

Summary

This document provides guidance for non-congregate sheltering. “Non-congregate sheltering” means locations where each individual or household has living space that offers some level of privacy (like hotels, motels, casinos, dormitories, or retreat camps). During the COVID-19 pandemic, non-congregate sheltering is the preferred method of sheltering. Accordingly, the Red Cross coordinates with state and local officials to determine whether congregate sheltering, non-congregate sheltering, or a hybrid approach is safe and appropriate under the circumstances for each specific disaster.

When non-congregate sheltering is the primary method, use this framework to to:

- Safely and efficiently evaluate clients' needs,
- Direct clients to non-congregate sheltering, and
- Provide mass care services in non-congregate sheltering locations.

Relation with Other COVID-19 Doctrine:

- See [Sheltering in COVID-19 Affected Areas](#) for guiding principles and details on all sheltering operations (including congregate and non-congregate) during COVID-19.
- For tools on providing lodging for single- and multi-family fire, or other small-scale, local disaster clients refer to the [COVID-19 DAT Response Tactics Job Tool](#).
- Additional non-congregate shelter doctrine includes:
 - [Non-Congregate Shelter Hotel Acquisition and Payment Job Tool](#)
 - [Non-Congregate Shelter Accessibility Checklist](#)
 - [Feeding in COVID-19 Non-Congregate Shelters](#)
 - [Disaster Health Services in COVID-19 Non-Congregate Sheltering](#)
 - [Disaster Mental Health in COVID-19 Non-Congregate Sheltering](#)

Non-Congregate Sheltering Standards

Unless otherwise noted, the HQ Sheltering Manager is responsible for achieving, enforcing, and sustaining each of these standards.

- When lodging clients in non-congregate settings, the DRO assigns the minimum number of workers necessary to serve clients safely. This measure protects the workforce by minimizing risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- All clients and workers must practice social distancing, wear an appropriate face mask, and always follow all health and safety rules at the non-congregate site.
- For the safety of the workforce no Red Cross worker other than Disaster Health Services or someone working at the direction of the DRO Director may enter the individual non-congregate living space of a client.
- Clients residing in non-congregate shelters receive the equivalent of three meals per day.
- Deliver Shelter Resident Transition services to clients at all non-congregate sites.

- Do not accept unsolicited donations at any non-congregate site.
- Do not complete a *Facility Use Agreement* for hotel sites. Check with DLC@redcross.org when using other types of non-congregate sheltering.
- Regardless of a client’s health status, deliver all in-person services to clients using “set down, knock, step back” approach to maintain social distancing.
- Disaster Health Services must notify public health of all clients who have 1) been exposed to COVID-19 and are not ill (in self-quarantine); or 2) symptoms of COVID-19 (in self-isolation) and their last known condition (fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath).
- Report shelter counts by sending an email daily to the DOCC. When a DR# is initiated, expect to receive detailed instructions for what will be reported. Do not report non-congregate shelters in NSS.
- Maintain a spreadsheet or similar document with each clients’ location, contact number, and relevant information (per email instructions from the DOCC above) and ensure this information is available to all those providing services.

Roles and Responsibilities:

This section describes roles and responsibilities that are unique to the non-congregate sheltering environment. The [Concept of Operations](#), program standards and procedures doctrine, and other job tools describe the standard responsibilities of each of these activities and functions.

The table below outlines the responsibilities of workers who support non-congregate shelter sites. The Assistant Director of Operations may combine positions or reassign responsibilities to deploy the minimum number of workers necessary to serve clients safety. This measure protects the workforce by minimizing the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

As described in [Sheltering in COVID-19 Affected Areas](#), each region has pre-identified COVID Shelter Teams. In most cases, these COVID Shelter Teams will deploy to support non-congregate shelter operations. Below is a list of positions that may or may not be filled by members of a COVID Shelter Team. In addition to the roles common to COVID Shelter Teams, non-congregate sheltering also has the following roles.

Worker	Details	Virtual or In-Person
HQ Sheltering Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determines number / locations of non-congregate shelter sites • Determines and execute strategy to intake and refer clients to appropriate non-congregate shelter site(s) which may include a physical or virtual reception center • Determines staffing necessary for virtual and physically assigned sheltering positions to meet service delivery objectives • Coordinates support to Shelter Site Managers and service delivery sites • Tracks and reports all services being delivered at non-congregate shelter sites • Coordinates with the Feeding Manager for all feeding needs 	Virtual Deployment

Worker	Details	Virtual or In-Person
Shelter Site Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May delegate responsibilities as appropriate to Mass Care Dormitory Generalist or Non-Congregate Shelter Client Lodging Coordinator • Reports to HQ Sheltering Manager • Primary liaison to non-congregate shelter facility management • Determines onsite and virtual staffing requirements for all shifts with HQ Sheltering Manager • Coordinates the provision of necessary services and items to clients as described in the Service Delivery Plan • Works with facility staff to ensure site security is sufficient. • Informs all clients of available services • Maintains awareness of onsite partners and communicates those details to HQ Sheltering Manager • Provides client contact information to appropriate virtual leads • Reports daily counts in the Non-Congregate Shelter Count app • Ensures feeding requirements are followed as described in Feeding in COVID-19 Non-Congregate Shelters job tool. • Coordinates with Disability Integration to provide support to clients who are deaf or hard of hearing or have other access and functional needs • Resolves issues associated with unsolicited donations • Coordinates the posting of signs • Makes referrals to Disaster Spiritual Care, Disaster Mental Health, Disability Integration, and Reunification as appropriate • If clients take actions that jeopardize the health of staff or clients, works with Disaster Health Services, public health, and/or law enforcement to accelerate transition out of the shelter. • Determines the strategy to address individual client situations in which clients are non-communicative or are not actively engaging with the Red Cross in their recovery. 	<p>Depends on situation.</p> <p>If not deployed in-person, may need to identify an individual to be an in-person liaison with hotel management and coordinate support to clients.</p>

Worker	Details	Virtual or In-Person
Non-Congregate Shelter Client Lodging Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Shelter Site Manger • Responsibilities may be handled by Shelter Site Manager or HQ Sheltering Manager • Determines the quantity and cost of available rooms/living spaces at non-congregate site • Supports ongoing coordination with Shelter Site Manager, non-congregate shelter facility management and Virtual Lodging Team of room reservations and adjustments based on client population • Maintains nightly reservations with front desk staff when P-Card is being used • Liaises with Virtual Lodging Team (VLT) when contracting with Corporate Lodging Consultants (CLC) • Tracks and reports number of rooms reserved, occupied, and nightly rates in the forthcoming hotel tracking tool. 	Virtual Deployment
Mass Care Dormitory Generalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Shelter Site Manager • Responsibilities may be handled by the Shelter Site Manager • Provides support for shelter operations and mass care assistance to clients at the direction of the Shelter Site Manager which may include feeding support, communicating information to clients, organizing inventory, delivering items to clients, and other duties as assigned 	In-person Deployment
Disaster Health Services (DHS) Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts initial assessments and virtual daily wellness checks as described in Disaster Health Services in COVID-19 Non-Congregate Sheltering job tool. • Communicates relevant client status to Shelter Site Manager 	Depends on situation with approval of HQ DHS Manager
Disaster Mental Health (DMH) Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides virtual support to clients who are referred as described in the Disaster Mental Health in COVID-19 Non-Congregate Sheltering job tool. • Communicates relevant client status to Shelter Site Manager • May need to be physically present to support individual clients and workers, as well as de-escalate situations 	Depends on situation
Disaster Spiritual Care (DSC) Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides virtual support to clients who are referred as described in non-congregate guidance • Collaborates with DMH to provide support to staff and clients • Communicates relevant client status to Shelter Site Manager • May need to be physically present to support individual clients and workers, especially if there has been a death in the family 	Depends on situation

Worker	Details	Virtual or In-Person
Disability Integration Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides virtual support to meet the access and functional needs of all clients, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical accessibility of hotel rooms ○ Alternate forms of communication ○ Modifications to methods of service delivery 	Virtual or in-person with approval of HQ Disability Integration Manager
Shelter Resident Transition Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Shelter Resident Transition Supervisor • Supports clients transitioning from non-congregate shelter site to safe, sustainable housing solution 	Virtual Deployment
Virtual Lodging Team (VLT)	<p>The Virtual Lodging Team (VLT) is a standing team that serves all active DROs with the following responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Virtual Lodging Specialist from the VLT is only assigned to DRO's utilizing Corporate Lodging Consultants (CLC) for hotel reservations; • The Virtual Lodging Specialist will facilitate with CLC to back into contracts previously secured by P-Cards • Will submit any requests for new or cancelled rooms by the Non-Congregate Shelter Client Lodging Coordinator to CLC; • Will track all nightly commitments to date on CLC contracts including how many rooms are reserved and the nightly rate; • Will track all DRO projected CLC hotel commitments including rooms reserved and their nightly rate; • Receive and distribute the Cumulative Report to the Non-Congregate Shelter Client Lodging Coordinator, Sheltering Manager, and DRO Director; • Liaise with Non-Congregate Shelter Client Lodging Coordinator to ensure alignment on hotel occupancy. • Assist Non-Congregate Shelter Client Lodging Coordinator with CLC Cumulative report and DRO lodging report reconciliation 	Virtual

Considerations for Non-Congregate Site Selection

In the initial phase of an event, disaster leadership must choose appropriate site(s) for non-congregate sheltering. Use fewer sites to reduce the number of locations where Red Cross is delivering services, but Disaster Leadership must consider the following factors:

- Proximity to clients' pre-disaster address
- Services that can be provided, such as meals and hygiene items
- Number of individual living spaces (rooms) available
- Accessibility (See [Non-Congregate Sheltering Accessibility Checklist](#))
 - Several accessible rooms should be available at each site, and clients who do not have disability related needs should not be placed in these rooms, if avoidable.
- Pet friendliness - see the Red Cross position in [Pets in Non-Congregate Shelters](#) section

- Price
- Amenities in room (like a fridge and/or microwave)
- Length of availability
- Space at site available for Red Cross usage
- Willingness to cooperate with Red Cross and support community
- Ability to accept clients with COVID-19 symptoms

Note on Hotel Sheltering Site Payment

- Regions identify P-Card holders as part of their readiness activities. These individuals are tasked with securing non-congregate housing should an urgent need arise.
 - Ensure hotel restrictions are lifted and request the payment limits needed to meet the expected cost.
 - Submit these requests to DROFinance@redcross.org between 8:00 am–5:00 pm ET, Monday - Friday. For evening and weekend unanticipated needs, contact the Assistant Director of Finance assigned to the operation.
- See the [Shelter Hotel Acquisition and Payment job tool](#) for more detailed information on paying for non-congregate shelter sites.

Campsites, College Dormitories, Lots, and Other Non-Traditional Sites (Not Hotels / Motels)

- Only identify and select sites with available individual or household rooms, cabins, or living spaces with necessary infrastructure. Red Cross will generally not be able to procure and provide individual family-sized tents or large soft-sided structures.
- Sheltering operations at any non-traditional site, including campsites, requires operational planning and support from Emergency Management.
- Identify necessary support services, including site security, hook-ups, propane, wastewater, trash pick-up, and electricity options.
- Sites must be accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- When clients are in tents or RVs, the HQ Sheltering Manager or designee refers to [Doctrine Bulletin: Counting Outside Shelter Populations](#) to estimate population counts when clear numbers are not available
- Contact DLC@RedCross.org for guidance on securing a *Facility Use Agreement*.

Evacuation Center

When evacuations occur in communities that do not have congregate shelter sites to perform an intake for disaster affected individuals, the Red Cross must establish procedures to safely and efficiently evaluate clients' needs and direct them to those services. Red Cross may need to establish a physical Evacuation Center to determine essential elements of information and client needs before directing clients to a non-congregate shelter site. In all situations, Evacuation Center workers rapidly assess clients and refer them to the service needed or requested as quickly as possible. When a client is directed to a non-congregate site, additional Red Cross workers follow-up with those clients within 24 hours to further assess and meet needs.

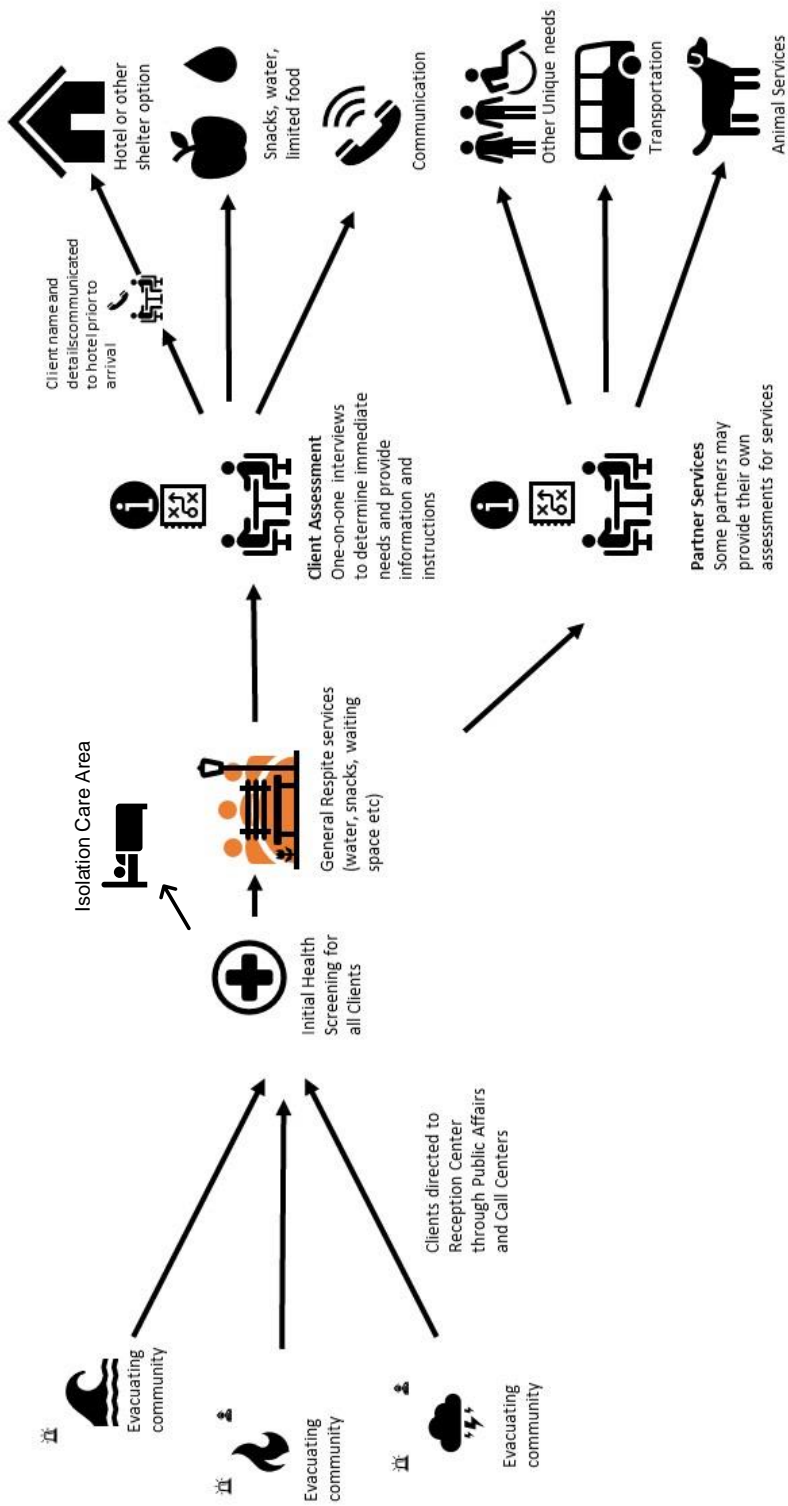
Considerations for Establishing an Evacuation Center

- Coordinate Evacuation Center opening with emergency management
- All clients over the age of 2 years receive a face mask and liquid-gel thermometer
- Report shelter counts by sending an email daily to the DOCC. When a DR# is initiated, expect to receive detailed instructions for what will be reported. Collect required client information as described in those instructions.
 - Includes primary client, number of family members, phone number, and referred-to hotel.
- The layout and operation of an Evacuation Center must follow social distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance as described in [COVID-19 Shelter Health Screening Using Personal Protective Equipment Job Tool](#).
- Clients move through Evacuation Center to services which may include being directed to a non-congregate shelter site.
- A waiting area that incorporates social distancing may need to be established when a non-congregate shelter site is not yet available.
- At a physical Evacuation Center health screening will occur (see [COVID-19 Shelter Health Screening Using Personal Protective Equipment Job Tool](#)), and clients who have been identified as having COVID-19 symptoms are directed to a temporary isolation care area.
- Disaster leadership must plan to transition Evacuation Centers to congregate shelters if the DRO is unable to acquire enough non-congregate space. See [Sheltering in COVID-19 Affected Areas](#).
- The HQ Sheltering Manager or designee must enter Evacuation Center sites into NSS as shelters when they open. There is no daily population count requirement. An Evacuation Center does not include overnight stays.
- Operate Evacuation Centers with the minimum Red Cross workers needed to deliver minimal necessary services. Red Cross workers assisting clients may handle multiple duties and tasks.

Services Available at an Evacuation Center

Health Screening	All new arrivals complete health screening with public health or Red Cross worker
Greeting/ Respite	Make clients feel comfortable with limited services, such as snacks, water, no more than one meal onsite (ideally portable). Blankets, comfort kits, and masks may be provided.
Intake and Referral	A very brief one-on-one private interview to determine urgent client needs that must be addressed immediately and refer to additional service providers, including non-congregate sheltering. Record Client information in a client log. It is not necessary for a client to have a health screening prior to being directed to their hotel room.
Psychological First Aid	Consider the stressful environment. Assign the minimum number of workers necessary to serve clients safely. This measure protects the workforce by minimizing risk of exposure to COVID-19.
Shelter Assignment	Collect client name and contact information and provide client with instructions on where to go. If provided with hotel, ensure hotel receives client name prior to their arrival.
Transportation	Direct clients in need of transportation to a waiting area with social distancing options until transportation is available. Long delays may also require a temporary onsite congregate shelter.

Evacuation Center



Pets in Non-Congregate Shelters

COVID-19 does not change the mission the Red Cross does, but it does change the way we do the mission. The virus that causes COVID-19 usually spreads from close person-to-person contact. For the Red Cross, that means reducing the number of close person-to-person encounters necessary to accomplish our mission and mitigating the risk to our clients and workforce when those close encounters are mission essential. Consequently, while COVID-19 remains a public health threat, the Red Cross will conduct much of its disaster relief work virtually and will limit its footprint of in-person responders to provide life-sustaining emergency shelter/lodging in response to disasters.

In terms of meeting the immediate sheltering needs of clients in the COVID environment, the Red Cross strives to do this in non-congregate settings such as hotels. For the safety of everyone, when non-congregate sheltering is an option that is our priority, and we will work to secure pet-friendly hotels. We recognize that each hotel has their own policies and limitations and do our best to keep families with pets together whenever possible. In parallel, we rely on community partners to manage the disaster housing and support for household pets who are evacuated or displaced with their owners.

We recognize that many Americans will not evacuate without their pets and given that many families are now staying home full time, the bond between humans and their animals will likely be stronger than ever. In the same way that American Red Cross relies on facility owners to make congregate shelter sites available to the community, we rely on community organizations and the government's animal services agencies to take pro-active steps to identify a solution. Ultimately, communities must identify and support a lead pet sheltering agency who will provide the vital pet sheltering services that families need. Red Cross is eager to convene and co-plan our efforts so that all families affected by disasters have a safe location to begin their recovery process.

Service animals are always welcome in Red Cross shelters, even when operating in the COVID-19 environment. Depending on the laws of your state, assistance animals may also be allowed. To find out if your state has laws specific to assistance animals and how they are defined, click [here](#).

When families with pets are displaced and hotels are used for shelter, Red Cross will work with pet owners, hotel management and the community leadership to determine the best solutions with the available resource. We recognize that there may be instances when ideal pet lodging isn't feasible, and the Red Cross welcomes the support of animal services agencies to support during disaster planning and operations to meet the needs of everyone affected.