



**COMMUNITY**  
**COLLECTION CENTER**  
Guidelines & Procedures

**A Part of MAW**  
**(Multi-Agency Warehouse Operations)**

## MEMORANDUM

To: Local Community Collection Sites

From: Jody Dickhaut – President IDHRC/Volunteer & Donations Subcommittee Chairman/  
ACSDR IA State Director

Re: Collection Center Operation

Date: June 10, 2011

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A vital key to any Donations Operation is the Collection Process. The collection, sorting, and inventorying of donated items is a huge undertaking and an important part of operations in disaster response! It is the hope and desire of the Volunteer & Donations Subcommittee of the Iowa Human Resource Council (IDHRC) to assist the local communities affected by disaster to manage the intake and distribution of in-kind (non-cash) donations in an efficient and orderly manner. The following material is being provided by Adventist Community Services Disaster Response, the Lead Agency working with the State of Iowa for collecting/sorting/warehousing/distribution of donated goods during a state level disaster through the Multi-Agency Warehouse Operations (MAW).

There are two purposes for this document.

**#1:** To provide you with a proven and usable plan that will assist the local community with an orderly process to handle what is often a chaotic inflow of donated goods. This is often referred to in disaster response circles as the “Disaster within the Disaster”.

**#2:** *The Multi-Agency Warehouse* - When the magnitude of the disaster/event goes beyond the ability for the local community/government to handle the donations, and a request is made to the State for help. A State Multi-Agency Warehouse may be opened. In such an event local communities and organizations using and following these guidelines will help to create a smoother and less stressful transition of operations when that time comes.

These guidelines are not exhaustive nor should they be considered complete. They will however provide you with a substantial basic structure to improve your ability to handle donated goods. If you would like further consultation or to set up specific training please contact: Jody Dickhaut – IDHRC President at [Pstrjody@msn.com](mailto:Pstrjody@msn.com)

## **VOLUNTEERS** – The following is a recommendation:

- (Depending on the magnitude of the event):Up to 3 Volunteers Shifts of 3 – 4 hours with up to 50 volunteers per shift  
(Example 8-11:30, 11:30- 3:00, 3:00-6:30 or 8-12, 12-4, 4-8)
- 2 Team Leaders for each volunteer shift
- Volunteers be advised to wear closed-toe shoes
- Receptionist for each shift is responsible to sign in and sign out volunteers and check for proper shoes
- Volunteers will sign in and sign out (for safety, record keeping and liability)
- Snacks and beverages be provided in the break area for volunteers; water is already on site
- Port-a-potties be placed on site to enhance restroom facilities

## **SAFETY**

- Volunteers be advised to wear closed-toe shoes
- Volunteers be advised to lift only light loads and ask for a pallet jack for heavier loads
- Volunteers prohibited from operating forklifts unless experienced and permitted by staff
- Gloves and masks are available for volunteers
- No one under the age of 18 be allowed to work in the facility (check with local jurisdiction specific guidelines,18 is a the typical age limit for those working in an industrial area with forklift traffic)
- If there is an accident of any kind, the incident report form must be completed.

## **NUMBERING SYSTEM & INVENTORY**

- Please see the attached diagram for warehouse flow & recommended sorting process
- No used shoes or clothes should be accepted
- A copy of the numbering system is attached. The numbers and item category are taped to the end of each table as well as posted above head. The numbering system subcategories are at the end of each table
- 1. Items are pulled from the reception by pallet or boxes. 2. Stockers remove the items from the boxes and place them on the first set of sorting tables. 3) Sorters place items together by category on the middle tables. 4) Items are boxed by like item on end tables. 5) Boxes are labeled with the subcategories number, the description of the items, and quantity in the box. 6) Boxes of like subcategories are placed on the pallet D. Pallets are inventoried by category,

subcategory, description, items per box, and number of boxes. (Pallet inventory forms are kept in folder near the boxing area.) 7) Only use same size boxes on each pallet, mixing box sizes will limit uniform stacking and alter the usable space and stability of the pallet.

- For heavy items, boxes should not be stacked more than 2 levels high.
- Pallets are pushed to the back staging area until pick up for storage or distribution.

**Supplies** – The following supplies should be inventoried and replenished as often as needed:

- Volunteer Sign in / Sign out forms
- Pallet Inventory Forms
- #000 - #900 Category Signs for sorting and storing product
- Boxes of all sizes ( standardized - Small – Medium – Large)
- Large Pallet Boxes – (Gaylord) for pre-sorting
- Tape Guns & Packing Tape
- Pallets
- Forklifts & Pallet Jacks as needed
- Shrink Wrap – 15” x 1500’ w/handles
- Tables for Sorting (30 tables 3 per Category set in a T- formation)
- Gloves
- Hand Sanitizer
- Garbage Bags
- Dumpster w/service
- Record keeping capabilities w/ appropriate personnel and space

# COLLECTION AND SORTING PROCESS

To help with organizing, sorting and storing process, a commodity identification numbering system has been established. It should be used for collecting, sorting, inventorying and setting up a manifest for shipment to and from the warehouse.

## **Know "what to collect":**

**Helping your community "Know what to collect and send" to the disaster area is the most responsible thing you can do. (A "Collections to Help Disaster Survivors" information sheet is provided later in this course.)**

Here are some helpful ideas:

You may call ACS DR 800-381-7171 for an updated needs list.

**NOTE:** Be prepared to explain to people that the items they donate today may not be used in a particular community, or even in this particular disaster response. They may, instead, be used in a local disaster response or to restock disaster response supplies for the next disaster. (This situation usually only occurs in smaller disasters, where too many items are donated, or near the end of the collection period of any disaster.)

Keep in mind the season and area of the country to which you are shipping. i.e., **NO FUR COATS SHIPPED TO FLORIDA IN SUMMER.** After sorting & sizing, all items should be packed in uniform sized boxes for easy shipping, storage, and handling. The weight of each box should **NOT** exceed 45 lbs. When packing clothing items, all items should be separated and packed by gender and size. Pants and slacks should be packed so that the longest inseam is packed on the bottom. Shirts, sweaters, and jackets should be packed with the largest size on the bottom. Care should be taken in sorting donated items to assure that only the best of the "USABLE" goods are included for packing and shipment to the disaster area. Make sure all clothing items are clean and in good repair. (Would you wear this item?) All underwear & socks **MUST BE NEW** and should remain as the manufacturer packaged them.

## **Shoes:**

The collection, sorting and distribution of **USED** shoes is **NOT** feasible. The logistics are simply too complicated. There may be legal & health restrictions (state specific). We can use large quantities of **NEW** shoes by a manufacturer or retailer; however, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other organizations often provide vouchers the survivor(s) can use to purchase new shoes.

## **Other Goods:**

Special care must be taken in sorting, handling, and storing food items. Any food not sealed in the original manufacturer's container **cannot** be accepted, and must be discarded. Most times our facilities do not have the capability to handle and store perishable, refrigerated, or frozen foods. Donors of these commodities should be referred to an area food bank. When processing canned and dry foods, the following must be looked for:

- Dented cans with sharp creases
- Cans or packages without labels
- Rusted cans
- Cans that are bulging
- Home-canned or packaged foods

- Re-packaged foods
- Outdated and expired food products

**All of these items must be disposed of properly and discretely.**

**Do NOT mix food items with any other items, especially cleaning supplies.**

Other categories of items often needed may include:

- Cleaning Supplies
- Personal Care Items
- Paper Products
- Baby Goods
- Blankets & Linens
- Pet Foods

**The public often thinks the survivors need just what they have to donate. Sometimes such items can be useful, sometimes they are not. The distribution operation should provide a very specific list of needed items. The collection center managers must provide this list of specific needs to their community, to minimize the arrival of items not needed at that time. If items are collected which are not on the current “needs list”, an attempt should be made to put the items to good use.**

**Processing Procedure:**

Special precaution must be taken when sorting items. Wearing protective gloves and a face mask are recommended and sometimes required.

Some items you receive will be unusable for various reasons, like winter coats in the summer time, broken bottles of cleaning supplies, clothes and other items that have mold due to storage that would not be appropriate for distribution. Every effort should be made to make a good use of all donated items. Sometimes a rag or recycling company may accept some of these items from your operation. You may also be able to find a Thrift Store or other like entity in or outside the affected area that will be able to use these items in a productive way. But there will usually be some items that simply must be **discretely discarded**. Always make sure you have a dumpster (size depending on the scope of your operation) delivered to your collection site and make arrangements for it to be emptied regularly. Discretion is advised here, the public may become very upset, if they think their donations were discarded, rather than distributed to the survivors of the disaster.

## BASIC SAFETY ISSUES

Don't rush. Your life and health are too valuable to lose. If a quota or time requirement is not realistic, talk with your supervisor. Take regular breaks or rotate positions to avoid fatigue. Also, make sure you're eating well, getting plenty of fluids and plenty of sleep to avoid exhaustion. Protect yourself while working in extreme heat. Workers in sweltering, humid environments need to protect themselves with proper clothing that allows the skin to breathe. Protect yourself against dehydration by drinking plenty of water. In cold weather, take appropriate precautions.

Lift properly. Hold the load close to the body, stand with feet apart, one slightly in front of the other, and bend the knees when lifting and lowering items. Never carry a load on one side of the body or over your head, and allow gravity to help whenever possible by using slides, chutes, hoists, and hand trucks. When you have a heavy load, ask for help.

**No sandals, flip-flops or open toed shoes should be worn.** Use protective equipment as required. Wear a dust mask, protective gloves, and steel-toe boots if your job requires it. Training is required before operating a forklift or other specialized equipment. Make sure your facility is well ventilated. Have a well stocked first aid kit and identify trained staff. Disaster operations occur in inherently dirty environments. Frequently wash your hands. Keep your dirty fingers away from your eyes, mouth, nose, and ears to help avoid contamination and illness.

If there is an accident of any kind, please complete the incident report form.

## ACS DR Numbering System

As donations are received, they usually arrive in boxes and bags of assorted items. Organization and consistency are important when many people in various places handle large quantities of donations. Therefore, ACS DR has developed a numbering system to identify specific goods. As donations are collected or sorted, they are placed in boxes with the same type of item and then the box is marked with a number from the numbering system. As an example, a box marked 111 will only contain baby food. To make it easier to find specific goods, similar types of goods are grouped together in the numbering system. When palletizing sorted items; place only one category on each pallet. **Do Not** mix 100's with 200's and so on. The general organization of numbers follows, with a more specific breakout of category numbers on the last page. Please note that you may encounter items in your sorting process that are not listed, these can be sorted in mass and noted under the "99" number in each category (099,199,299 and so on)

#'s less than 100	Animal Products
100's	Food and Drinks
200's	Personal Care Items
300's	Paper and Plastic Items
400's	Baby/Child Products
500's	Bedroom and Bathroom Items
600's	Kitchen Items
700's	Cleaning Products
800's	Clothing and Footwear
900's	Miscellaneous Items





# VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone [Work] \_\_\_\_\_ [Home] \_\_\_\_\_

[Cell] \_\_\_\_\_ [Fax] \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Male [ ] Female [ ]

In Case of Emergency Notify \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date First Reporting to volunteer at this location \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Date of Departure \_\_\_\_\_

What special and/or vocational skills do you have that might contribute to this operation?

\_\_\_\_\_

What disaster response training have you had?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently affiliated with a disaster relief agency?  Yes  No

If yes, name of agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you bring one of the following:  Tent  Camper/Travel Trailer  Mobile Home

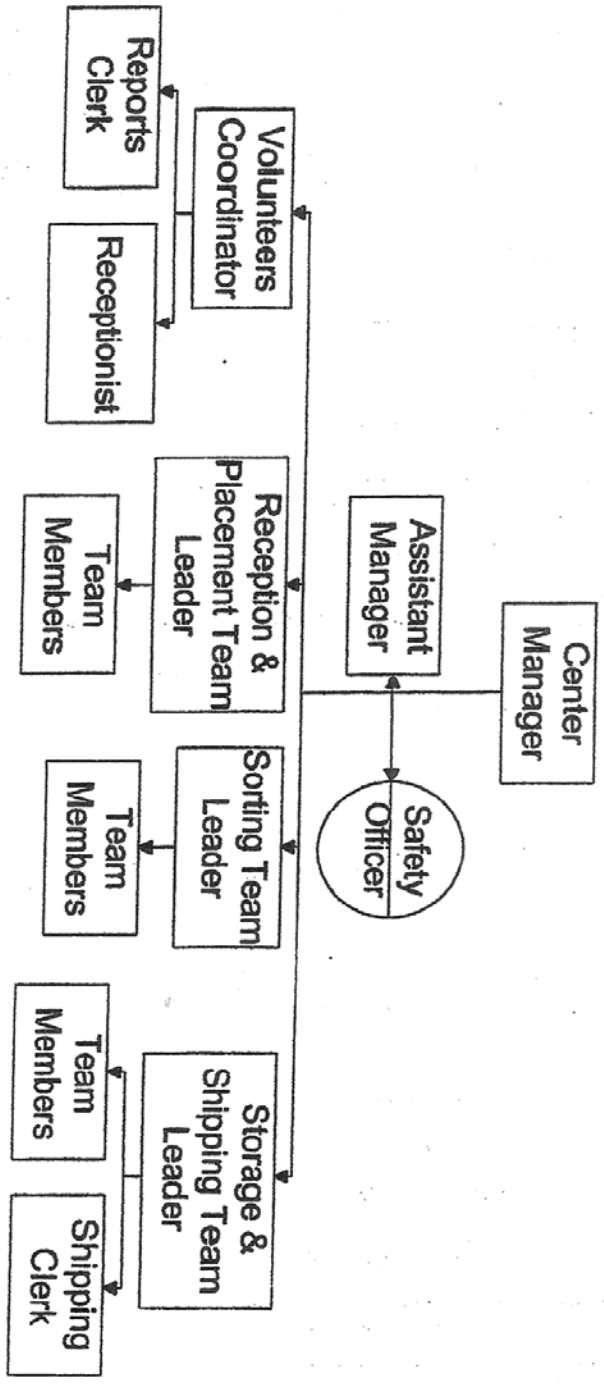
**DATES YOU ARE AVAILABLE TO VOLUNTEER:**

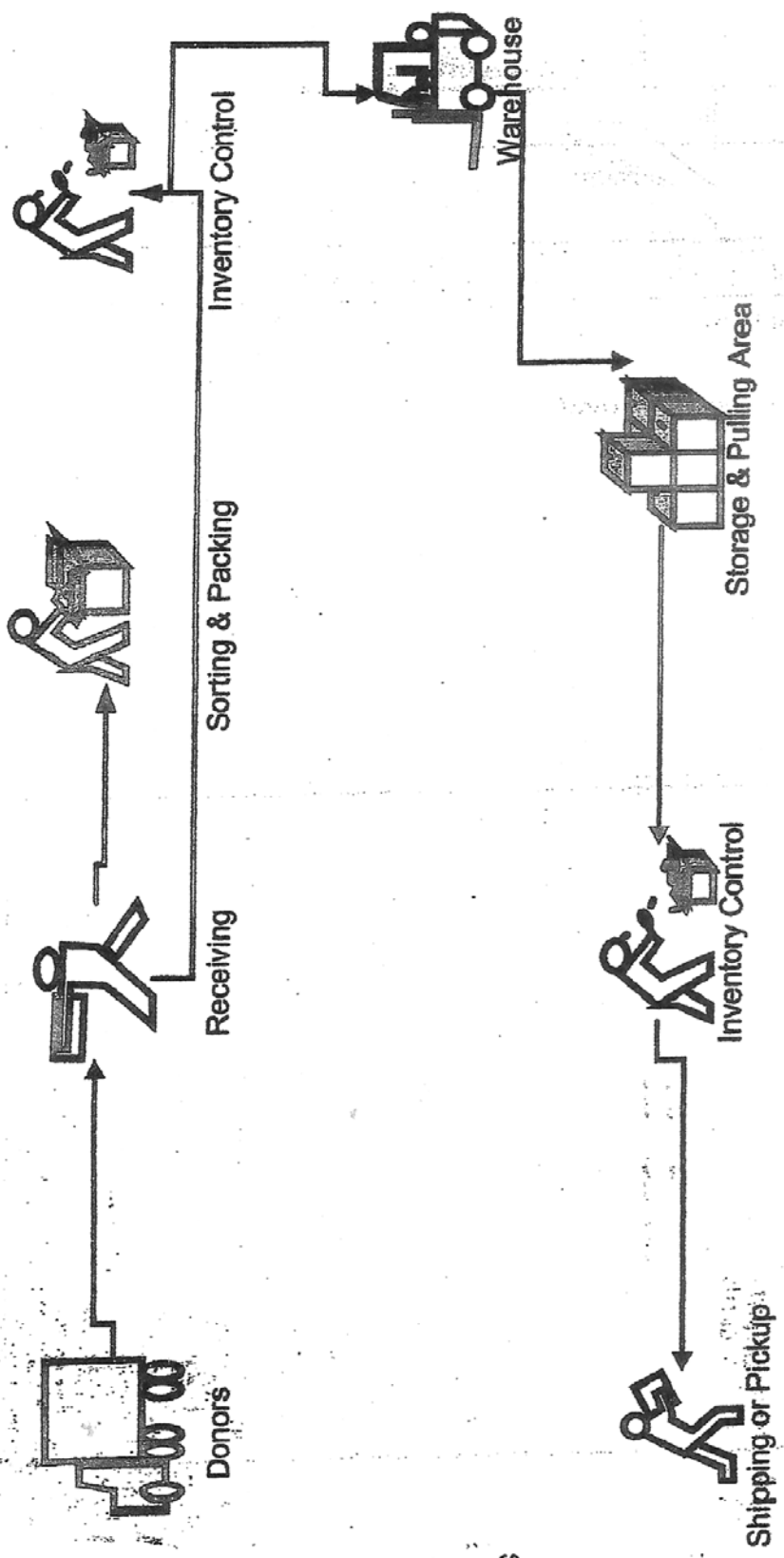
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Date							

**Volunteers MUST check IN& OUT at the beginning and end of each work shift.**



# Community Collection Center





Warehouse Flow Chart

