



American Red Cross
of Alaska

American Red Cross of Alaska
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News Release
NEWS RELEASE

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Red Cross of Alaska Helps Families Statewide

Urges Everyone to Plan for Emergencies during National Preparedness Month

ALASKA, Thursday, September 20, 2012 — Statewide heavy rains and strong winds have prompted American Red Cross of Alaska to open 3 shelters overnight in the Susitna Valley and assist is operating a shelter in Seward. If your home has been affected by the recent storms and you need immediate assistance, please call 907-646-5401 or 1-888-345-4376.

Willow Community Center Shelter

The Willow shelter opened around 8pm Wednesday evening in response to evacuations and flooding. Anyone who has been evacuated or has been affected by the ongoing rainfall should call the shelter at 907-232-2698, or go to the shelter located at the Willow Community Center (WACO).

Upper Susitna Senior Center

Volunteers opened the Upper Susitna Senior Center around 11pm Wednesday night after Yoder Road was evacuated near Talkeetna. Anyone in the area that has been affected by evacuations and flooding can call the shelter at 907-733-6200 or go to the shelter location.

Menard Sports Complex

Around 1am Thursday morning, the Emergency Operating Center in the Mat-Su Valley requested that Red Cross open a third shelter in Wasilla after rescues on the Little Susitna River. Volunteers opened Menard Sports Complex on South Mack Drive by 2am to relieve families affected by Little Su flooding.

Seward High School

Several people stayed overnight in the Seward High School shelter stood up by the City of Seward officials. Red Cross volunteers are assisting in the operations and feeding efforts for the Seward area.

Statewide, Red Cross of Alaska continues to monitor risk areas and is prepared to open additional shelter if the need arises. Shelters that are already standing will stay open as they continue to keep an eye on situations until the need for shelter is apparent.

“Our goal is to make sure that the immediate needs of these families are being met so they can focus on getting repairs made before winter hits,” said Melissa Logan, Disaster Services Manager. “By offering a place to sleep, a warm meal and necessities that were taken from them, these families are able to work towards longer term solutions.”

American Red Cross is standing by to see where further assistance may be needed. Should prolonged evacuations and overwhelming requests require the need for additional shelters statewide, Red Cross staff and volunteers are prepared to act.

For the latest information, follow Red Cross of Alaska on Twitter (@RedCrossAK) and Facebook (facebook.com/AlaskaRedCross), or call 1-888-345-4376 or 907-646-5401.

Responding Appropriately During a Flood

- Listen to area radio and television stations and a NOAA Weather Radio for possible flood warnings and reports of flooding in progress or other critical information
- Be prepared to evacuate at a moment's notice
- Stay away from floodwaters—if you come upon a flowing stream where water is above your ankles, stop, turn around and go another way
- If you come upon a flooded road while driving, turn around and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car quickly and move to higher ground; most cars can be swept away by less than two feet of moving water
- Keep children out of the water
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood danger

National Preparedness Month

The disasters Alaskans have seen already this September through windstorms and flooding are a reminder to join the American Red Cross in National Preparedness Month. The Alaska Chapter encourages all households to create a family disaster plan to make sure they are ready for the next emergency or disaster.

Plans should include designating a meeting place right outside the home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire, an out-of-area emergency contact person, and a location where everyone should meet if they can't go home. All members of the household should work together on the emergency plan and each person should know how to reach other family members.

“Disasters can strike at any time and being prepared is a family's best defense,” said Logan. “Making a plan is an important step in making sure all household members know what to do in an emergency.”

Red Cross tools make it easier for people to make or update plans. The [American Red Cross Hurricane App](#) for iPhone or Android smart phones helps people create a plan, share it with household members and over social networks. The Hurricane App will also alert Alaskans of weather watches and warnings in their areas.

“Everyone must be prepared to take care of themselves and their neighbors in an emergency,” Logan added. “With recent weather that has affected Alaskans statewide; we are once again reminded of the importance of personal and family preparedness.”

Other Ways to Get Ready

The Red Cross has several programs to help people, businesses, schools and communities be better prepared

- [Be Red Cross Ready](#) is an online tutorial that teaches people to be ready for emergencies
- [Red Cross Ready Rating™](#) is a free, web-based membership program that measures how ready businesses, organizations and schools are to deal with emergencies and helps them improve their readiness level
- The [Ready When the Time Comes](#) program trains employees from businesses so they can be used as a community-based volunteer force when disaster strikes
- [Red Cross First Aid and CPR/AED training](#) courses provide participants with the knowledge and skills to respond to emergencies in case advanced medical help is delayed

People can visit redcross.org for information on what to do before, during and after emergencies and disasters.

About the American Red Cross of Alaska: *Governed by volunteers and supported by community donations, the American Red Cross of Alaska is dedicated to saving lives and helping Alaskans prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Led by over 1,500 volunteers and 27 employees, last year the American Red Cross of Alaska mobilized relief to 631 Alaskans affected by disaster, trained 31,515 people in lifesaving skills, taught more than 5,000 Alaskans how to be better prepared for disasters, and exchanged 2,100 emergency messages for U.S. military service personnel and their families. For more information about the American Red Cross of Alaska, please visit our website at www.alaska.redcross.org.*