

**MISSION
TO NORTH
AMERICA**

Disaster Response Site Manager Handbook

Mission to North America

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Editorial note: this manual is a "work in progress," a collection of the experience and lessons learned by those who are leading in Hurricane Katrina relief work. Please add your questions, comments and additions to the content; our goal is to have a working document that grows constantly. MNA ShortTerm Director Arklie Hooten is coordinating this collective effort. Please communicate with him at ahooten@pcanet.org

Site Manager Handbook

MNA Disaster Response

Designed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina to help prepare future MNA Disaster Response Site Managers, by Brian McKeon of New City Fellowship, working with Disaster Response Key Leaders. Our hope is that as future disasters come and go this handbook will be edited accordingly. Special thanks to Ron and Judy Haynes, who made this work possible.

MNA Disaster Response (MNADR) Purpose:

Our vision is that this ministry will give members of the Presbyterian Church in America opportunities to offer relief to those affected by natural or man-made disasters. Through these efforts, we hope to share the love of Christ by meeting the victims' immediate needs as well as helping to rebuild their lives.

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SECTION 1

Relief Providers (RP):

- ❖ Definition: A Relief Provider (RP) is a Presbytery or network that is able to mobilize its people in response to tragedy and disaster and effectively bring relief to a stricken area.
- ❖ Key Functions:
 - ❖ Advance Assessment Teams
 - ❖ Staging Site set up
 - ❖ Infrastructure set up
 - ❖ Site Manager teams
 - ❖ Care Team skills
 - ❖ Communications: Info/Data
 - ❖ Volunteer generation
 - ❖ Self sustaining
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Site Manager Team (SMT) Job Description:

- ❖ The Site Manager Team will be in charge of coordinating relief efforts at a particular site. SMT will work closely with the local church, seeking to support and protect local church leaders as well as to keep the work within the boundaries established. SMT will be expected to arrange for as many workers as possible to come help, and to keep them safe and busy while on site.

Introduction:

- ❖ Scripture: Luke 17:7-10, Isaiah 58, Micah 6:8
- ❖ Warning: SMT will often be out on their own, under great stress, and with minimal support. There may be pressure from the local church, from those who are coordinating the overall relief effort, from incoming teams, and from those receiving relief. This will be difficult. Anger not dealt with will quickly lead to burnout and bitterness. Each SMT should develop its own prayer support team – people who are not involved in the work with them, who can hold them up before God.
- ❖ Encouragement: This experience will be life changing. God works in incredible ways, and often amazing things come out of disaster. Trust in Him, He will carry you through!
- ❖ Grassroots nature of PCA: To be written by MNA
- ❖ Chain of Command: To be written by MNA
- ❖ Local Church Leader/Session Authority: To be written by MNA

Primary Goals:

- ❖ Protect and support the local church leadership.
Remember that the local church leaders have just endured a disaster and may not be emotionally, mentally, spiritually stable. The teams coming in should be a blessing, not an additional burden. The SMT is there to be a barrier between the teams and the leadership.
- ❖ Facilitate as large a response from outside volunteers as possible.
At the same time, there is a massive buildup of people who want to come help - and will come one way or another. The SMT should try to set things up to allow massive numbers of volunteers to flow through each site.
- ❖ Show God's Mercy and Love to people in need.
Be evangelistic. Look for opportunities to share the Gospel and pray, and encourage teams to do the same.

Before Arrival...

- ❖ Training: All SMT members should attend some kind of training situation before arriving on a disaster site, even if it is a brief training from a previous SMT.
- ❖ Support Group: Build up a group of people who know the type of work being done and will commit to praying faithfully as well as providing encouragement and accountability throughout the duration of the disaster response.
- ❖ Team building: If at all possible SMT should meet or at least be in communication with others before arriving on site.
- ❖ Finances: There should be some system in place to ensure financial stability for SMT members.
- ❖ Equipment: Work with home churches and presbyteries to build up supplies and equipment that would be helpful during a disaster.
- ❖ Vehicle: A truck of some sort is a huge blessing on a work site.
- ❖ Site Manager Kit will be provided by MNA. It will include a cell phone, laptop computer, this handbook, cash, and other necessary items.
- ❖ Information from Advance Assessment Teams:
Advance Assessment Teams will be on the ground immediately after (or even just before) a disaster. A copy of their After Action Report should be provided to the SMT. Communicate directly with them and find out as much information as possible. Ideally SMT arrival with overlap with Assessment Team. Find out who is in charge locally, what the local church's status is, what locals that are willing/able to help, and what are any special circumstances of that particular site.

Response Parameters:

- ❖ Focus of work: This will differ greatly from one site/disaster to another. This will need to be determined by MNA and the local church.

- ❖ Church members and key personnel need to be made a priority.
- ❖ Overall Community Approach: Working systematically through a map, section by section.
- ❖ Target Neighborhood Approach: Finding areas that are particularly impoverished, neglected, or hard hit.
- ❖ Financial Need Approach: Prioritizing those who are un/under insured.
- ❖ Possible Tasks: these will change as the relief work continues over time. At the beginning, most MNADR work will be limited to Tree Work, Gutting; over time, more Repairing and Rebuilding will begin. Circumstances may call for additional tasks.
- ❖ Tree Work. How to...
 - Prioritize the task. Clear roadways, entrances, power access, and dangerous areas first. Worry about backyards and cosmetic work later. Bobcats are preferred, and work best with a small 3-5 person chainsaw team attached. Dragging the brush to areas where it will be collected can be time consuming, and some workers will consider that beneath them. Don't take people at their word when it comes to chainsaws. Often the "tree experts" are the ones who get hurt and cause further damage.
- ❖ Gutting. How to...
 - Ensure that the air and other environmental factors are not dangerous and/or that proper breathing apparatus and protective clothing is used. Open up windows and doors, move out the large wet stuff first. Shovel muck if necessary. Watch out for the refrigerators and large appliances that collect water. Be extra careful in removing them. Tear the walls out to four feet if waterline is lower than that. Otherwise go to the ceiling. Remove all debris. Do not cause unnecessary damage, and be on the lookout for salvageable belongings and valuables. Pull the nails from the walls and clean up before leaving so the house looks as nice as possible.
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Feeding
- ❖ Medical
- ❖ Rebuilding
- ❖ Counseling

Team Approach:

- ❖ Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. A cord of three strands is not easily broken...
- ❖ Lone Ranger Mentality: Many disaster responders tend to be lone ranger types - wanting to do it all without help. Individual members of the SMT may be able to accomplish great things, but will be limited. Set up a strong team approach and the work will be greatly multiplied.
- ❖ Rogue Teams: There will be groups (even from the PCA) that just show up, or do their own thing. This can be frustrating and distracting. Try to draw them into the established boundaries. They just want to help.

- ❖ Weakness: Know the limitations of the SMT, and the areas that it is weak in or will struggle with.
- ❖ Staying in Lanes: There is so much going on that will vie for attention. Be careful about losing focus and especially about getting caught up in the local church politics. Support other team members, but remember each has a separate task.
- ❖ SMT Members: Suggested in this Manual are some jobs that would be helpful on the SMT. Some of these may be combined, or others added, depending on the scope of the disaster and its unique needs.
 - ❖ Site Manager (SM) is the one in charge.
 - ❖ On Site Team:
 - ❖ Communication & Administration
 - ❖ MacGyver
 - ❖ Assessor
 - ❖ Hospitality
 - ❖ Care Group
 - ❖ Off Site Team:
 - ❖ Volunteer Coordinator
 - ❖ Administration/Communication

SECTION 2

Site Manager (SM) Job Description:

- ❖ Lead SMT: There has to be a leader!
 - ❖ Know all jobs. Know what each team member does.
 - ❖ Local ability to meet personnel resources. Fill in gaps with local volunteers, and help them move towards taking over from the SMT.
 - ❖ Housing for SMT. Make sure the team is housed in the best possible situation, and be aware of any extra issues that may arise from their housing situation.
 - ❖ Site parameters need to be clearly explained and adhered to.
 - ❖ Importance of unity. Keep all SMT members in the loop.
 - ❖ Meetings daily with SMT, even if just briefly to pray.
 - ❖ Accountability, both for the team and yourself.
 - ❖ Rest/Care: The tendency will be to work incessantly, and not take breaks. The SMT needs to think long term. Remember exhaustion will drastically increase mistakes and injuries.
 - ❖ Oversight: Conflicts and issues will come up, and you need to be the leader, and sometimes will have to make hard decisions. Use Matthew 18 as a guide.
- ❖ Local Church:

- ❖ Authority: They are in charge. If there are problems the authority rests with them and their decision will be upheld.
- ❖ Protect: Teams can cause great damage and stress to the local leadership. Your job is to be a buffer between the two.
- ❖ Facilitate: The pastor needs to be free to shepherd his flock, but this can also be a tremendous opportunity to enable the church towards mercy ministry and greater diversity.
- ❖ Sustainability: Include the church as much as possible, train them to take over the work, connect them so the work continues.
- ❖ Priorities: Be aware of the congregations needs and make those a priority.
- ❖ Site Setup:
 - ❖ Local Permission: Find out who is in charge and work with them
 - ❖ Number of Workers: Determine how many volunteers the site is able to handle, based on housing/facilities available and your own leadership resources. Then add 10.
 - ❖ Housing: Tents, buildings, homes, RVs - look for as many options as possible and also be looking to add to those or make them more long term. Be aware of potential problems that may arise.
 - ❖ Showers were voted the #1 concern in post Katrina follow up.
 - ❖ Toilets may be available, but what about sewage issues?
 - ❖ Cooking: Set up a kitchen area and determine whether teams will feed themselves or be cooked for. Coordinate food supplies.
 - ❖ Resources: Know what is in hand and what is available locally.
- ❖ Orientation:
 - ❖ No matter how experienced a team is you need to make them aware of the particulars of the site. This can eliminate or reduce problems later on. Set the tone spiritually, tell them what happened in the area and the impact on the local church. Make the job parameters and expectations clear. Introduce SMT and local church leaders. Emphasize safety and speak directly to concerns in this particular area and work. Teams will be working hard, and often want to wear themselves out the first day. Drinking lots of fluids and pacing themselves with regular work breaks will increase their effectiveness over a several day period. Explain the rules of the site clearly, including the chain of command. Semper Gumbil Always flexible - emphasize to teams the changing nature of a disaster response and that they need to be flexible.
 - ❖ Show teams how to do the work, and discuss the particular nuances. It helps to challenge them in some ways. Remind them to take advantage of the evangelism opportunities that will come, to stop and pray with and listen to those that have suffered.
 - ❖ Go over the schedule, make sure all necessary paperwork is taken care of, give any additional information relevant to the site, take time to answer all the questions, and spend some time in prayer.
- ❖ Supervise Teams:

- ❖ Get to know the leaders of the group and have a working relationship with them. Go out of the way to support the leaders and the work the team is doing, and try to be visible. Look for problems and try to deal with them quickly and simply - before they escalate into anything major. Demonstrate trust - give teams as much freedom as possible, without losing control. Be confident and humble in use of authority. As annoying and frustrating as it may get, try to answer questions.
- ❖ Organize Work:
 - ❖ Know the site parameters.
 - ❖ Find work: At first this may be surprisingly difficult, but establish a system to advertise work and to collect job info.
 - ❖ Assess each job before sending a team. Use Assessor.
 - ❖ Prioritize the job in keeping with the local churches wishes, and then assign teams to do the jobs. Give them a copy of the work order and a map or directions. Make sure they have the tools they need.
 - ❖ Each job needs to be inspected after teams leave, and information for follow up passed on to the local church.
- ❖ Finances:
 - ❖ Cash will be needed for the first few weeks as power and phone lines may not work, thus eliminating credit card use. Keep all receipts to turn in to MNA later. Purchase the supplies needed, but be careful about pressure from teams to buy extras. Keep MNA posted on any financial issues key personnel (SMT, local church leaders, etc.) may have.
- ❖ Safety:
 - ❖ In the orientation be sure to emphasize safety issues. Make sure each work site has adequate supervision - if there are concerns about a team then a member of the SMT may need to stay at the job the entire time.
 - ❖ Learn how to say no, or stop people when things are not being done safely. Use the Team Leaders as much as possible. It may be necessary to take people off a work site if they are acting in a dangerous or irresponsible manner. At the same time give teams the right to say no to a job if it is outside their comfort level. Do not force them into a potentially unsafe environment.
 - ❖ Pray for wisdom and emphasize the same to the Team Leaders.
 - ❖ Watch out for dehydration. Have plenty of water available at all times.
 - ❖ Know where the hospitals or clinics are! Hopefully they'll not be needed.
- ❖ Equipment:
 - ❖ Possible Needs: Chainsaws, (+ accessories), Rakes, Tarps, Pole Saws, Ropes, Ladder, Generators, Ext. cords, Scoop & flat Shovels, Brooms, Wheelbarrows, Extra Wheels, Hammers (&

- sledge), Pry bars, Utility knives (extra blades), Dolly, Strong Garbage bags, Gloves, Masks, etc.
- ❖ Maps: Find accurate local maps and a good wall map.
- ❖ Personal tools. Each SMT member should have their own complete set.
- ❖ Medical: 1st Aid kits, and high quality dusk masks for mold settings.
- ❖ Know resources for getting more equipment - where are the nearest open stores, and how limited are their supplies? Communicate needs or expected needs to MNA and incoming teams.
- ❖ Maintain equipment, provide secure storage, and keep track of it all. Only allow trained workers to do maintenance. Have sign out sheets or teams may accidentally take equipment home.
- ❖ Closing Site:
 - ❖ The time will come for a site to be shut down. Make sure all key personnel are involved in the decision making process, and know what the plans are to continue helping local folks. There may be a pile of equipment left, and MNA does not have storage for future disasters. Try to get those things to places where they will be used (other sites) or stored for future use.
 - ❖ Debrief is essential for all key individuals. Share lessons learned for future MNADR.

SECTION 3

SMT Job Descriptions:

- ❖ OFFICE MANAGER:
 - ❖ It may be possible to recruit local church folks to help in this capacity, but one person will need to be in charge at least at the beginning.
 - ❖ Phones & Email: Answering and returning messages from incoming teams, the RP, MNA, local church personnel, people in the community looking for help, etc.
 - ❖ Communication link with MNA, RP, etc. Information needs to flow freely to the rest of the response structure.
 - ❖ Databases: Setting up easy to use system to record information on SMT, volunteers, jobs, etc.
 - ❖ Work: Handling incoming work requests and assisting in systemizing the process.
 - ❖ Volunteers: Ensuring that all information is gathered and keeping an eye out for potential problems.
 - ❖ Equipment: Computers, printers, phones, files, etc.
 - ❖ Scheduling: Helping coordinate team schedules but also trying to keep track of SMT as well.
 - ❖ Paperwork system: Organizing the various paperwork that needs to be collected and distributed.

- ❖ Guarding SMT: As other team members pass through running interference from pesky team members and watching stress levels.
- ❖ Church support: The local church may not be functioning initially, and may need help in finding members and in general communication.
- ❖ Blog: It's new and high tech but is an easy and effective way to make information available to a curious public – and prayer partners.
- ❖ Resource for information.
- ❖ MACGYVER:
 - ❖ All purpose handyman, repair person, gopher, etc. Set up showers, keep vehicles and equipment running well, find needed supplies, and creatively use available resources to solve problems. Keep chainsaws sharp, and help teams complete work that requires higher technical skills.
- ❖ ASSESSOR:
 - ❖ How to assess... Take the completed work order and try to schedule a meeting with the home owner. Their signature will be needed on the release form before work can begin. Find out what damage has occurred, look for unique challenges, and write a brief report on the work order. A simple priority system will allow easy sorting of assessed jobs. Ask the homeowner about neighbors/relatives that also need work done. It is ideal to have a number of jobs in close proximity to each other. Note any peculiarities, anecdotes, or special tools needed on back of form.
 - ❖ Prayer/Evangelism: Often the Assessor may be the first help a person sees after the disaster. They will want to tell their story and show all the damage. This is good and opens a door for evangelism. Pray with each person before leaving the house.
 - ❖ Post work inspection: Don't assume a job is finished when a team leaves, visit each job to see what else needs to be done, and note accordingly. Some jobs will be beyond what teams are able to do.
 - ❖ Maps are important. GPS and MapQuest type programs will be helpful as well. Bring laptops with Microsoft Streets and TripsMaps (or equivalent) installed, to provide for street maps without utilizing the internet. While finding houses jot down directions and landmarks – street signs and landmarks maybe changed after a disaster.
 - ❖ Be a resource both to the homeowners, providing information on help available, and to the SMT, by keeping them informed of what things are like on the street.
- ❖ HOSPITALITY:
 - ❖ Upkeep of Facilities: cleanliness, supplies, chores assigned.
 - ❖ Fluid enforcement: ensure SMT and work crews have adequate fluids with them each day and are drinking enough.

- ❖ Food supervision: Whether cooking is done for teams or teams cook for themselves, supervise and keep track of food.
- ❖ Housing arrangements for work teams
- ❖ Site Mom: Nurse sick folks, answer questions, solve problems, etc.
- ❖ Prayer support: Mobilize folks to pray and monitor prayer needs
- ❖ Resource for teams and SMT, also mediate between teams and SM when needed
- ❖ CARE TEAM:
 - ❖ Tend to spiritual needs, provide support and counseling across the disaster site, with the local church, with SMT, with work teams, with those affected directly by the disaster. Lead team devotions and help gauge the well being of SMT and local church leaders.
 - ❖ A retreat should be taken a few weeks after the disaster, with all key personnel taken to a nice location for R&R, counseling, sharing of ideas and struggles, and a few days of being spoiled. The Care Teams will help lead this in conjunction with MNA.
- ❖ OFF SITE TEAM: This falls more into RF domain, but should be considered a part of the SMT, and all work together.
 - ❖ VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR: Get the word out about relief efforts, raise funds, talk to the media, gather resources needed, coordinate outside groups and individuals who want to join teams, make sure all key individuals are informed, be the point person, handle training for teams before they leave, etc. Work closely with Team Leaders to make sure they understand the realities of the disaster and the particulars of the site. Debrief Team Leaders upon return.
 - ❖ SECRETARIAL/DATA MANAGEMENT: Help keep the flood of volunteers flowing by setting up communication centers, organizing volunteers and dealing with all the paperwork. Keep the information flowing from the SMT to future work teams and others interested. Set up prayer support for both the SMT and work teams, and providing any needed support for the On Site team.

SECTION 4

Issues:

- ❖ COMMUNICATION:
 - ❖ Communication can be a nightmare in any disaster. Simplify the direct chain of communication. Talk to one person representing MNA, and one from the RP. Delegate extra communication as much as

possible, but get regular updates and have a system in place for urgent information. Use a Blog to make information readily available.

- ❖ External: MNA, RP, Public, Media, Support group
- ❖ Internal: Local church, SMT, Team leaders, Teams, Community, Relief recipients

❖ PERSONAL:

- ❖ It may feel like the same day over and over, like the movie Groundhog Day, and you need to watch out for yourself. Take the extra time out of insanely busy days to spend time in the Word and on your knees. Use the SMT and local church leaders to provide accountability, build meaningful relationships and good friendships. Be careful though about relationships - you are in a position of power and with that comes temptation.
- ❖ Pace yourself - you are there for a longer period of time than the work teams and adrenaline can only carry so far. When down time comes use it well, know what it takes to recharge your batteries, and make time for a few simple pleasures (like milkshakes) that can brighten up a day.
- ❖ Have people pray for and with you, build up a support group that you regularly email with updates who can track how you are doing. After a few weeks there will be a retreat, and you need to go. Be wise in the risks you take, and avoid being foolishly brave (e.g., not taking safety precautions).

❖ SUPPLIES:

- ❖ Bring all necessities - nothing else may be available! Use the resources available when needs arise and don't be afraid to ask teams to bring extra or forgotten things (socks, etc).
- ❖ Suggestions: Lots of water, and powdered Gatorade. MRE's for the early weeks with no power. All the personal gear necessary (clothing, hats, boots, toiletries, tents, sleeping bag, pillow), a few books to read, a notebook to use as a journal, pens, permanent markers, and medical needs. Flashlights, batteries, car chargers (power inverter), music player, cds, etc.
- ❖ Gas may be hard to come by. Ensure that all personnel who plan to arrive at the disaster area have sufficient gasoline to return on their own to a certain gasoline supply.

❖ TEAM LEADERS (TL):

- ❖ Bad teams are almost unheard of, but poor leadership can cause all kinds of problems. Often leaders come with a predetermined agenda and set in stone ideas about what the realities are and what their team will do. Have open lines of communication ahead of time and be humble. Often it is the pride of the TL and the SM that cause conflict. Encourage the TL, find ways to build them up and support their leadership, but remember the SM is the one in charge, and MNA and the local church leadership can be called upon for support.

- ❖ Teams will come with their own set of rules, and rules from the SMT or local church may be added to those as well. Encourage teams to set policies about dating/pda, curfew, dress code, smoking, drinking, free time, etc. Use the TL and their existing authority structure to enforce those rules - deal with discipline issues through the TL as much as possible.
- ❖ VEHICLES:
 - ❖ Gas will be hard to find in the early weeks, and limited for quite some time after a disaster. Long hours may be spent in a vehicle stuck in traffic or trying to get back and forth to teams. Have a good vehicle as repair shops may not be available.
 - ❖ Be wary of vehicle donation offers. Often people mean well but are just getting rid of junk that will cause more problems than it is worth. There are also insurance and liability issues.
 - ❖ Trucks are invaluable.
 - ❖ Bobcats may be hard to get but push hard for them. A trained bobcat operator with a small chainsaw and dragging crew can accomplish massive amounts of work in a short time.

SECTION 5

Appendix

- ❖ Information on other agencies: Southern Baptist Disaster Response, Red Cross, etc.
 - ❖ MNA Contact Info: MNA key contacts, including perhaps people like myself who can be a help and resource. Should include pastors, counselors, etc
 - ❖ Plans/formulas: The magic formula for killing mold on studs, the plans for bunkhouses, shower trucks, sheds, etc.
- Blank forms (work order/release form, volunteer info and release form, team info, etc)