

# Donated Goods Management Planning:

## Civil Defence Emergency Management BEST PRACTICE GUIDE [BPG2/06]



## **Donated Goods Management Planning**

**Civil Defence Emergency Management  
Best Practice Guide [BPG2/06]**

July 2006

ISBN 0-478-25456-3

Published by the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management and the National Lifelines Coordinating Committee.

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Te Rākau  
Whakamarumaru

**Ministry of Civil Defence  
& Emergency Management**

## Foreword

Recent experiences of civil defence emergencies have challenged and provided learning opportunities for the civil defence emergency management (CDEM) sector in New Zealand. One of these lessons is that the management of donated goods is a huge task for responding organisations and their partner agencies, a task that needs to be carefully managed to ensure that it does not become a burden.

This Best Practice Guide has been developed as a result of those experiences, to assist CDEM Groups and local authorities to plan for the management of donated goods following an emergency. The experience of CDEM Groups who have managed donated goods during an emergency was instrumental in developing this Guide, and MCDEM acknowledges the support of those groups in its development.

This Best Practice Guide provides a further resource to advance our commitment to supporting communities during emergencies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Ferguson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bruce Ferguson

Acting Director

Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management



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## Purpose

The goal of donated goods management is to provide those affected by an emergency with as much support as possible by the efficient and effective acceptance, or rejection, of donated goods.

The primary purpose of a Donated Goods Management Plan will be, in most cases, to deter the donation of unsolicited physical goods and promote the donation of money or specifically requested goods and services. Without an established system, unsolicited donated goods can interfere with the response effort, waste human resources, create negative public relations and hinder longer-term recovery efforts.

This document outlines the need for, and processes surrounding, an orderly means of receiving and managing donated goods.

The goals of a Donated Goods Management Plan are:

1. To ensure territorial authorities and emergency response and recovery agencies remain the primary recipients, managers, and distributors of donated goods and services (such as labour or professional services). The Civil Defence Emergency management (CDEM) Group will provide coordination, assistance and support on local agency request.
2. To educate the public on how they can best provide assistance to those affected by an emergency. This education will be targeted to deter the unsolicited, unneeded, and unwanted donated goods.
3. To establish guidelines as to when donated goods would be counter-productive and how to prevent unsolicited donated goods from hindering critical emergency response and rescue efforts.

A Donated Goods Management Plan will provide guidelines for the coordination of public information, acceptance, staging, distribution and disposal of donated goods received by an affected territorial authority or CDEM Group following an emergency event.

## General principles

There are several general principles for the management of donated goods and services that should be taken into account in CDEM Group planning. These are outlined below, and described in further detail in the following pages.

### 1. Encourage monetary donations

The CDEM Group, territorial authorities and public figures will, through public information messages, media releases and call centre management, encourage individuals and organisations to make contributions of **money** to recognised emergency relief funds.

### 2. Encourage volunteers to affiliate with existing organisations

Individuals interested in volunteering their services will be encouraged to **affiliate** with a recognised response or recovery organisation to facilitate their involvement in response and recovery activities.

### 3. Discourage unsolicited donated goods and services

**Unsolicited** donated goods and services could severely affect territorial authority and CDEM Group recovery efforts, and local community business recovery. Such donations will therefore be **discouraged**.

### 4. Establish a donations management system

Territorial authorities, in coordination with community-based organisations, should plan for a **donations management system** for their area. The CDEM Group should plan to support territorial authority activities on request.

## General Principle One

### Encourage monetary donations

The CDEM Group, territorial authorities and public figures will, through public information messages, media releases and call centre management, encourage individuals and organisations to make contributions of **money** to recognised emergency relief funds and discourage donations of goods.

The optimum and preferred situation in any emergency is to have all individuals or organisations wishing to make monetary donations. This will eliminate the logistics involved in managing goods or services. The funds can be used to purchase the items or services needed and in the quantities necessary. Monetary donations are also the least labour-intensive of any gift.

### '0800' help/information lines/call centres

Previous experience has shown that any help or information line established following an emergency will receive a lot of calls offering donated goods, donations of money or offers to volunteer. It is critical that all such information lines receive clear guidance from the event lead agency on what advice to give callers. While exact messages will depend on the nature of an event, likely responses to questions have been included in Annex A.

- It is the responsibility of the responding lead agency to ensure all information lines, radio stations and other news media etc have these responses.
- It is critical that all call takers are provided with correct responses as quickly as possible – these could include local council call centres, regional council call centres, national call centres, media liaison people, radio stations and the like.

Key messages for the public are included in Annex A. Broadly, key messages should include:

- Encouraging monetary donations.
- Discouraging sending goods.
- Companies confirming need for, and managing distribution of, their donations.



## General Principle Two

### Encourage volunteers to affiliate with existing organisations

Individuals interested in volunteering their services will be encouraged to affiliate with a recognised response or recovery organisation.

In addition to the trained and involved volunteers who are part of the CDEM structure in New Zealand, many CDEM organisations expect, in an emergency situation, to use spontaneous volunteers. These are people who have the desire to help in emergencies - although few have had actual experience.

Certain practices should be considered and planned for if your CDEM organisation intends to use spontaneous volunteers. Broadly speaking these involve:

1. Determining who will operate as a spontaneous volunteer coordinator.
2. Pre-planning your arrangements for receiving, registering, screening and briefing spontaneous volunteers (preparing for spontaneous volunteers).
3. Managing spontaneous volunteers.
4. Predetermining your legal issues.

A guideline for management of spontaneous volunteers is available from MCDEM and through the RAPID NZQA modules (available at [www.rapid.org.nz](http://www.rapid.org.nz)). A CDEM Group should, through its welfare planning arrangements, have a plan in place for the management of spontaneous volunteers.

If planning arrangements for spontaneous volunteers have **not** been considered in advance, or if the number of people volunteering is too many, it is recommended the following principles be adopted:

- Individuals wanting to volunteer will be encouraged to affiliate themselves with a responding voluntary agency, or an organised group of their choice.
- Unaffiliated volunteers will be discouraged from going directly to any emergency site. They will be thanked for their offer of assistance and informed that their presence may hamper response and recovery efforts. They will be encouraged to contact voluntary agencies in their area and assist with activities for the emergency response and recovery efforts being conducted in the community where the volunteer resides (such as a drive to raise funds).

## General Principle Three

### **Discourage unsolicited donated goods and services**

Unsolicited donated goods and services can severely affect territorial authority and CDEM Group recovery efforts, and local community business recovery; such donations will therefore be discouraged.

Unsolicited donated goods and services cause many problems, largely related to the excessive logistics and administrative overheads needed to manage them. New Zealand experience to date, has indicated this far outweighs their true value. As far as possible, the lead territorial authority (TA) or CDEM Group will not accept donated goods or services unless the territorial authority or the Group needs those goods or services and they can be sent directly to the end user.

### **Case study: Lower North Island Floods, February 2004**

#### **Donated goods are a big problem for responding authorities.**

*The following comments are courtesy of Horizons Manawatu.*

During the February 2004 storm that affected the lower North Island, the Manawatu-Wanganui CDEM Group was inundated with unsolicited donated goods.

Tens of thousands of items were donated from both private and corporate donors. This became such a problem for the region that a large warehouse had to be rented to store goods. The warehouse was staffed with volunteers from the Red Cross, Salvation Army and other community groups. Enhanced Task Force Green staff had to be employed just to sort through the items. Shelving and other equipment such as forklifts had to be rented - all costing more than \$10,000 per month to operate.

It is estimated that nearly half of the goods were unfit for use and had to be dumped (creating an extra cost from disposal fees). Those goods deemed usable still had to be sorted and stored until a need for them was actually found.

Following needs assessment and goods distribution, thousands of items were left over and had to be sold to help meet storage costs. Money raised from the sale was put into the Regional Relief Fund.

The flow of donated goods into the region could not be stemmed (radio stations across NZ were running competitions to collect goods!). This led to a significant subsequent affect on resources (both personnel and equipment).

Volunteers who could have worked on welfare issues had to be diverted to other duties, there was an increased logistical management strain on an already-stressed region, and significant additional pressures were placed on the Recovery Management staff.

In addition the Recovery Office received negative publicity - both for attempting to stop the inflow of donated goods and for the subsequent sale of goods.

The overall cost to those agencies managing the donated goods was more than \$65,000 - a cost not justified by the goods involved.

Unsolicited goods can fall into two categories – useful and non-useful. It can be very difficult to determine this when unsolicited goods arrive in bulk containers, and useful goods can often be mixed in with non-useful items. Whether useful or non-useful, all donated goods require significant resource to process, distribute or destroy.

The introduction of large quantities of commodities into an affected area can hurt the local economy when it is already vulnerable. The lead agency should refuse offers of donated goods that are unsuitable or will cause resource problems for distribution or will disadvantage local suppliers and business. Donations must be managed to minimise the impact on the recovery of the local economy.

All donations accepted by the local TA/Group become resources to be used in the emergency/recovery and will not be returned to the donor. Such a statement should be included in public notices (as per Annex A), ensuring those donating are aware the item/s cannot be returned.

### 3.1 Types of donations and their management

Not all donations, in spite of good intentions, are helpful or wanted. The various types of donations and some techniques for managing them are listed below.

#### 3.1a **Designated donated goods:** donations made to, or requested by, a specific organisation.

- Inquiries concerning donated goods for a specified organisation will be referred to that organisation. The organisation accepting/receiving the donation will follow its own policies and procedures. Note: All organisations involved should liaise with the welfare or recovery manager prior to making a request for donated goods. This ensures the overall welfare or recovery process is taken into account.
- Donors will be advised to label all goods and to provide a detailed inventory list with all shipments. In addition, shipments should be palletised for ease of unloading. Loose items should be shrink-wrapped.
- Once donated goods have been accepted by a specific organisation they become the property of that organisation. Distribution and disposal of the donated goods becomes the agency's responsibility and the agency will follow its own policies and procedures.

#### 3.1b **Unsolicited/undesigned donated goods:** donated goods that have not been requested by, or designated for, a specific organisation.

- Unsolicited and undesigned donated goods will first be directed to an organisation that has agreed to accept such goods and services.
- If donated goods arrive unsolicited, but can be used, they will be accepted and directed to the appropriate location/organisation.
- Donated goods that cannot be used by an organisation involved in the emergency operation, or which are determined a health hazard, will be rejected by the welfare or recovery manager. Plans should be made as to where such goods can be sent/stored once rejected (eg. back to sender, to dump etc).
- Donors who attempt to donate unsolicited or unsuitable goods, such as clothing, should be directed to community agencies such as food banks, clothing banks, or second-hand stores. Many voluntary agencies that assist in emergency response and recovery utilise these items for their day-to-day operations (eg. Salvation Army, Red Cross).

- If a donor insists on donating unneeded goods, they will be advised that although they cannot be accepted at this time, the information will be recorded and made available to responding organisations. If a request is later identified, the donor will be contacted. This approach has been successful in several recent events in New Zealand, in regard to managing community expectations about donations.
- Donors will be discouraged from sending unsolicited or non-designated donations directly to the disaster site.
- Under no circumstances will pharmaceutical supplies or other medications, or prepared foods, be accepted from the public. It is also strongly recommended that non-new electrical goods are not accepted<sup>1</sup>.

**3.1c Corporate donated goods:** donated goods provided by corporations/companies/business.

- The welfare or recovery manager will consider corporate offers of bulk items if they can be used in the emergency response and recovery efforts. Offers should be recorded for later reference. Acknowledgement of offers and donations is important and may involve your communications group (in relation to media releases).
- Corporate offers of donated goods will not be accepted if their presence in an area is likely to hamper longer-term recovery efforts in the community (eg, by putting local retailers out of business).
- Donors will be advised to label all goods and to provide a detailed inventory list with all shipments.
- All corporate donated goods must be tracked to their end-point, for transparency and auditing purposes (they are tax-deductible for the donating organisation).
- The receiving authority must acknowledge all corporate donated goods (that were accepted).
- Corporate donated goods that have not been requested or approved by the welfare/recovery manager, but are received anyway, may be sold to raise money for those affected. Care should be taken as their sale can take business off local retailers. Consideration of sale outside the affected area is important. Should such a decision be reached, the company or organisation that donated the unsolicited goods should first be notified and offered the opportunity to retrieve their goods at its own expense.
- It is important to involve your communications manager/team when dealing with large corporate donations that are accepted, as the donating company may wish for some positive comment to be made to the media.

**3.1d International donated goods:** donated goods from outside New Zealand.

- As per Part 8 (81) of the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan:
  - (1) Offers to New Zealand of emergency assistance from international sources will be considered in the DESC<sup>2</sup> system and managed by –

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<sup>1</sup> For safety reasons these must be tested by the receiving authority prior to being distributed – testing takes time, manpower and costs money, while disposal of unsafe items is also costly.

<sup>2</sup> Domestic and External Security Co-ordination.

- (a) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the case of government-to-government assistance; or
  - (b) the New Zealand representatives of non-governmental organisations in the case of all other overseas assistance; or
  - (c) the National Controller, if there is no New Zealand representative.
- (2) Upon arrival in New Zealand, the assistance will be coordinated through the National Controller or other agencies as appropriate.

**3.1e Cash donations:**

- The lead agency or lead Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) will encourage, through active communications/media, cash donations to mayoral relief funds (where available) or responding non-profit voluntary organisations with donation management experience.
- Charitable contributions to non-profit, tax-exempt organisations are preferable to undesignated financial donations.
- Ideally only one relief fund will be established.
- If multiple funds do arise (such as various charities, supermarkets, banks etc) coordination of multiple funds to draw the money into one 'pot' will be undertaken by the recovery manager.

There is a 70-30 rule in disaster donations. 70% of the donated goods are junk; 15% can be used immediately; and 15% can be used later in the recovery. Unwanted and unasked for 'gifts' are often a burden that drags down recovery efforts.

*HEMNZ Bulletin Issue 102, November 2005.*

## General Principle Four

### **Establish a donations management system**

Territorial authorities, in coordination with community-based organisations, should plan for a donations management system for their area. The CDEM Group should plan to support territorial authority activities on request.

Once emergency conditions subside, individuals and response and recovery organisations from outside the disaster area will begin to collect materials and supplies to assist the impacted areas. This is likely to occur in spite of public information to the contrary. In addition, individuals and organisations will feel compelled to go to the area to offer assistance. As such, unsolicited donated goods can be expected and must be planned for.

Non-useful and unwanted donations can be expected. These items could include unsorted or dirty clothing, used mattresses, highly perishable foodstuffs and worn-out or cast-off items (e.g. rubbish dumped as a 'donation'). The disposal of surplus, non-useful or unneeded donations will be required.

When these situations occur, a need for an organised response is imperative.

Affected territorial authorities will establish storage and distribution centres within their jurisdictions convenient to the disaster area, if possible. They will be assisted by pre-planned arrangements with charitable and religious organisations that can offer their assistance in managing and distributing donated goods.

#### **4.1 Organisation and responsibilities**

In your CDEM Group you may decide that each TA will plan at a local level for management of donated goods (usually with partner agencies) with support from the CDEM Group if necessary, or you may plan that the CDEM Group will manage donated goods on behalf of all the affected TAs. The decision may relate to such issues as physical isolation of TAs, or your CDEM Group welfare arrangements, and/or available warehouse facilities, transport resources and staff.

##### ***Lead agency (TA or CDEM Group)***

The designated lead agency (TA or the CDEM Group) is primarily responsible for managing donated goods and services in its community. They are also responsible for working with voluntary organisations that may assist them in this effort. Additionally, they are responsible for establishing distribution centres in their community where people may go to get goods or services and where goods may be distributed at a local level.

If a TA is acting as lead agency and is overwhelmed with donated goods, or the scale of the emergency precludes management of donated goods, the CDEM Group will be notified and can assist with the response (using its Donated Goods Management Plan).

The CDEM Group is the primary agency responsible for the Group-level coordination of donated goods management. Within the CDEM Group this function may be planned for and managed by the Welfare Advisory Group or welfare planning committee, and carried out in an emergency by a donated goods management team operating from within the EOC (possibly in the welfare or logistics area).

Once an affected area is transitioning to recovery, the recovery manager will coordinate issues around management of donated goods, where necessary through a donated goods team within the recovery structure.

### **Case Study: Whakatane Floods, July 2004**

#### **Using a non-government partner to assist with donated goods management.**

*The following comments are courtesy of Whakatane District Council.*

During the July 2004 Flood Event the Salvation Army was the appointed lead agency for donation acceptance and distribution. The advantages in having only one agency was that it restricted the “double dipping” which can occur from agency to agency and also through Work and Income grants. In addition it meant that if people were really keen to donate goods they could do so by donating to their local Salvation Army shop/office, which would then support the national organisation.

Another advantage of the Salvation Army is that its staff are very good at assessing people’s need and have the skills to interact with people in stressful situations. It must be noted, however, that the impact on Salvation Army in Whakatane was not minor, in regard to both staffing and monetary costs. In the case of the July 2004 floods the Mayoral Relief Fund provided some reimbursement to the Salvation Army to help them meet their costs.

While the use of the Salvation Army was successful in July 2004, the Whakatane District Council emergency management welfare group believes that in a larger event a pre-planned and established donations management structure and specific resourcing would be required.

## **4.2 Creating a donated goods management plan**

During planning for this function the lead agency will need to create a written Donated Goods Management Plan (DGMP), in conjunction with contributing partner agencies. Factors that should be considered in this plan are detailed below. A checklist at Annex B provides an action sheet for creation of the plan.

Once prepared, the lead agency is responsible for maintaining the DGMP and all associated procedures. They will also be responsible for coordinating all operations of the donated goods management programme as detailed in the plan, and for convening relevant agencies to assist in management of donated goods issues following an event.

### **4.2a Determine donated goods management policy for the TA/Group**

Consider such issues as the recovery impact of donated goods (both positive and negative), the ability of your TA/CDEM Group to resource the management of donated goods and public expectations around donated goods. Document your operational plans (see 4.3).

#### **4.2b Determine pre-approved public information messages**

- Public information will be coordinated through the TA or Group Public Information Manager.
- Press releases will be issued immediately following an emergency to educate the media, government officials and the public concerning donations of cash, goods and services (prior education should also be considered as part of a CDEM Groups public education programme).
- The primary message will be to encourage cash donations rather than clothing, food or other items. Releases will briefly explain some of the problems associated with unsolicited goods and services. The relevant key players (TAs, non-government agencies) will coordinate and approve any information before it is provided to the news media.
- The programme should reach a wide variety of organisations such as voluntary and church groups, schools, and other interest groups.
- Volunteer organisations are responsible for representing their own organisations; however prior coordination between public information staff of each agency must take place to ensure public messages are consistent (sample messages are provided in Annex A). Ideally all such communications will be coordinated through the welfare/recovery manager (or their staff).

#### **4.2c Determine resource requirements for management of donated goods**

While considering resource requirements it is important to review the following areas:

##### ***Staffing requirements***

How many staff may be needed? Where can staff be obtained from (consider your welfare partner agencies).

##### ***Communications requirements***

Can likely communications requirements be met from within your current capacity, or will extra communications equipment be required?

##### ***Warehousing***

A donations warehouse is a facility equipped to receive, sort, store, and distribute unsolicited donated goods. TA-run donated goods warehouses may be located in areas with the greatest need and/or at sites convenient for the activities of a large logistics operation.

- The Group (or a supporting Group) may open a warehouse away from the disaster area where donations can be organised and stored until needed by the affected TAs.
- More information about warehousing is included at Annex C.

##### ***Transportation***

- Transportation of donated goods from the donor to the receiving organisation will be the responsibility of the donor. Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis and only for the most desperately needed items.



- The lead EOC's donated goods management team will coordinate transportation of emergency supplies from the reception centre to distribution sites.

#### **4.2d Criteria for distribution of donated goods**

As far as possible prior to an event, consider criteria and processes for how you might distribute donated goods. Things to consider include:

- Distribution through a partner agency/agencies.
- Proof of need (how will this be established if required?).

#### **4.2e Disposal of excess donated goods**

Consider possibilities and requirements for disposal of excess donated goods.

- Unsuitable and unneeded donated goods must be disposed of properly.
- Unusable items will be recycled when possible.
- Unused and unneeded goods remaining after the disaster will be donated to existing charities with a need for such items.
- Goods that cannot be on-donated will be recycled or sold and any money obtained returned to the designated fund (ideally the Mayoral Relief Fund) to offset the cost of the donated goods management process.
- Items that cannot be donated to other organisations or recycled will be properly disposed of (ie local laws will apply when disposing hazardous materials).
- In large-scale emergencies, goods may be donated to other CDEM Groups following consultation with their Controllers or Recovery Managers.

#### **4.2f Support agencies**

Liase with appropriate support agencies to determine their input/role in your DGMP. The following is a list of the activities that supporting government agencies, (including your local authorities and regional council, and volunteer organisations), could be asked to perform in your DGMP.

##### ***Government agencies (both local and national, involved in CDEM)***

- Assist in the selection of possible sites for Group-level multi-agency warehouse(s).
- Help identify, obtain, and equip the multi-agency warehouse (for primary and alternate sites).
- Review and approve any contracts necessary to facilitate donation management operations.
- Issue permits or waivers for the disposal or burning of non-hazardous waste and debris where required.
- Coordinate emergency disposal or storage of hazardous materials.
- Provide load movement permits and waivers as necessary.

### ***Volunteer organisations***

- Provide liaison persons to work in the donated goods team in the EOC.
- Help develop procedures for accepting unsolicited donations received from the public.
- Provide volunteer organisation-specific donation phone numbers to responding call centres.
- Provide a list of solicited donation requests to those managing donated goods.
- Help develop procedures for the disposal of unsolicited, unsuitable or excess donated materials.
- Provide food bank donation phone numbers to responding call centres.

Once you have determined how your partner agencies can assist with your DGMP you will need to establish memorandums of understanding to document agreed relationships.

## **4.3 Concept of operations**

The following concept of operations intends to show in broad terms how the donated goods management plan could be implemented. It is a flexible strategy that can be adapted to different emergencies and the needs of the affected area(s).

### **4.3a Activation**

1. On recognition of need, or likely need, the EOC will activate the Donated Goods Management Plan.
2. Donated goods management activities will be coordinated out of the lead EOC.
3. The Controller will designate a staff member to manage the DGMP. Other staff will be designated as necessary. Location and resourcing of this team will depend on the organisation, however it will most likely operate out of the Logistics area with a strong link to Welfare.

### **4.3b The Donated Goods Management Team (DGMT) actions**

1. The DGMT will convene as instructed by the controller.
2. They will act to coordinate donations management issues in the area affected by the emergency. Coordination actions may include:
  - a. Provision of information to the public and media regarding donated goods.
  - b. Overseeing warehousing and transport needs.
  - c. Donations tracking.
3. These functions are implemented as needed.
  - a. A database may be created to track offers and donated goods that come in from the public. Larger corporate donations (eg new whiteware) should be tracked as far as is feasible.
  - b. The DGMT will coordinate with the response and recovery organisations to establish items needed and provide information on resources available.

- c. At the request of an affected TA, a warehouse may be set up outside of the emergency area to store an overabundance of donated goods out of the way of the response and recovery efforts.

#### **4.3c Deactivation**

1. The lead agency will coordinate with relevant agencies over any remaining donated goods management issues (ie disposal of surplus goods) as appropriate. Refer to section 4.2e.
2. The lead agency should produce a report summarising what has been donated and distributed, costs and lessons identified for the future.

## **Annex A: When an emergency strikes, donations are needed - how you can help**

Everyone is moved when they hear the news that an emergency has befallen a community. Earthquakes, floods, storms, tornadoes etc can suddenly change the lifestyle of a family, community and country.

Unfortunately, the best intentions of people can cause problems in emergency areas when unsolicited donated goods are sent as they tie up resources, cost money to sort, clear and store and may hinder longer-term community recovery.

Some helpful ways in which you can be of assistance are outlined below.

### **I really want to contribute – what can I do?**

#### **Contributions of cash - always the best donation**

Donations of money allow the professional response and recovery organisations to purchase exactly what is most urgently needed for those affected and to pay for the transport necessary to distribute the supplies. Individuals can also benefit from your cash donation through mayoral relief funds and other community charities. Every little bit counts; so don't feel that your contribution won't help!

### **But what if I don't have much money, but do have some goods?**

#### **Sell it – don't send it!**

Rather than sending unsolicited goods to an emergency area, you can help by arranging local collection of goods. These can then be provided to a local voluntary agency to support its overall effort. Alternatively you could have a local street sale, or school fair, and donate the proceeds to a recognised emergency appeal.

### **My company has goods that we would like to donate – what should we do?**

#### **Confirm the need**

Be aware that, although well meant, donated goods can hinder an emergency response, by tying up resources, and a recovering community by taking business away from local suppliers and tradespeople. So it is very important that you check that your goods are needed before you send them.

Generally, donations of goods will only be accepted from corporate sources that can donate larger quantities of new, necessary items.

If you believe you have goods that may assist in an emergency, or in recovery, you should first contact the coordinating responding agency to ensure the goods will be useful and to discuss the timing of their delivery.

### **Corporates must manage their donation effectively:**

1. Donate through an emergency-response organisation

Before starting a collection of goods to send to an emergency site, it is essential to locate a reliable responding organisation willing to receive the shipment.

2. Plan transport in advance

Don't assume response and recovery supplies will be transported at no charge. Local trucking firms may be willing to help in times of emergency, if funds are available to cover part of the expense.

Certain precautions are necessary regarding inventory, shipping restrictions and warehousing of goods. Always work with an identified source to avoid transport problems.

3. Donated items must be well packaged and labelled

It is more efficient when items are sent properly sorted, clearly labelled and ready for distribution. This should be handled in advance at the sending location.

Specific content lists should be taped to the side of each box sent. This allows the receiving officials to determine what is in the box without opening it, plus getting it to the proper distribution location in a timely manner.

Food items, if needed, should be boxed according to instructions provided by the organisation with whom the donor is working.

**Remember – every little bit helps in a response and recovery effort. However cash is the best donation. If you have goods, sell them locally and donate the proceeds to the affected area. Corporate donations may be accepted under certain circumstances.**

## Annex B: Checklist for creation of a Donated Goods Management Plan

Planning action	Completed
Determine and document the Donated Goods Management Policy for the TA/Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery impact</li> <li>• Resource implications</li> <li>• Public expectations</li> </ul>	
Determine Pre-approved Public Information messages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop appropriate messages (encourage cash)</li> <li>• Liase with Public Information Manager</li> <li>• Liase with partner organisations</li> </ul>	
Determine resource requirements for management of donated goods. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing requirements</li> <li>• Communications requirements</li> <li>• Warehousing</li> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul>	
Determine criteria for distribution of donated goods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution techniques and possibilities</li> <li>• Proof of need issues</li> </ul>	
Consider possibilities for disposal of excess donated goods	
Liase with appropriate support agencies and document arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government agencies</li> <li>• Volunteer organisations</li> </ul>	

## Annex C: Warehousing of donated goods - a basic guide

The information contained in this document has been adapted with kind permission from the International Red Cross Warehouse Manual. It provides background information for TAs and CDEM Groups about the planning and operations of a donated goods warehouse.

This document should be considered an **initial guide** only. MCDEM recommends that any TA or CDEM Group required to establish a donated goods warehouse of any significant size, or for any reasonable length of time, seek **professional advice** or use a **professional service** to manage the warehouse.

If not using a professional service to run a donated goods warehouse, the TA or CDEM Group must consider the following:

1. Location – ensure you have the ability to use the donated goods warehouse location for a reasonable length of time. Remember that disposal of unwanted donated goods can take time and that recovery is a lengthy process.
2. Management – ensure those chosen for managing the warehouse are available for a reasonable length of time. If using TA staff, ensure they can be released from their day-to-day jobs. If using a non-government organisation to manage the warehouse, ensure it has sufficient personnel and resources to continue to manage the warehouse over time.

Ideally using a non-government organisation to perform this function will be planned for in advance, through the Group or TA welfare planning arrangements. Any such plan should document relationships, cost arrangements and reimbursements<sup>3</sup>.

**Costs** associated with the establishment and running of a donated goods warehouse may be eligible for government reimbursement under standard policies. Refer to the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan and its accompanying Guide, Section 26 Clauses 88 and 89 (Government Financial Support). CDEM Groups should pre-consider how this cost can be managed, and that it may be able to be addressed by insurance.

### General guidelines

While, in general, every effort should be made to reduce the delay between receiving donated goods and their distribution to beneficiaries, there will be delays as decisions are made over the suitability of goods for distribution, and where they should go.

Most donated goods, especially food, need to be protected from sun, rain, humidity and high temperatures. Therefore the use of open, uncovered storage areas should be avoided. If this is not possible, open storage should be limited to short periods, and only to those supplies not immediately affected by such exposure. It should be remembered that even unsolicited and unwanted donated goods should be properly stored, at least initially, as the image of goods being damaged or ruined by being left in the elements can create public-relations problems for the organisations involved in the response and recovery effort.

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the New Zealand Red Cross will not generally be involved in the management of donated-goods warehouses unless it has specifically agreed to perform this function at a Group or TA level.

Typically, response and recovery operations and programmes require the establishment of local warehouses - sometimes regional warehouses may also be necessary.

Regional warehouses are normally used for mid- to long-term storage (1-6 months) of large quantities of donated goods, while local ones are for short-term placement and distribution of limited amounts of donated goods. The scale of the operation, the available transport, storage capacity and the condition of roads will determine the number of warehouses and their locations. Wherever possible, goods should be moved as close to the ultimate destination as possible to prevent additional cost and possible damage that occurs with double or multiple handling of donated goods.

## **Physical warehouse issues**

### **Choosing a warehouse**

Though buildings specially designed for storage should preferably be used as local or regional warehouses, this is not always possible. Depending on the amount of donated goods and the length of time they are to be stored, existing commercial warehouses or converted public, community or even private buildings can be used. Ideally, a warehouse should give easy access to trucks and enable easy loading and unloading. The warehouse must be secure against theft.

Locating a warehouse is, in most cases, predetermined by the number of suitable available buildings. Commercial warehouses usually already exist in most cities or towns. When other types of buildings are used as local warehouses, particular attention has to be paid to security and accessibility. If also used as distribution points, enough secure space is needed (inside or outside, depending on type of distribution and local conditions) for the distribution of donated goods to the public.

In emergencies or for short-term storage where no suitable facilities can be found, warehousing can be improvised - using cargo containers or tents, for example. Care must be taken that such improvised storage facilities are properly established and weather-proofed.

### **Warehouse size, space and volume**

The size of the warehouse required depends on the amount of donated goods expected (wanted or unwanted). Only about 70% of the total storage area of a warehouse should be taken up with goods. The remaining 30% ought to be left clear for ventilation, passageways, handling and repacking.

### **Warehouse preparation and maintenance**

Before the warehouse is used, floors, ceilings, doors and frames should be checked and thoroughly cleaned and repaired if necessary. The exterior should be cleared of weeds and rubbish to avoid attracting rats, mice and insects. If necessary, walls and floors can be treated with insecticides.



### **General pointers for warehouse use**

- Before donated goods are received, a storage plan should be made.
- Keep foodstuffs separate from all other supplies in the same warehouse.
- Never store fuel, chemicals, fertilisers, pesticides or cement in the same premises as foodstuffs.
- Keep different items and packages, goods from different sources and those arriving at different times in different stacks.
- Do not store goods directly against walls, pillars or partitions, to avoid dampness and inaccessibility. Leave a corridor of about 1.2 m (also called a fire corridor) between stacks and walls and between different storage stacks.
- Wherever possible stack goods on pallets (or their equivalent) and not directly on the floor, to avoid their contact with water. If no pallets are available, stack bags on plastic sheeting.
- Keep maximum stack height at 2.5 m to preserve lower-layer packages.
- Every warehouse should be cleaned regularly.
- OSH protocols should be followed at all times.

### **Warehouse personnel**

The number of warehouse staff should be kept to a reasonable minimum, depending on how much work there is. In general it will be necessary to have the following:

1. A warehouse manager (oversees physical warehouse issues, contracts, deliveries etc).
2. A storekeeper responsible for receiving incoming supplies, the release of goods for dispatch, the care of the goods in stock, keeping all stock-movement records, organising the handling of supplies, maintaining a security system and managing all other warehouse personnel.
3. A team of warehouse workers.
4. Security (optional).

### **Warehouse security**

Donated goods can be of considerable value in terms of both their cost to the donor, and their value for the beneficiaries and the local economy. Warehouse security should be kept in mind.

- Access to the warehouse should be restricted to authorised personnel only. Authorised personnel include storekeepers, security and warehouse workers.
- If the warehouse is also used as a distribution centre, the area should be clearly separated from the storage area.
- *Smoking* will be prohibited in the warehouse and the warehouse compound. Fire-fighting equipment must be available on site in case of fire, and a plan posted which includes escape routes and actions to be taken in the event of fire.

**Donated goods 'stock' control**

Attention should be paid to the movement of donated goods in and out of the warehouse. This is particularly important in the case of valuable goods (such as new white ware) or where the donating organisation has indicated that it wishes to know where its donated goods 'finished up'.

The storekeeper should establish a system to oversee the movement of donated goods entering and leaving the warehouse. Assistance of a commercial warehouse provider is invaluable in this area.

**Record-keeping**

Keeping records of items received and distributed is important, especially in relation to corporate donations. Plans should be made to make a record of donated items and movement of these items.

## Annex D: Resources

### ***Red Cross auction site***

[www.oneway.co.nz/redcross](http://www.oneway.co.nz/redcross)

The Red Cross does not actively solicit or manage donated goods (new or second hand) unless specific to a defined and requested need based on a thorough assessment. It is widely accepted however, that in times of crisis people are giving in nature and wish to contribute regardless of demand or policies. Some individual donors may not be in a position to donate cash and will part with goods as a means of contribution.

In Partnership with [oneway.co.nz](http://oneway.co.nz) the NZ Red Cross has established an auction web page as an outlet for donated goods during a national or international emergency or disaster. This site is a means for those with the right technology to sell unwanted or donated goods on a public auction. It is designed to be self-sufficient and can be utilised by any organisation or individual.

The Red Cross can direct all the proceeds of any successful auctions to an appeal for the area. In the absence of a specific appeal the money will be utilised in Red Cross humanitarian operations.

Organisations such as territorial authorities concerned with managing unsolicited donated goods in the aftermath of an emergency or disaster are welcome to refer donors to this site. Organisations wishing to dispense with unwanted goods of a reasonable quality can submit goods to the site themselves or donate the goods to any local Red Cross shop.

The Red Cross does not promote or collect unsolicited donations for any purpose including for use on this website.

### ***International Red Cross Warehouse Manual***

A very detailed manual that contains specific information about warehousing goods for Red Cross operations. It is primarily intended for warehousing operations in developing nations, but is also useful to refer to if considering temporary warehousing in New Zealand.

The manual can be obtained from Red Cross New Zealand by contacting the National Office in Wellington at:

New Zealand Red Cross  
National Office  
Red Cross House  
69 Molesworth St  
PO Box 12-140  
Wellington  
Phone (04) 472 3750









