Hurricane season 2020

• Hurricane season is expected to be more active than average this year.
• In spite of stay-at-home orders, it may become necessary for people to seek safety in evacuation shelters.
• Shared living areas and crowded conditions in shelters require modifications to standard shelter operations.
• CDC developed recommendations to assist shelter staff to reduce the possibility of transmission of COVID-19 among shelter staff, volunteers, shelter residents, and visitors.
Sheltering during the COVID-19 pandemic

Questions

• How do we lower the risk of transmission?
• How do we operate while maintaining social distancing?
• What strategies can we use to monitor illness?
• What do we do if someone gets sick?
• What should people bring to a shelter?
• What are considerations for people in the higher risk category?
• What are considerations for children?
• What if someone brings their pet?
First consideration
Disaster shelter options During Covid-19
Disaster shelter options

Option 1 - Hotels or dormitories

Preferred option:

• Separate rooms lower risk of transmission
• Areas for feeding, laundry, and other services
• Hotels preferred over dormitories because they have private bathrooms, televisions, phones, and bedding
Disaster shelter options

Option 2 - Campgrounds

- People can stay in separate tents, cabins, or RVs
- Many sites have bathrooms, laundry and bathing facilities
- Need to check for accessibility
- Post-hurricane sheltering only
Disaster shelter options

Option 3 - Congregate shelters

- Small shelter (fewer than 50 residents)
  - May need more shelters
  - Less complicated operations
  - May be closer to home than larger facility

- Large shelters
  - Option of last resort
  - Demobilize when safe to do so
  - Move shelter residents out of large shelters as soon as possible
CDC Interim Guidance for General Population Disaster Shelters During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The guidance covers the following topics:

- People who need to take extra precautions
- Screening, monitoring, and isolation
- Intake area and waiting room
- Isolation area
- Discontinuation of isolation
- Information in all common areas of the shelter
- Social distancing
- Food service
- Increased use of supplies
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Air filtration
- Special considerations for children
- Animals in emergency shelters
Key points and important messages

• Alternatives to opening disaster shelters, such as sheltering in-place, should be considered if safe.

• Everyone in the shelter should wear a cloth face covering at all times except when not practical, such as when eating or showering. *

• Access to safe shelter is critical and shelters should not exclude people who are having symptoms or test positive for COVID-19. These individuals should be directed to the isolation area.

* Cloth face coverings should not be placed on babies or children younger than 2 years of age or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance.
Key points and important messages

• Staff should monitor residents for symptoms of COVID-19 and other illness, including mental/behavioral health concerns, and provide a daily update to the local health department.

• Shelters should provide separate areas to isolate residents with symptoms of COVID-19.

• If testing is available, shelter staff, volunteers, and residents should be tested in accordance with state and local health department guidelines.
Key points and important messages

- Use of cloth face coverings, frequent handwashing, social distancing, and frequent cleaning and disinfection should be maintained in all areas of the shelter, including animal area.

- In accordance with the ADA, service animals must be allowed to stay with their handlers unless the animal is out of control or poses a direct threat to health and safety.
CHALLENGES
Not a perfect solution

Challenges:

- Some people may be afraid to go to a shelter due to COVID-19.
- There may not be enough masks, face coverings, or testing available for everyone.
- People may not comply with social distancing and other preventive measures.
- May be a heightened level of anxiety in the shelter.
- Options to transport people who can’t drive themselves may be limited and increase the risk of exposure.
- Some staff and volunteers may be unable or unwilling to assist in the shelter.
Questions?

For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.