

Guidelines for Deploying Volunteers During COVID-19
Indiana Kentucky Conference
Disaster Preparedness and Response Ministry Team (DPRMT)

Both Indiana and Kentucky and their respective county health departments have guidelines for the health and safety of their residents. These general guidelines for response teams are designed to protect all those involved in the disaster response process while respecting and following the guidelines already in place by the state and/or county.

In the ever-changing landscape of COVID-19, all response team activities should adhere to critical health and safety protocols to:

- Protect clients and their families
- Protect volunteers and their families
- Protect volunteer service partners and agencies

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

1. Recognize that traditional responses may shift. Inform volunteers of any changes and provide updates from the Indiana Kentucky Conference's Staff and Volunteer Covid-19 Safety Protocols. The protocols follow the county color coding and risk level assessment assigned by the IDHS for Indiana and the county color coding developed for Kentucky.
 - a. The DPRMT, as the disaster response ministry of the IKC, follows these protocols.
2. Require all volunteers to be fully vaccinated.
3. Conduct daily health screening, such as taking forehead temperature and asking general health questions.
4. Recognize that some of your volunteers may be at a higher risk for infection. You may have response teams who may need to change or suspend their service for precautionary reasons.
5. Volunteers should not assume that they are not at risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19. Individuals who have been fully vaccinated and/or recovered from COVID 19 are not immune from infection or re-infection; however, they are at a lower risk. We do know that fully vaccinated individuals can still contract and spread COVID-19 even though symptoms may not be present or as pronounced.

IKC Disclaimer: The IKC personal liability insurance coverage does not apply to COVID or any other illness. Furthermore, the liability insurance does not provide protection for IKC should someone contract COVID or another communicable disease during an IKC activity and want to point to IKC as negligent and responsible.

6. Be sure to keep up to date with the latest information and best practices from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
7. Follow the CDC recommendations for the number of people gathering together. Please consider the following actions:
 - a. Do not gather volunteers for the purposes of registration or instruction.
 - b. Limit the size of volunteer groups to adhere to the CDC guidelines.
 - c. Require volunteers to practice social distancing rules during tasks (at least 6 feet apart).
8. Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (including pens used by clients and volunteers to sign needed documents).
 - a. Guidelines for using cleaning products can be found on the CDC and OSHA websites.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-cov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html#health>

- b. Guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting shared power tools, electric lawn and garden equipment and appliances before placing in storage.
 - 1. Stanley Black & Decker/DeWalt: <https://www.nccer.org/news-research/newsroom/blogpost/breaking-ground-the-nccer-blog/2020/06/11/cleaning-guide-provided-by-dewalt-and-stanley>
- 9. Control directional airflow away from volunteers when using fans, blowers, and other air moving equipment.
- 10. Provide handouts with best health practices (social distancing, hand washing, symptom awareness, practice safety drills, etc.).
- 11. Display posters in facilities with best health practices against COVID-19 (social distancing, hand washing, etc.)
- 12. Make sure you have the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) available, and train volunteers on its proper use before allowing them to do tasks.
- 13. Make sure all volunteers understand any risks associated with the task you would like them to perform and understand if they are not comfortable with that level of risk.
- 14. Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies in all locations for all volunteers such as:
 - a. Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
 - b. Clorox wipes or the equivalent
 - c. Tissues
 - d. Trash receptacles
 - e. Disposable facemask
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
 - f. Eye protection
 - g. Gloves
 - h. Cleaners and disinfectants
- 15. Screen all volunteers and clients before meeting in person and then evaluate their capabilities before deploying them to the job site.
 - a. Consultation with the LTRG Construction Manager is essential to match the volunteers' skills and work to be performed.
- 16. It is preferable that only one team member interact with the client on site.
 - a. Consultation with the LTRG Case Manager is essential to confirm the safety of volunteers and the potential of COVID exposure from the client.
- 17. Have an isolation space ready in case someone arrives with symptoms or becomes ill from COVID-19.
- 18. Notify the IKC staff if a situation arises because of symptoms or an illness from COVID-19.
- 19. Perform outdoor/ exterior work if possible.
- 20. The Safety Officer position on the response team is key and should hold all members of the team accountable for following safe practices. Concerns should be brought to the attention of the Team Leader.
- 21. Don't forget to track volunteer hours and donations and document volunteer work efforts. These are "Donated Resources", and many times can be used to help lessen the overall financial burden experienced with recovery from a disaster.
- 22. Explore additional non-profit resources:
 - <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/>
 - <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/trends-policy-issues/the-nonprofit-community-confronts-the-coronavirus>

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. DO plan for extra time for briefing, screening, and preparation from volunteer organizations or agencies to make sure you are cleared to volunteer for the task.
2. DO be prepared to answer the following questions. If any of these are answered yes, then you should not participate. You will be asked these questions when filling out the application and again right before deployment.
 - a. Have you traveled in the past 14 days to another country?
 - b. Do you have any signs or symptoms or a respiratory infection – fever, cough, or sore throat?
 - c. Do you have generalized muscle aches?
 - d. Have you had any known contact in the last 14 days with someone infected by or suspected to be infected by COVID-19? (or presenting the above symptoms?)
3. DO clean and wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds before, during, and after volunteering.
4. DO avoid physical contact with others and maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet, when possible.
5. DO cover your cough and sneezes with tissue.
6. DO use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
7. DO expect shifts schedules and work opportunities may be cancelled or changed on short notice; especially where volunteers are working with the vulnerable populations. Please be gracious and understanding.
8. DO call before arriving for a volunteer shift, call ahead to the service agency and ask if any additional safety precautions should be taken before, during and after the shift.
9. DO use proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when needed/provided for the task.
10. DO clean any used spaces thoroughly before and after, including tabletop surfaces and doorknobs/handles.
11. DO NOT assume that you are at a lower risk of infection or re-infection because you have been fully vaccinated and/or recovered from COVID-19. You can still contract and spread COVID-19 even though your symptoms may not be present or as pronounced.
12. DO NOT volunteer for any activity if, in the last 14 days, you have:
 - a. Experienced symptoms that could be related to COVID-19 (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or loss of taste or smell).
 - b. Been around anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
 - c. Been asked to isolate/quarantine in the past 14 days unless you have received a negative test at least 7 days after their exposure. This applies whether you have been vaccinated or not.
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/if-youve-been-exposed-to-the-coronavirus>
 - d. Traveled to any foreign country.
13. DO NOT attempt to volunteer for any activity if you are feeling sick for any reason or at a higher risk because of serious illness or pre-existing medical conditions.
14. DO NOT volunteer if you live or have frequent contact with people at a higher risk of contracting the virus.
15. DO NOT show up to volunteer for any activity without confirming that there is a need for the activity, that it will be conducted, and that volunteer support is needed and expected.
16. DO NOT take part in any volunteer activity if you are uncomfortable with the level of risk.
17. DO NOT touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with gloves or unwashed hands.

This supplemental guidance is not intended to replace medical recommendations from the CDC. Visit www.cdc.gov for updates.

Resources:

- Disaster Ministries, United Church of Christ, Can Disaster Recovery Volunteers be Deployed Safely in the COVID-19 Pandemic?
- Insurance Board, Partners in Protection, COVID-19 Liability FAQ
- UMCOR: Guidance for Disaster Case Management Programs during COVID-19 outbreak v04.20.2020
- ALVOAD Guidelines for Volunteers and Volunteer Organizations During COVID-19 Outbreak in Alabama, 3/18/2020
- National VOAD, Disaster Response and Pandemic Resource, Approved Dec. 22, 2020

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