

Donations for Disaster Relief and Recovery

Do you know the best way to donate to help disaster victims?

Chaos rules after a disaster. Getting the right supplies to the right place to help the right people is a logistical challenge. Your approach to offering donations has a critical impact on the lives of others. Under ordinary conditions, delivering materiel requires a well-organized system and an intact transportation network. However, disasters leave devastation in their wake. Roads may be washed out. Debris may block transportation routes. Bridges may no longer exist. Airport runways may be damaged and unusable. Communication networks may be destroyed. Delivery of donated goods, therefore, becomes problematic, if not impossible. If you donate goods, they need to be inspected, inventoried, and warehoused. Outdated, malfunctioning, or damaged items need to be discarded. Perishable items need to be refrigerated. You may donate shoes, but the need may be for coats; you may donate coats, but the victims may have no shoes. Donating goods can get in the way of disaster relief efforts. Donate goods only if specifically requested.

It is much better for disaster relief organizations to receive donations of money. Money is easy to store. It doesn't spoil. It can be wired across the globe to be used at appropriate locations nearest to the disaster. It can pay for supplies, as they are needed and in the quantities that are needed, after damage and needs assessments are done. It can be allocated for a variety of resources – water, food, clothing, bedding, medical supplies, shelter, construction materials, labor, etc. Money provides flexibility to address changing conditions. You can arrange to make a donation by contacting one of the disaster relief organizations. You can go directly to an organization's website, link to many organizations via the NVOAD website, or call an organization via its toll-free number. When there is a major disaster, newspapers list the disaster relief organizations that are seeking donations. You may wish to donate money periodically instead of doing so only when a major disaster occurs. These charitable organizations have ongoing needs and help countless victims of disasters which are not on a scale to merit widespread media coverage. [See – “Resource Directory” – in Chapter 7, p. 130.]

