



**American Red Cross**  
of Alaska

American Red Cross of Alaska  
235 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 200  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
www.alaska.redcross.org

*News Release*  
**NEWS RELEASE**

**Contact: Laura Spano**  
Development Specialist  
Telephone: 907-646-5410

## **Another Shelter Opens as state of Disaster Is Declared** *Red Cross Urges Alaskans to Practice Personal Preparedness*

**ALASKA, Saturday, September 22, 2012** — Statewide heavy rains and strong winds have prompted American Red Cross of Alaska to open shelters in the Mat-Su Valley and begin disaster assessments for clean-up needs.

### **\*\*\*UPDATE \*\*\***

Alaska State Governor Sean Parnell declares State Disaster for the Kenai Peninsula and Mat-Su Boroughs. American Red Cross of Alaska has opened 3 shelters in the Mat-Su Valley this week, and a fourth has opened today at Palmer State Fairgrounds for evacuees and residents affected by recent storms to park recreational vehicles at so stay clear of weather around homes.

Menard Sports Complex, Salvation Army, Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge and Walmart have assisted with feeding needs for shelter residents and volunteers at the three shelters in the Mat-Su Valley.

The Seward Emergency Operating Center is beginning to evacuate residents of the Bear Creek area as floodwaters continue to rise and water quality is compromised. Red Cross is prepared to assist in any sheltering needs for the area, it is estimated that 15 homes will be displaced due to the evacuation.

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.

Red Cross of Alaska is urging all Alaskans to practice personal preparedness and use this opportunity to update emergency kits and family emergency plans. For information and tips, visit [redcross.org/prepare](http://redcross.org/prepare).

### **Red Cross of Alaska Media Contacts:**

**Katie Bender 907-250-7314**  
**Laura Spano 832-407-0144**

### **Shelters Still Operating**

#### **Upper Susitna Senior Center**

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

#### **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).

#### **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.

## Palmer State Fairgrounds

Red Cross of Alaska opens the Palmer State Fairgrounds for RV parking while homes in the area become threatened by flood waters.

***Alaskans can help their neighbors today by making a financial donation to American Red Cross of Alaska. Visit <http://www.alaska.redcross.org> to make an online donation, stop in to local Red Cross office, or mail contributions to 235 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 200, Anchorage, AK 99501.***

Statewide, Red Cross of Alaska continues to monitor risk areas and is prepared to open additional shelters should there be need. Shelters already standing will stay open and continue to keep an eye on situations until the need for additional 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, Red Cross 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](https://www.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

## 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
- Download the American Red Cross Hurricane and First Aid Apps to stay up to date on weather alerts and have a toolkit at your fingertips

People can visit [redcross.org](http://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](http://www.alaska.redcross.org).*