 Jamestown, RI 02835
PER AGREEMENT – BRIDGE
 NSS:55045 Capacity: 500
- Tiverton Middle School (Will open pre-evacuation/Will close post storm if long term options are needed)
 10 Quintal Dr
 Tiverton, RI 02878
 NSS: 59770 - Capacity: 175
- Kickemuit Middle School (On Hold/awaiting alternate location)
 525 Child Street
 Warren, RI 02885
 NSS:37471 - Capacity: 150