

CANTERBURY CDEM GROUP

DONATED GOODS

GUIDELINES

OPERATIONAL DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

This guideline has been developed utilizing information from the Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management (MCDEM) 'Directors Guidelines: Donated Goods'.

It is too late to develop a donated goods management guideline after an emergency has occurred. By having a predetermined management guideline there is less likelihood that the donated goods task will impact on the response and recovery activities.

The intent of a donated goods management guideline will be, in most cases to deter the donation of unsolicited physical goods and promote the donation of money or specifically requested goods.

An influx of unsolicited donated goods has potential to inhibit response and recovery.

ASSUMPTIONS

- a. Previous expectations that the New Zealand Red Cross and The Salvation Army are the primary agencies for the coordination and local distribution of donated goods can no longer be assumed to apply.
- b. Community, humanitarian and social support organisations will assist in the management of donated goods, under the coordination of the respective lead agency – Local or Group Controller, etc.
- c. The Canterbury CDEM Group has limited experience in coordinating the management of donated goods during an emergency.
- d. During an emergency the public becomes generous in both donating money and goods to the affected area. This includes major corporations/companies. Often this generous outpouring of goodwill severely impacts and potentially overwhelms local government and social agencies trying to manage the donated goods.
- e. Many donated goods may never be used and will require disposal if effective management is not established early and inappropriate donations avoided.

CATEGORIES OF DONATED GOODS

- a. **Donated Goods are categorized as follows:**
 - i. **Designated donated goods:** donations made to, or requested by a specific organisation.
 - The organisation accepting/receiving the donation will follow its own policies and procedures.

- 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 organisation's responsibility.
- ii. **Unsolicited donated goods:** donated goods that have not been requested by, or designated for a specific organisation.
- Should only be directed to organisations that have agreed to and have the capacity to accept them.
 - Donated goods such as clothing or unprepared food should be directed to community agencies such as food banks, clothing banks or second-hand stores.
 - Donors will be discouraged from sending donations directly to the emergency site.
 - Under no circumstances will pharmaceutical supplies or other medications or prepared foods be accepted from the public.
 - Used electrical goods should not be accepted.
 - Unsolicited donated goods do invariably arrive during major emergencies, so arrangements should be in place to enable them to be disposed of efficiently and safely.
- iii. **Corporate donated goods:** donated goods provided by corporations/companies/businesses.
- To be balanced against the possibility of hindering the longer-term recovery efforts in the community (e.g. by putting local retailers out of business)
 - Where possible the donating corporation should be encouraged to coordinate transport to a designated distribution point (be it local or regional).
- iv. **International donated goods:** donated goods from outside New Zealand will be managed by appropriate agencies, including MCDEM.
- b. **Regardless of the donations, all donors should be considered as a customer. See Annex A for guidance.**
- c. **Monetary donations are the preferred type of donation.**
- Public Education and Public Information programmes should highlight the preference for monetary donations.
 - Potential donors could be encouraged to donate an equivalent value to the goods they might otherwise send to the emergency area.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following should be considered:

1. Information Management. Clear, consistent and timely communication to potential donors is essential for effective management of donated goods. This will assist in reducing an impact on response activities. Prepared messages should be agreed with other agencies, e.g. Red Cross, The Salvation Army.
2. Managing Goods, Facilities and Transportation. Identifying in advance an appropriate facility to potentially store and sort items. This facility will need to be supported with competent and trained staff, and other resources such as communications and heavy lifting equipment. Transport requirements of donated goods should not conflict with higher priority response and recovery tasks.
3. Managing monetary donations.
 - Funds donated by individuals and organizations will generally be received and managed, in the first instance, by trading banks acting on behalf of the affected communities.
 - For local emergencies the respective local authority will be responsible for activating or establishing a (Mayoral) Relief Fund, including criteria for distribution.
 - In larger emergencies a Group Relief Fund or agreement may be established to ensure that monetary donations are managed in a regionally-equitable manner and maximum benefit is made of central government financial support.

RESPONSIBILITIES

General.

While management of donations will occur at the lowest level, the Canterbury CDEM Group Response Levels will be used as a guide to differentiate between local and regional management and coordination.

As a general rule Local EOCs and/or Recovery Management Offices will be responsible for Levels 1 – 3 responses. The ECC, Regional EMO, and/or Group Recovery Management Office will be responsible for providing overarching coordination for Levels 4 and 5 - if required.

Awareness of potential “collection drives” is important to ensure that any donated goods must be something that is *needed* by the affected community. These “drives” can rapidly grow due to promotion by radio stations, email,

websites, texting, etc. Public Information Management has a critical role in discouraging, monitoring, responding to and managing these initiatives.

a. **EOCs (Local)**

1. Ascertain likely donated goods requirements.
2. Liaison and coordination with local agencies, institutions, commercial facilities and volunteer organisations for the management, distribution and where necessary the disposal of donated goods. This allows for responsibilities to be shared between contributing organizations and not unduly burdening individual organisations.
3. Make full use of existing voluntary agencies capabilities.

b. **ECC (Regional)**

1. Coordination of donations during larger emergencies (Level 4 + 5)
2. Coordination of large scale corporate donations.
3. Coordination of goods arriving from outside the CDEM Group area and/or movement between local authorities.
4. Assist Public Information Managers with the formulation and dissemination of common public information messages.

COORDINATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

The good natured generosity of New Zealanders could prove to be a hindrance to response activities by providing unwanted donated goods. Previously radio stations have run competitions to provide the 'most donated goods'.

By being proactive in educating the community and/or corporations of donated goods requirements there is a need for clear messages to be coordinated between CDEM and relevant partner agencies (e.g. Red Cross and The Salvation Army) in advance.

To assist Public Information Managers in the development of public information messages consider the "Donations – Frequently Asked Questions" attached at Annex B.

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. Remember local laws will apply when disposing hazardous materials.
- Unusable items will be recycled when possible.
- Unused and unneeded goods remaining after the emergency 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 and storage.
- In large-scale emergencies, goods may be donated to other CDEM Groups following consultation with their Controllers or Recovery Managers.
- Cash for scrap – transfer the cash to relief fund(s).
- The cost of the disposal versus recycling – particularly in light of recently introduced waste minimization charges.

Annex A.

THE DONOR AS CUSTOMER

For any donations management effort to be successful, you must treat all donors as your customers. Use the points below as a reminder of our responsibilities:

- ❖ **Treat all donors with the respect they deserve. Always provide timely, courteous, and informed responses to donors.**
- ❖ **Be honest with the donor. If an offered donation is not needed, make that clear, but provide alternative suggestions (e.g. contact another organization or make a monetary contribution instead). The same donor may want to make a more useful donation in the future.**
- ❖ **Provide clear guidance to donors on how they can help. Develop an information brochure or other materials to help donors meet your logistical requirements.**
- ❖ **Process all offers as soon as possible.**
- ❖ **Arrange for all donors to be thanked for their offers – either individually or collectively.**

Annex B
DONATIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is donations intelligence?

A: Donations intelligence is the gathering of donations-related information from any source available that may have a potential impact, both negative and positive, on the donations programme and applying this information effectively to managing the supply and demand of donated goods in an emergency. Close attention should be maintained of reports of well-meaning, yet overwhelming and potentially problematic, collection drives that may be taking place locally or further a field.

Q: Why should the effected area worry about collection drives occurring outside of their boundaries?

A: When collection drives are started anywhere, they often difficult to manage or stop. Community enthusiasm can be boundless, more so when fueled by ill-informed media. Unless the coordinators of the drive(s) are advised properly as they communicate with the donating public and enthusiastic media in their community, a very large amount of unwanted, unsorted, poorly packaged, mixed goods will be on route to the emergency area. The determination of the collection drive coordinators must be met with an understanding, yet informed and firm, intervener.

Q. How can you find out about collection drives?

A. Effective liaison with relevant agencies such as Red Cross, The Salvation Army.
Consider submitting an “information request” regarding any collection drives to Planning/Intelligence and/or Public Information Management Sections. Monitor the media (radio stations, websites etc).

Q: How should coordinators of collection drives be advised?

A: Ideally, the collection drive coordinator should be put directly in touch with someone from the respective EOC/ECC. The donated goods point of contact in the EOC/ECC should be able to quickly determine whether what is being collected is needed or not.

- If the collections are needed, the following needs to be confirmed:
 - There is a confirmed recipient prepared to receive the goods.
 - The donor will also donate transportation.
 - The goods are sorted, packaged, labeled, and palletized.
- If the collections are not needed, the donor must be persuaded to keep them for the time-being, donate the goods elsewhere, or make a monetary donation instead.
- If there is a mixture of needed and unneeded goods, the coordinator should stop collecting unneeded goods, focus on and separate needed goods, work to find a recipient, and negotiate with the recipient regarding transportation and receipt.

Q: What is meant by a “value-added” donation?

A: “Value added” simply means making items more desirable by preparing them properly for transportation, receipt, and subsequent distribution and use.

Q: What kinds of things can be done to prepare goods better?

A: Above all, any donated goods must be something that is *needed* by the emergency stricken community.

Bulk items are difficult to manage, so donors should be encouraged to provide goods in numbers or packaging suitable to the affected community and local response or recovery activities.

Q: What donated goods shouldn’t be accepted?

A: Medical supplies, second hand electrical goods, second hand (stuffed) toys, pre-prepared food.