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Information bulletin

United States: Post-Tropical Storm Sandy

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

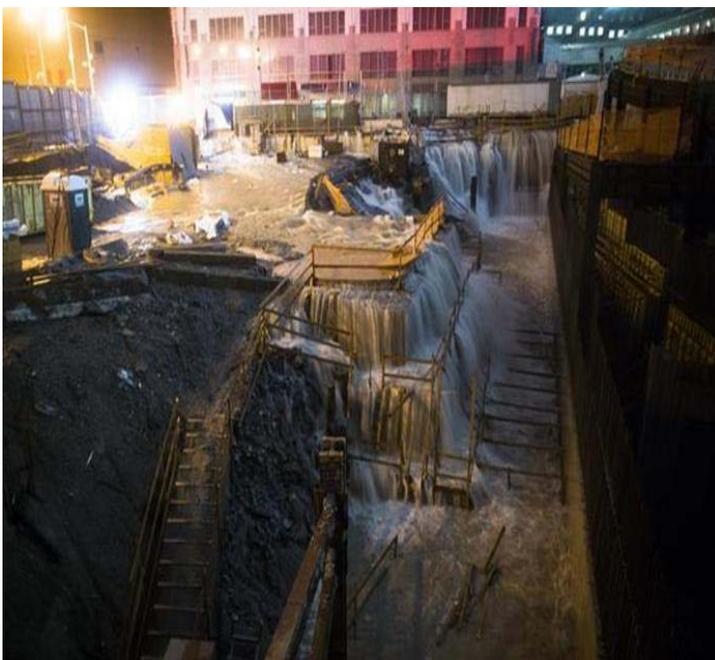
Information Bulletin n° 1

30 October 2012

This bulletin is being issued for information and reflects the current situation and details available at this time.

Given the massive scope of Post-Tropical Storm Sandy, the American Red Cross is mobilizing a significant fundraising response and welcomes Red Cross and Red Crescent partners to engage with donors in their country and accept funds for emergency response. Details on transferring funds from National Societies to the American Red Cross will be provided in the coming days.

[<click here for detailed contact information>](#)



Flood waters at the World Trade Center construction site in Lower Manhattan: Source – The Associated Press.

The situation

Prior to hitting the United States, Hurricane Sandy had a severe impact in the Caribbean. In **Cuba**, approximately 15,000 homes were destroyed and 75,000 people were left homeless and are living with relatives or in communal shelters. An additional 43,000 homes were damaged and 80 per cent of water systems impacted. In **Jamaica**, 1,500 families were affected, and 40-60 per cent of houses have roof damage and all crops affected in the hardest hit areas in the north/north west. In the **Dominican Republic**, 17,530 persons have been displaced, 580 persons housed in official shelters, 3,506 houses were flooded, 56 houses were severely damaged, and 7 houses were destroyed. In the **Bahamas**, damage knocked out power lines and created a pile-up of debris, and there was significant loss of livelihoods with crops and fishermen affected. In **Haiti**, up to 17,187 people were evacuated to 118 emergency shelters including those living in 12 highly vulnerable camps. Some 5,981 families were affected (roughly 29,900 people). In addition 1,811 houses were flooded, 2,089 damaged and 1,885 destroyed.

Post-Tropical Storm Sandy lashed the densely populated east coast of the United States on Monday 29 October, shutting down transportation, forcing evacuations in flood-prone areas, and threatening basic infrastructure. Fierce winds and flooding hit hundreds of miles of Atlantic coastline and heavy snows were

forecast farther inland at higher elevations as the centre of the storm moved ashore along the coast of southern New Jersey on Monday evening.

Reports indicate that the immediate death toll was 18 lives lost, bringing the total number of deaths to at least 84 after the storm wreaked havoc in the Caribbean. U.S. stock markets were closed for the first time since the attacks of 11 September 2001, and remained shut on Tuesday, 30 October. The federal government in Washington was closed and schools were shut along the affected eastern seaboard. Initial damage assessments throughout Tuesday indicated widespread destruction with electrical fires and record power outages adding to the misery of devastating flooding in the northeast.

The area affected by the storm in the United States includes key population centres such as New York City, Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia. As of Tuesday afternoon eastern standard time, there were approximately 7.5 million customers without power along the east coast; over 2.3 million of these are in New Jersey, more than 1.8 million in New York and more than 1.2 million in Pennsylvania.

Sandy has slowed and is expected to continue its westward track across Southern Pennsylvania and take a turn toward Western New York tonight. The storm is forecast to move into Canada on Wednesday, 31 October with a steady weakening forecast during the next 48 hours. As a result of a collision with cold air, Sandy has become a snow storm as rain turns to snow on its western side.

In Canada, Ontario is still experiencing windy and rainy weather; rain directly related to Post-Tropical Storm Sandy has begun over parts of the province of southern Ontario. Rainfall amounts of 20-40 mm are forecast over many areas but higher amounts are possible in some locations. Wind speeds are high over southern Ontario, with some areas reporting wind gusts of up to 90 kilometres per hour, particularly in the Lake Ontario and Lake Huron areas. Several conservation authorities have issued flood outlooks and water safety bulletins cautioning around the potential for high water levels in rivers/streams. Approximately 150,000 power outages have been reported in areas across the provinces. Provinces in Atlantic Canada are expecting heavy rains throughout the remainder of 30 October and 31 October. Current precipitation forecasts indicate Charlotte County in New Brunswick, Yarmouth and Shelburne County in Nova Scotia will receive the most rainfall.

High tides are expected in the evening of 30 October in the Gaspé region of the province of Quebec. Areas along the shores of the St. Lawrence River are also at risk of high water levels and surges. Both areas are being closely monitored.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The massive storm was expected to affect as many as 60 million people in the mid-Atlantic and north east, and the American Red Cross deployed workers and relief supplies across a number of states to be in a position to provide immediate help to those affected by Sandy. Prior to Sandy's impact the American Red Cross was fully focused on preparatory measures. With the effects of the storm already felt as of Saturday night, Red Cross shelters in North Carolina and Virginia prepared to open and the Red Cross has prepared to support more shelters as the storm moved northward.

The American Red Cross preparatory efforts included on-line access to the [Red Cross Hurricane app](#), the Red Cross public web site, and the toll free disaster relief number. The public was also encouraged to register on the [Red Cross Safe and Well website](#), a secure and easy-to-use online tool that helps families connect during emergencies. This site also connects with the Twitter and Facebook accounts of users. For those who are concerned about a loved one in the U.S. affected by Hurricane Sandy, click [Search Registrants](#) and enter the person's name and pre-disaster phone number or address. [Safe and Well](#) is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is accessible in both English and Spanish.

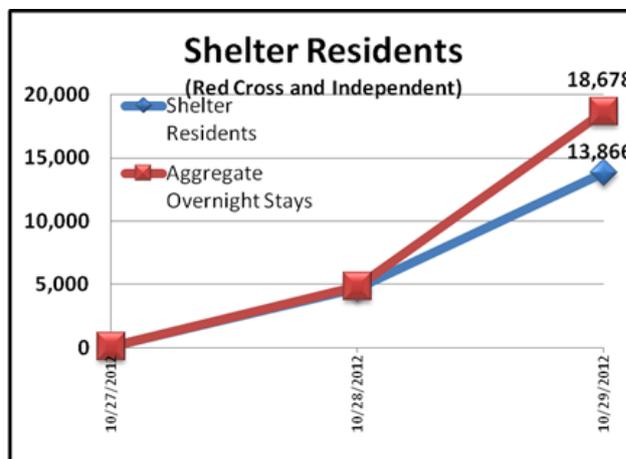
American Red Cross emergency vehicles were mobilized to distribute meals and relief supplies after the storm passed. Thousands of ready-to-eat meals and relief supplies such as cots and blankets were ready to send to areas of need. Given the anticipation that this would develop into a large, costly relief response and the need to respond accordingly, the American Red Cross is mobilizing a significant fundraising response and welcomes Red Cross and Red Crescent partners to engage with donors in their country and accept funds for emergency response. The support is expected to enable the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance to those affected by disasters like Hurricane Sandy. The Red Cross shipped blood products to hospitals in the affected area in advance of the storm.

As the storm continues to travel across the north east, the Red Cross is responding by focusing on services such as providing meals and shelter (see shelter graphic). As of 12.01 hours in the early morning of 30 October 2012, the American Red Cross had opened and managed 258 shelters across 16 states with nearly 11,000 overnight residents. The Red Cross expects the shelter number to increase today. To date, more than 1,700 American Red Cross workers are supporting relief efforts in response to Post- Tropical Storm Sandy. Additional Red Cross workers will be arriving in the days to come to support relief efforts further. Volunteer training is also taking place across many areas of the north east.

Current view of open Red Cross shelters at 10:52 a.m. ET



Nearly 170 American Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicles are currently positioned to respond once it is safe to access affected communities, bringing meals, water, information, emotional support and damage assessment. More than 230,000 shelf stable meals are ready to be distributed in affected states. In addition, the American Red Cross is coordinating with more than 15 national partners including faith-based organizations, NAACP, AmeriCorps/NCCC, NAACP, and Children’s Disaster services.



The American Red Cross is currently working closely with local emergency management agencies, FEMA Regional Coordination Centers and the National Response Coordination Center to identify needs. American Red Cross leadership has also been in close communication with state governors and commissioners.

Preparedness messages continue to be shared with the public. Initial download results of the American Red Cross [Hurricane App](#) revealed that between Friday and Sunday, there were 160,000 Hurricane App downloads.

In **Canada**, over 300 volunteers in Ontario have expressed availability and teams are standing by across the province. Logistics bases in Ottawa and Toronto remain positioned with emergency supplies should requests for assistance arise.

Provincial government departments responsible for emergency social services in Atlantic Canada have been contacted to advise of the Red Cross’ monitoring and preparation activities. Teams in New Brunswick were placed on stand-by on 29 October.

The Gaspé region of Quebec has experienced extensive flooding and tidal surges in the past few years, and communities in the area are well prepared. Red Cross disaster response teams in Quebec are ready to respond to any requests for assistance.

Media coverage of the storm has been very high and the Canadian Red Cross has had an excellent opportunity to educate the Canadian public on how to be prepared for severe weather. This message continues to be reinforced as the storm makes its way northward to Canada. Since the start of Hurricane Sandy media coverage, the Canadian Red Cross has received 188 media mentions (broadcast, internet and print).

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

American Red Cross

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.