



## **LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE VOLUNTEER RECOMMENDATIONS**

*The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) provide this information as a resource for those wishing to volunteer for disaster response. We hope this information results in meaningful service opportunities. Neither the ELCA nor LDR assumes liability for your participation in any of these opportunities. Volunteers should follow all recommendations and restrictions from the volunteer manager and local and state emergency management agencies and health departments.*

### **Facts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

- Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is thought to spread mainly from person to person.
- Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19.
- There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection.
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html>

### **Before You Arrive**

1. For two weeks (14 days) prior to your volunteer work, monitor and record your health and temperature. Do not volunteer if you or anyone you encounter has experienced a fever of 100 degrees F or more, or has been diagnosed with or is presumed to have COVID-19.
2. Do not volunteer if, within two weeks (14 days) of your first volunteer day, you or anyone you have encountered has been in an area considered to be a COVID-19 "hot spot" or has traveled outside your state/country of residence.
3. Clean and sanitize any tools, equipment, coolers and water coolers prior to loading and upon arrival at the volunteer hosting or work site.
4. You must return all required paperwork to the volunteer site before being sent to any work site.

### **General Guidelines**

1. Update group leaders/liaison **immediately** if you experience any COVID-19 symptoms (coughing, fever, shortness of breath, etc.).
2. Be flexible to changing health protocols.
3. Consider offering your service as close to home as possible to avoid the necessity of an overnight stay.
4. Refrain from touching your eyes, nose and/or mouth with unwashed hands.
5. When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth with a tissue and then put it in the trash. If a tissue isn't available, sneeze or cough into your elbow.



6. Avoid public places beyond the work site or host site. This will significantly reduce your potential exposure.
7. Follow all safety protocols and guidelines of the volunteer hosting or work site.
8. If you need to leave the site for any reason, notify a group leader first — no exceptions. Individuals going off-site will be required to wear a mask and take necessary physical distancing precautions.
9. Bring a thermometer for your own use. Prior to work each day, check your temperature and report it to staff.

### **Masks**

1. Bring one or two cloth face masks (more if you are working multiple days) and sealable plastic bags. Masks should be double-lined, should fit snugly but comfortably, and should be secured with ties or ear loops.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face mask or N95 mask when you are around others or in a communal area.
3. Soiled masks should be sealed in a plastic bag and stored with your personal items until laundered.

### **Handwashing**

1. Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds with hot, soapy water, especially before eating and after sneezing or using the restroom.
2. Bring personal hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
3. Use hand sanitizer when handwashing is not an option, especially on building sites.

### **Hosting Site and Meals**

1. Family units\* should work and eat together, if possible.
2. Wear face masks and latex gloves when preparing or serving food (outside groups providing food must do the same). Food safety orientation will be provided and updated as needed.
3. Volunteer clusters are limited to five people (or a family unit\*) when eating together; remain with your family unit for the duration of the trip, if possible.
4. When arriving or returning to the hosting site, immediately wash your hands with soap and hot water.
5. Maintain proper social distancing of at least six feet in common areas. Avoid gathering or hanging out in high-traffic areas: restrooms, kitchen facilities, sleeping areas, etc.
6. Sleeping quarters may be separated with dividers or grouped into smaller clusters.
7. Keep personal items neat and tidy, in your personal space only (put soiled items in plastic or paper bags).
8. At the host site, disinfect all hard surfaces each morning before traveling to a work site. All accommodation areas must be clean, neat and tidy at the end of the stay.
9. Clean/sanitize the shower area after using it. Clean/sanitize all touched surfaces (i.e. door handles, hard surfaces, etc.) with disinfectant wipes or spray.



10. Bring your own toiletries, towels, washcloths and, if possible, bed linens, pillows, and cots or air mattresses. If linens are provided by the host site, strip your own bed and place the linens in the container/bag provided.

### **Work Sites**

1. If possible, restrict any power tool to one person for the workday to minimize spread of germs.
2. Any shared work tool should be disinfected between users and at the end of the workday. **Unplug the tool BEFORE disinfecting it.** Use disinfecting wipes rather than aerosols.
3. Any piece of personal protective equipment (PPE) used on site — such as gloves, N95 masks or hardhats— will be assigned to an individual and remain with that person for the duration of the trip. You are responsible for keeping track of your own PPE.
4. When working on job sites, practice physical distancing according to state and local requirements (currently six feet apart).

### **After Returning Home**

1. Take your temperature daily for two weeks (14 days) after returning home. If you experience a temperature of 100 degrees F or more, contact the host site's volunteer coordinator immediately.
2. Clean, disinfect and/or dispose of all personal items you used while volunteering.

Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is the disaster response program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In the United States, LDR represents 65 ELCA synods and 30-plus LDR-affiliated social ministry organizations across the country.

\* A **family unit** is defined as immediate family members volunteering and traveling together, or individuals that are members of a volunteer team arriving in the same vehicle. In most instances these individuals will eat and work together at the same site. We recommend that the team size be three to five individuals to permit safe physical distancing.