

DONATIONS MANAGEMENT ANNEX G

G1. Purpose, Situation, and Assumptions

G1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Donations Management Functional Annex is to guide and coordinate agencies and organizations in the post-disaster management of donations in Park County, particularly unsolicited donations. Uncontrolled donations can interfere with disaster operations and present logistical challenges with storage and distribution if a management system, even a very basic one, is not established.

G1.2 Situation Overview

Montanans, by nature, often like to help their neighbors, particularly during times of disaster. Many communities across the state are very self-sufficient due to the willingness of friends and neighbors to assist when needed. This desire to help is an admirable quality during and following disasters but can become overwhelming if not managed properly.

Spontaneous donations, particularly of goods, can quickly go from a few manageable items to a large assortment of items in need of storage, organization, and distribution. Without a designated location and tracking system for these types of donations, well-intended individuals may bring them to the scene of an incident or places like fire stations and inadvertently interfere with critical disaster operations. Items such as food and supplies for first responders may be welcomed initially, but once the supply exceeds demand, concerns for food safety (if items require refrigeration) and what to do with all of the excess items may result.

Several voluntary organizations and individuals in the communities have experience with managing donated items and may be asked to assist in a disaster. Ideally, donations management should not be done by those with other critical roles in an emergency. Spontaneous volunteers and individuals not playing an otherwise critical role in the disaster may be used to support donations management if an appropriate management system is in place. Organizations that may be called up to provide support for donations management include:

- The Salvation Army
- Local Thrift Store Owners and Employees/Volunteers
- Church Groups
- Civic Organizations, such as Fire Auxiliary, Rotary, Masonic, and other Clubs

Monetary donations can be easier to manage and utilize once established. Disaster funds may be established at local banks to benefit those impacted by the disaster. Support organizations, such as the American Red Cross, may have similar donation opportunities.

G1.3 Planning Assumptions

- A disaster has had a large enough impact and media attention to produce excessive amounts of unsolicited donations.

G2. Concept of Operations

The decision points that follow are the responsibility of incident management. Note that not all decision points may be necessary and some decision points may be combined during rapidly escalating situations.

- Decision Point: *Cash donations are needed.*

Cash donations are typically the most preferable and useful type of donation following a disaster. Cash can be used to purchase items that are identified as needs in the type and quantity needed or distributed directly to the victims. Disaster relief funds may be set up by any non-profit organization willing to manage the donated funds, however, these efforts should be coordinated through the Emergency Operations Center and Public Information Officer to maximize fundraising efforts and minimize public confusion over where to donate.

- Decision Point: *Management of donated goods is needed.*

Sometimes, when a specific item or items are identified as needed during or following a disaster, that need can be communicated to the public and fulfilled in the way of donated items. This approach will require a level of management for receipt, tracking, storage, and distribution of the items and may result in an excess of donations.

Other times, based on the needs portrayed in the media or perceived by those aware of the disaster, unsolicited donations of goods may result. In these cases, the donations may become increasingly problematic and difficult to manage. Therefore, if unsolicited donations are expected or start occurring, as early as possible in the incident, a management system for such goods should be established.

Management of donated items, particularly unsolicited items, may best be managed by the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. These organizations may include a wide variety of groups, but ideally, the selected volunteers should have some experience in warehouse and/or thrift store operations. At a minimum, some oversight should be provided by the Emergency Operations Center to ensure the goods are tracked appropriately and matched and distributed to those in need. The Emergency Operations Center may also need to provide logistical support such as drop-off and pick-up locations, temporary storage warehouses, and perhaps a donations phone hotline. Information on the specific community needs and locations may be coordinated by the Emergency Operations Center or directly between Donations Management volunteers and the Incident Command Post(s).

Public information is a very important function of donations management and may be used to solicit for specific items or to curb unusable donations. The Public Information Officer(s) will need to coordinate with those assessing the needs of the affected public and those managing donations in an effort to clearly portray the items needed and where donations should be taken, if needed. Otherwise, the Public Information Officer(s) can emphasize the needs for cash donations rather than goods, if the donation of goods is becoming overwhelming or ineffective.

G3. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

The responsibilities listed here are specific to this function. Note that all entities, whether listed or not, are also responsible for their basic disaster and emergency responsibilities as outlined in the [Base Plan, Section 3.2](#), as applicable.

The following entities are not specific to jurisdiction. Therefore, in an emergency, the jurisdiction(s) affected will have the responsibility for these roles, and other non-affected jurisdictions may also be involved through mutual aid.

Disaster and Emergency Services

- Notify and coordinate with Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (i.e. Salvation Army, etc.) for donations management services.

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)

- Coordinate the collection and distribution of donated goods to disaster victims.
- Manage disaster-specific financial donations.

Other Entities

- Relay information on donated goods or identified needs to DES/EOC, as applicable.
- Perform other duties as needed and assigned.

G4. Direction, Control, and Coordination

Park County Disaster and Emergency Services is primarily responsible for the donations management function, but may delegate management responsibilities to other individuals and organizations for support and oversight. Additional information on the direction and control function can be found in the [Direction and Control Annex](#) and [Base Plan, Section 4](#).

G5. Information Collection and Dissemination

G5.1 Information Collection for Planning

Table G5.1A lists the key information needed and possible sources needed for donations management.

Table G5.1A Possible Information Sources

Information Type	Source
Specific community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Incident Command- Law Enforcement- Fire Departments / Districts- American Red Cross
Possible warehouse / temporary storage facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- VOAD- Local Real Estate Agents- School Administrators- Other Jurisdictions

G5.2 Public Information

Information regarding the public information function can be found in the [Public Information Annex](#).

Providing clear direction to the public regarding the types of donations needed and the types of donations not needed can make the donations management function much easier and effective. Public information may also be used to communicate with disaster victims regarding the distribution of donated items and funds.

G6. Communications

See the [Communications Annex](#) for more details on emergency communications in Park County.

Other than communication between the Incident Command Post(s) and the Emergency Operations Center, most communications regarding donations management would likely take place in person or over the phone. Donations management staff and volunteers generally do not have public safety radios.

G7. Administration, Finance, and Logistics

G7.1 Finance/Administration

For additional information on the Finance/Administration function, particularly the importance of recordkeeping, see the [Base Plan, Section 7.1](#).

G7.2 Logistics

For additional information on disaster and emergency logistics, see the [Base Plan, Section 7.2](#).

G8. Plan Development and Maintenance

See the [Base Plan, Section 8](#) for additional information on annex development, review, revision, and exercise.

G9. Authorities and References

G9.1 Authorities / References

None.

G9.2 Acronyms

See the [Base Plan, Section 9.4](#) for the list of acronyms used in this plan.

G10. Attachments

None.