

Waterbury Natural Disaster Response Manual

January 2025 {updated December 2025}

MISSION STATEMENT: The Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee of Waterbury area marshals the human, physical, and financial resources required to help the community prepare for and respond rapidly to natural disasters.

TAGLINE: By planning ahead, sharing knowledge, and lending a hand, we make sure no one faces a crisis alone.

Preface

This is a living document. It is a starting point that invites all experienced voices to the table for ongoing addition and revision.

January 2025 marks the completion of this document. By “completion,” we mean that the Waterbury Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee completed the document and has edited it based on input from Municipal Manager Tom Leitz and CReW. Other perspectives may well be included later, not the least of which will be that of the to-be-named Waterbury Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator. To date, this document’s dominant perspective is that of the volunteer, as this is the perspective with which the authors are most familiar. The committee acknowledges our incomplete experience regarding the disaster preparedness and response ecosystem. Thus, while this document in its current form explores all known aspects of disaster response, in time, there will undoubtedly be more items to add and thoughts to consider.

This document is a combined manual, to-do list, collection of response thoughts, and job description for a new Waterbury Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator. This action will necessarily shift the burden of response away from CReW and to this new coordinator so the former can concentrate on long-term recovery efforts, per their mission. In this document are CReW forms that have been repurposed with this shift in mind. We are grateful to CReW for these resources.

In the document’s finished form, the intention is that it can be used by interested but inexperienced parties (including future flood recovery teams in Waterbury) and so therefore it intentionally covers some items that may seem obvious to those of us who are well-experienced in flood response.

Introduction

At present, no local disaster recovery effort can adequately take place without many volunteers. Therefore, this document is centered around a Volunteer Corps. The purpose of this Corps is to provide cleanup and relief in the immediate aftermath of a disaster event. The Corps is the

second party to enter into a disaster situation, just after the emergency response process has concluded. The Volunteer Corps will also play a part in assessing overall needs of the residents of the homes they work in, and they will help connect in-need households with longer-term services provided by CReW.

This document is organized by topic area, but many topics overlap such that, arguably, content from one area would reside more naturally somewhere else. In some areas, content is duplicated to facilitate the process of finding pertinent information.

While a range of disasters is possible, flooding is by far the most likely scenario for our region and the one for which current volunteers will be most experienced. Therefore, the purpose of this document is to first build the Volunteer Corps with flooding in mind, with the acknowledgement that most duties and much of the equipment this entails will also be applicable to other issues, such as ice storms, hurricanes and windstorms, tornadoes, fires, severe snow, etc. Once this plan is completed and approved, we intend to expand it to address these other kinds of disasters as well.

This plan is the product of the Waterbury Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee.

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Acronyms

Volunteer Corps: VC

This term refers to the people who are on a roster of those willing to help on an ongoing basis, which, in non-emergency times means taking occasional training. However, the term is also used to refer to ad hoc and occasional volunteers who we would hope to convert to members of the VC. Corps member responsibilities will include helping the Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator to coordinate and perform outreach for the response, mucking, trucking of trash, serving as runners, and other work as needed.

Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator: DPRC

This is the town employee whose job is to oversee all preparation and response efforts. It can be assumed that when disaster strikes and many bodies are needed (as well as rest), this position may be augmented by a group of volunteers who have the time to cover shifts to address issues such as creating clean-up plans for individual neighborhoods or households.

Team Leaders: TL

Team leaders are ad-hoc designated based on the job and the day. The reason for appointing a team leader is to help teams operate smoothly, and to resolve situations where several opinions are present. Team leaders usually have experience of a particular kind of situation and/or a property. A volunteer who is a team leader one day might be a team member on another.

Personal Protective Equipment: PPE

Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee: NDPC

The Scenario

As a way of understanding the content of this document, below is a description of what the DPRC and VC will be responding to.

A severe flooding event affects up to 500 homes in Waterbury and the immediate area (as happened as a result of Tropical Storm Irene). For context, the July 2023 flood affected 250 properties, the December 2023 flood affected over 100 homes, and the July 2024 flood, 200. These homes have issues with:

- Water and mud in basements and possibly on the first floor as well
- Stored hazardous materials
- Household goods and personal items of monetary and sentimental value stored in water-damaged areas
- Damaged utilities, including loss of municipal water service to the property, and loss of hot water, heating, electrical, and cooling systems.

Some affected homes will opt to do the cleanup work themselves. This is a plus and we should in these cases encourage them to take advantage of the town's supplies and guidance. Often, when volunteers arrive at a home, the residents do not have the resources (perhaps monetary, perhaps human) to complete the cleaning themselves. In those cases, there may also be other needs, including:

- Social needs
- Food needs
- Shelter needs
- Health needs
- Mental health needs
- Financial needs
- (Other needs, such as financial, which may not be directly related to the immediate cleanup)

What follows below is information about the communication, materials, skills, organization, processes, and personnel needed to respond optimally to this scenario within the shortest possible time.

Communication

Communication with the Community: No Looming Event

Responding optimally to a disaster can only happen via preparation. Information regarding preparation will live on the town's website, as will information pertaining to response and resources.

As of this writing, the town's website does not have a dedicated, permanent, organized disaster preparation and response section. The establishment and maintenance of this is important and is a task that the NDPC is prepared to undertake. This will include information regarding TextMyGov. The committee sees disaster preparation as an ongoing challenge and community conversation that will require not only new information but reorganized information on an ongoing basis. This will require website access for the committee, which is a decision for the town to make. It is also possible that the task of website maintenance and updating will belong to a full-time DPRC, negating the need for the NDPC to have site access.

In non-disaster times, the DPRC will be responsible for communicating best-practices preparation information via town social media, the Waterbury Roundabout, and the Front Porch Forum at least once per year. Some items to be included are:

- If a property is at risk (as defined by being in a location that is either in a flood plain or that has experienced previous water damage), it is important to move or at least elevate utilities. To start, this is a general message to the community but as we learn more about at-risk areas, this message should be refined and targeted to particular properties and more defined areas.
- Buy a dehumidifier, perhaps more than one.
- Install a sump pump.
- Clear the basement; dispose of any chemicals, paints, etc. that are not likely to be reused.
- Homeowners with mobility issues related to moving possessions from their flood-prone areas may be given a volunteer work crew to assist with this.
- Disaster-related information can, as of the writing of this manual, be found at the CReW website and on the town's website. This information includes links to the following resources: VT Emergency Management Plan, VT DEC Flood Resilience, and all other state and federal information deemed necessary. The decision will be CReW's as to whether to maintain that information on their site in the future, but the information will need to be available on a new town disaster page. Toward this end, we have gathered all extant information that we are aware of. It is available in the Forms and Checklists section of this manual.
- A one-page disaster preparation document providing general information should be part of the town's annual report. This will also serve as an update to the town regarding what the DPRC and NDPC are doing to help.

Communication with Volunteers: No Looming Event

This section of the document will be filled in after more discussion and thought on the part of the NDPC.

Realistically, the greatest number of volunteers will make themselves known only immediately after a disaster. It will be key to keep them coming back and to use their networks for more volunteers. But the recruitment and retention of volunteers well before a disaster is critical because the longer water sits, the worse the situation is for the structure, and more importantly, for the physical and mental health of the residents. This means a swift initial assessment is important, which will require as many volunteers as possible.

Scenario: If 500 homes are affected and need help, optimally, 250 or more will fill out a damage assessment form on their own (accessible via the town's website) versus waiting for volunteers to arrive to fill it out. This leaves 250 homes in need of assessment. If two-person teams each assess two homes per hour (undoubtedly an unrealistically high estimate, but consider that some people may not be at home or property access might otherwise not be available), this means that a two-person team could assess 16 properties in an eight-hour day, which means that 10 teams (or 20 people) could assess 160 properties in an eight-hour day, which in turn means that, at 250 homes in need of assessment, and with eight hours available in a day to assess, theoretically 320 properties could be assessed in two days. This scenario is clearly not entirely correct as it relies on a supply of volunteers with considerable time as well as a firm count of affected homes; in a more realistic scenario, fewer volunteers will be available and calls will trickle in well after the disaster occurs, such that there may not be an immediate need to visit 250 homes because the residents have been too busy with dealing with flood issues to report in. But the purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate that if we can recruit enough volunteers to assess homes well ahead of any disaster, we can reach all affected homes within a few days. According to CReW, in all three of the disasters (of 2023 and 2024), neighborhoods were assessed within two days of the storm while individual home assessment began within days and was done several times as the cleanup continued.

This section restricts itself to the people who will be responsible for messaging and the people they will be messaging to. Below, there are a placeholder titles ("communication strategy and tactics") and some communication items that note tasks that will be addressed later by the NDPC.

Communication strategy and tactics for communication with volunteers: No looming event.

This section might include an annual communication calendar that lists what should be communicated at what time and in which media. It will rely on best practices and evidence about volunteer recruitment and retention, etc. The NDPC will more fully develop this section later. Below are some general considerations.

- The DPRC is communicating twice per year to the volunteer list. Simple one- or two-paragraph updates are sufficient. Contained in these messages is a big thanks to volunteers and a reminder of why what they do is important. Include quotes from grateful residents. Include the ongoing call for volunteers and a request that if a volunteer is no longer available, please let the DPRC know so that the town can maintain an updated list.
- Annual requests for volunteers go out via the FPF and town social media (special appeals will also be made during floods).
- The DPRC will manage annual training for volunteers on flood response basics.
- The DPRC will spearhead an effort (to possibly include NDPC, the town, and CReW) to recruit volunteers both from existing rosters and, optimally, via an annual event, e.g., a public gathering with food, beverages, and entertainment. This could be the culmination of a training/orientation day for current volunteers that includes sandbag-filling.

Communication with the Community in the Case of a Looming Event

This communication takes place via the town website, town Facebook page, Waterbury Roundabout, CReW website, Front Porch Forum, WDEV, Vermont Alerts tailored by county, the Waterbury TextMyGov, and others as necessary.

- Here's what's coming.
- Here's who's vulnerable.
- Here's how to prepare.
- Here's how to get help (e.g., volunteers to move possessions).
- Get all the disaster-related information from the town's Disaster Preparedness web page.
- Buy a dehumidifier.
- Install a sump pump.
- Move your car to higher ground.
- Clear the basement; dispose of any chemicals, paints, etc. that are not likely to be reused.
- Here's where you can pick up sandbags.
- The town website lists tasks the volunteer corps can help with and also tasks that property owners are responsible for (e.g., moving cars).
- Here's where to find information on the scope of a flooding disaster: <https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/watv1>. It is important to note that, historically, flood levels have been underestimated. This is a communication issue that will require further work by the NDPC, namely, making sure to help residents prepare but also not adding to stress by being overly cautious.

Communication with Volunteers in the Case of a Looming Event

As a result of past disasters, there is a list of volunteers available. Over time, the DPRC will augment this with new names. These people will be contacted with the following information:

- Here's what's coming
- Here's who's vulnerable
- We need your help once again; your efforts are very much appreciated
- Please tap your personal network for more help
- We need help filling sandbags
- The DPRC will be in touch once the emergency phase of the disaster has ended
- Same drill as in the past: all information and resources are available at the municipal building/response center
- Stay tuned

Communication with Volunteers in the Event of a Disaster

As there will be a great and ongoing need for volunteers, there should be a week-by-week and phase-by-phase communication plan. For example, we don't want to communicate in the same way to volunteers on day one as we do on day 17, as many variables will have changed in the interim. Also, we may want to employ volunteer motivation strategies such as adopting a home versus simply cleaning out a home. Adopting would mean the same volunteers would be able to take a home from the initial visit through to eventual completion.

1. Natural disaster event occurs.
2. Call for already-recruited volunteers goes out.
3. Call for new volunteers goes out.
4. When volunteers show up, NDPC (and designated volunteer coordinators) make sure volunteers receive all necessary communication regarding the list below:

Communication strategy and tactics for communication with volunteers both before the disaster and over the course of the recovery. Communicating during non-disaster times is different from communicating during disaster times and so this section, to be fully developed by the NDPC in the future, will contain recommendations for week-by-week actions for the NDPC and VC to undertake.

Communication with the Community in the Event of a Disaster

This communication takes place via the town website, town Facebook page, Waterbury Roundabout, CReW website, Front Porch Forum, WDEV, and others as necessary.

In the case of WDEV, the station manager as of this writing, Lee Kittell, can be reached at 802-244-7321. However, WDEV is not live 24/7. WDEV is live weekdays from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., followed by CBS and ESPN Radio feeds between 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. On Saturday, they are live from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. followed by CBS and ESPN. On Sunday, they are live from

6:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. followed by CBS and ESPN. If an event develops during the time live local personnel are on the air, they can provide some degree of support such as taking calls, reporting on situations, and disseminating information through the Emergency Alert System.

Secondarily, communicating beyond the immediate borders of Waterbury can serve the purpose of helping with volunteer recruitment. Therefore, one role of the DPRC will be to either serve as or to designate a press representative. This person will be responsible for creating and dispersing press releases to the relevant news outlets such as VT Public, VT Digger, and the local broadcast television affiliates.

Communication strategy and tactics for communication with the community in the event of a disaster. The NDPC will more fully develop this section in the future.

1. Natural disaster occurs.
2. Town and DPRC use FPF, town social media, and the Waterbury Roundabout to let affected residents know what to do and provide a rough timeline for response and recovery (handholding/assuring residents that we're on the case): contact 211 and fill out Flood Damage Assessment form.
3. DPRC, aided by outreach and coordination volunteers, is in contact with affected homeowners to tell them when help will arrive.
4. DPRC posts to media platforms about CReW assistance available.
5. When appropriate, affected residents are encouraged to post thanks and personal stories to the FPF and social media about the volunteer response. The purpose is to encourage more volunteers.
6. As the recovery winds up, DPRC posts to ask residents if they need anything else.
7. As the recovery winds up, DPRC asks residents to return any equipment still on loan.
8. DPRC recruits volunteers to assist in the return and checking/cleaning of returned equipment.
9. The town website lists tasks the Volunteer Corps can help with and also tasks that property owners are responsible for.
10. DPRC posts to media platforms information about CReW and long-term recovery.
11. DPRC shares Red Cross resources with VC and with residents (see Forms and Checklists section).

Communication Regarding Mold

THE NDPC considers it the town's duty to inform residents about mold but not to perform mold mitigation. Here are some considerations:

- We do not know enough about mold to be considered experts. According to the National Institute of Health's National Institute of Environmental Health Services, "People are exposed to molds every day and everywhere, at home, at work, at school, both indoors and out. Molds are generally not harmful to healthy humans."

- This is not to say that molds are not a problem; they are, particularly for those with asthma or compromised immune systems. It is in part due to this concern that we are wary about subjecting volunteers to potentially dangerous molds.
- Regarding mold prevention/mitigation, Vermont basements are exceedingly difficult to clean based on the spray-a-cloth-and-wipe-the-surface approach volunteers are currently using. The issue is that concrete basements are both porous and rough, while stone basements are nearly impossible to clean properly due to the variety of surfaces.
- Yet, in past events, our communication to households is that mold is always a problem and that volunteers will mitigate it. Thus, we are likely unnecessarily scaring them as well as potentially leaving ourselves liable in the event that volunteers are unable to remove mold entirely and it becomes an issue for the household.

Therefore, the town website will include information about mold (see the Forms and Checklists section) and we will provide mold kits to residents, with the mold form included. *Individual volunteers may perform mold mitigation if they wish*, but mold removal will not be included in the official volunteer list of duties.

NOTE: The following is the feedback from CREW on this topic: “All flood disaster recovery organizations, including FEMA, VOAD and the state of Vermont strongly recommend mold prevention after floodwaters in the home.”

While the NDPC does not dispute these recommendations, the risks to untrained and underequipped volunteers remain, partly because, in Vermont basements, “prevention” and “remediation” share a blurry line. Mold risk is greatly minimized if dehumidification is performed promptly and so due to our concern about the use of volunteer time to engage in preemptive cleaning and our concern about the rarer but worrying cases when dangerous molds arise, we recommend that mold mitigation be categorized under “long-term recovery” and that specialized equipment and training should be part of this process.

Tasks

Below is a list of DPRC and VC tasks to be undertaken in the response process.

1. Contact companies for Necessary Rentals:
 - a. Dumpsters - Casella: 802-830-8829
 - i. 3-5, placement based on event (randall, union, ohear, rte 2, south main)
 - b. Dehumidifiers - Milton & Sunbelt - for one month: quantity? 50?
 - c. Vactor Trucks -
2. DPRC dispatches volunteers to assess homes. Volunteers bring an Assessment [Form](#) and fill it out on site. They also bring the Flood Recovery Resources form, Immediate Response Resources/Short-Term Crisis Counseling form (two sides of the same sheet), and Guide to Available Red Cross Services and leave them behind.
3. Volunteers return forms to the municipal building/response center and insert into folder for each household.
4. DPRC and VC review these forms and create an individual action plan, which they leave in each household folder.
5. DPRC dispatches volunteers to clean homes and notifies the town if a vactor truck is necessary. They bring Flood Response Task Ticket to guide them.
6. If home residents include people able to assist in the cleanup, VC provides them with necessary supplies such as Tyvek suits.
7. Upon completion of the day's work, TL updates the Flood Response Task Ticket and returns it to the household folder.
8. DPRC and VC review updated folders on ongoing basis and leave notes as appropriate.
9. DPRC assigns volunteers to particular homes; this is about volunteer care and feeding (addressed later in this document).
10. Town and DPRC continue to use FPF, town social media, and the Waterbury Roundabout daily to fill volunteer slots. A regular, considered communication response is important here.
11. Once cleanup is complete, ask residents if they would like mold mitigation supplies and information. If yes, leave mold kit and instructions with them.
12. After the affected areas are cleaned and, if power is available, install dehumidifier(s), either consumer-grade or, if the situation warrants and equipment is available, industrial-strength versions.
13. In homes with industrial dehumidifiers, after a week, moisture-test.
14. If the moisture reading is good, remove of meter and dehumidifier.
15. At this last home visit, leave behind the Flood Recovery Resources form and the Immediate Response Resources/Short-Term Crisis Counseling form (even though they will already have been left there during the initial visit.)

Volunteer Management

As three recent floods (to date) have taught us, the recruitment, care and feeding of volunteers is critical. If we take good care of them, we improve our chances of retaining current volunteers and recruiting additional ones. Taking good care of them means not overworking them, not letting them overwork themselves, equipping them properly, and putting them in a position to succeed. In addition, we should use volunteers to recruit more volunteers by encouraging them to post to their listservs and social media accounts and to mention the issue in conversation.

When volunteers show up to work, DPRC or VC/TL thank and orient them. This orientation includes all or some of the items on the list below, depending on the experience level of the volunteer:

- All volunteers must first submit a waiver form.
- Thanks are offered to the volunteers. "You matter very much, and your efforts are appreciated and will be remembered."
- Wear the proper gear (see lists).
- During your work period, check yourself for signs of physical issues (dehydration, hunger, etc.).
- What to expect when working with the homeowners
- Please consider recruiting more volunteers.
- Introduction to the day's team leader (TL can take on this orientation)
- DPRC strongly suggests to volunteers (unless they are fully retired) that they do not sign up for more than three shifts per week after the first week.
- DPRC ensures that only experienced, equipped, and informed volunteers show up at the homes with the most issues (mud, water, damaged possessions, chemicals).
- DPRC ensures that homes are screened for able residents. On occasion, volunteers show up at homes where able-bodied residents assume that the volunteers are experts and so stay out of the way. Volunteers then go to work while the residents could be helping.
- DPRC triages properties. It is dispiriting to clean properties that are full of stored items/obsolete items/trash. Also, there is the matter of the optimal use of limited resources: Cleared homes can be cleaned more quickly whereas cluttered homes can take many crews many days to clear. Therefore, as part of the pre-disaster overall communication plan (see above), we will let in-need residents know that we can send volunteer crews to their homes in non-disaster times to move items to upper floors AND that if they do not accept this offer, their homes will likely be pushed to the back of the line for mucking and cleaning. Naturally, there will be exceptions to this general rule.
- DPRC will inquire with the Red Cross about setting up a feeding site, perhaps at the municipal building/response center, or they can send an ERV (Emergency Response Vehicle) to affected neighborhoods. (See Forms and Checklists section.)

Volunteer Checklists

1. If volunteers are going to a basement for an initial cleanup (mucking, carrying wet items, etc.), this is the process:
 - a. TL picks up the Flood Response Task Ticket from the household folder at the municipal building/response center to properly understand the job. DPRC or coordinating volunteers help with this. (This ticket is also available via the town's disaster web page and the hope is that residents will fill it out themselves.)
 - b. Volunteers follow best practices, e.g., wearing suitable PPE, and if are not willing, they will be reassigned to another, less hazardous task.
 - c. Volunteers are briefed on hazards such as e coli, paints, and chemicals.
 - d. Volunteers show up with muck boots (or, at minimum, high waterproof winter boots) and a hat.
 - e. Volunteers bring shoes to wear in the car (so they are not driving home in filthy boots).
 - f. Volunteers bring a box to put soiled clothes into after the cleanup.
 - g. Volunteers put on a Tyvek suit over clothes.
 - h. Volunteers and team leaders make and wear a name tag (orange for team leaders, blue for volunteers).
 - i. Volunteers bring water and snacks to the work site.
 - j. Volunteers take full advantage of water and snacks, with the recommendation that they use alcohol and water to clean up before eating or drinking and that they eat and drink well away from the structure (e.g., not in the basement).
 - k. Team takes one or more mucking kits (pre-assembled; see lists) for five volunteers (kit consists of shovels, squeegees, garbage bags, duct tape, masks (volunteers can opt for masks with cartridge filters, bearing in mind that these are hot and heavy and tend to fog safety glasses more readily than N-95 masks but are critical in cases of off-gassing materials), rubber gloves, disposable gloves, spray disinfectant, hand cleaner, drinking water, snacks, headlamps, utility knives, safety glasses or goggles, rags, paper towels, clipboard with writing utensil, and, depending on whether it's an initial visit, Flood Damage Assessment Form and/or Flood Response Task Ticket, Structural, Social, and Physical Welfare Form, etc.
 - l. Volunteers wear a mask whenever in the basement or affected areas of the house.
 - m. Safety glasses are recommended, not required (fogging is an issue).
 - n. TL is in charge of making sure the forms are filled out with the home dweller's input.
 - o. Volunteers consult with homeowner about what gets saved and what gets tossed.
 - p. Volunteers dispose of items, muck, saved possessions in designated areas

- q. Volunteers remove saved items from basement if possible; place under a roof or tarp if possible (communicate about this with residents).
 - r. When leaving, volunteers place Tyvek suit in a bin or bag in their car. Depending on their quality, these can often be rinsed or dried and reused; it's up to the volunteer.
 - s. If a hose is available, volunteers spray boots as necessary before going home and leave in a plastic box or bag in car. If not, spray boots at the response center (e.g., the Municipal Building) before going home, or at home.
 - t. TL fills out the Flood Response Task Ticket and returns to property folder at municipal building/response center
2. If volunteers are serving as assessors or doing follow-up, they need to bring:
 - a. Proper form
 - b. Clipboard
 - c. Writing utensils
 3. If volunteers are serving as response coordinators working out of the municipal building/response center, they should bring:
 - a. Laptop computer
 - b. Phone
 - c. Pen
 - d. Paper
 - e. Additional layer of clothing
 - f. Food and drink
 4. If volunteers are serving as runners, they should bring:
 - a. Phone
 - b. Paper and writing utensils
 5. If volunteers are serving as kit assemblers, they should:
 - a. Ensure that all kits are fully equipped (see Forms and Checklists section of this document).
 - b. Ensure that equipment (such as shovels) is hosed and clean.

Job Descriptions

Disaster Preparation and Response Coordinator

The NDPC sees the committee's relationship with this person or people as analogous to that of a board to a CEO. The committee's job would be to ideate, support and advise. The DPRC would be responsible for:

1. Being the primary contact with the town, the town emergency response coordinator, the NDPC, and CReW to provide updates and input
2. Advising residents of FEMA assistance if a federal disaster has been declared and coordinating with CReW
3. Developing a press contact list and working with the press, both local and state, to answer relevant questions and promote town needs (such as donations and volunteers)
4. Interacting with the town regarding industrial-strength mucking of select properties
5. Interacting with Volunteer Corps in non-disaster times
6. Budgeting for disaster response supplies and equipment and ensuring that supplies are stocked and ready
7. Spearheading the recruitment of both team leaders and volunteers
8. If the Steele Room is used as the headquarters for the response, then DRPC's job will also be to be in contact with the town with the goal of vacating the room as early as is feasible since the room is critical to town business.
9. Writing full instructions for team leaders and volunteers
10. With the help of the town, recruiting volunteers when a disaster strikes
11. Maintaining the Sign-Up Genius scheduling and listing of needs
12. Assembling volunteer teams and assigning team leadership roles
13. Overseeing volunteer teams and designating tasks for leaders
14. Twice-yearly (or more) communication with the Volunteer Corps
15. Assigning household folders to affected households
16. In a disaster, overseeing the updating and maintaining of household folders
17. In coordination with town, recruiting volunteers in the aftermath of a disaster
18. Training volunteers and crew leaders in all aspects of recovery
19. Inspection and maintenance of stocked materials and equipment
20. Coordination with adjacent towns
21. Ongoing research regarding software and apps that may prove helpful to the town regarding case management, impacted areas and available resources
22. Sharing information with CReW (e.g., the Flood Damage Assessment Form and the Flood Response Task Ticket) to assist in their long-term recovery efforts
23. Maintaining communication with Washington Mental Health as their services are funding-dependent and therefore not necessarily always available

Tasks the Volunteer Corps Will Be Responsible For:

Depending on the specific job description, volunteers will have the following tasks:

- Signing up for time slots via Sign Up Genius or other utility and showing up on time
- Following instructions from team leaders regarding needed tasks, PPE, and best practices
- Signing waiver form
- Mucking (the town will be responsible for industrial-strength vacuuming and priorities will be set on a case-by-case basis)
- Moving things from basements in non-disaster times
- Delivering and starting up dehumidifiers
- Delivering and starting up sump pumps
- Removal of debris and possessions taken from basements, some to dumpsters and some to dry places at the residences for later cleaning by residents
- Drywall removal
- Moisture testing
- When the moisture reading is good, removal of meter and dehumidifier. Following is FEMA information on acceptable basement moisture levels:
https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_cleaning-flooded-buildings-hurricane-sandy-fs-001.pdf
- Data entry
- Serving as runners
- Assembling kits
- Speaking with property owners on an ongoing basis: listening and looking for opportunities to help
- Cleaning equipment after use (spraying down at municipal building/response center)
- Speaking with mental health services, the state, nonprofits, etc. (working with CReW to divide tasks).

The Care and Feeding of Volunteers

Recent experience has shown that, in the event of a disaster, we can count on a fairly robust initial response that tails off in a week or so. The issue is that many volunteers are needed for two to three weeks or more, and, ideally, enough volunteers would be available to clean out all affected properties within a week or two (due to issues that arise with prolonged moisture in the home). When fewer volunteers show up, the work stretches out longer and volunteer burnout becomes a significant issue. Therefore, below are some notes about maintaining the enthusiasm, energy, and mental health of volunteers.

Adopting Homes

From a volunteer's perspective, going into one home after another to perform initial cleanup can be draining and dispiriting. It is empowering to take a home from wrecked to clean, to view the results of their efforts. Often, a home can be cleaned in a weekend by a few different crews. From a homeowner's perspective, it can be helpful/comforting to see familiar faces. Therefore, if possible, DPRC and VC should assign the same people to homes that require several visits. This information will be available in the folders kept on each household.

Homes with Available Help/Non-essential Tasks.

In the past, volunteers have worked in homes where there are able-bodied residents who are not assisting in the effort. This is likely because of a lack of communication on the part of the cleanup effort such that residents believe volunteers have specialized knowledge or, sight unseen, are all young and in top shape.

In other, rarer instances, volunteers have participated in rehab efforts that are not directly related to flooding.

In both cases, it is important for volunteer morale to not have volunteers placed in these situations. To address both situations, additional lines have been included in the Flood Damage Assessment Form.

Communication with Volunteers

- Shift time. It is logical to assume that shorter shifts leave less of a reason not to volunteer, and based on anecdotal experience, one may volunteer for a short shift but if the work is not finished when the shift is, the volunteer will often stay longer.
- Offer evening shifts.
- Designation of a team leader and DPRC support for the team leader when orienting the crew for the day's task is necessary, as it can be chaotic to have several people in masks in a basement all with different ideas for how to handle a task, i.e., too many chefs.
- If the team leader does not have a clear directive from the DPRC regarding a course of action for a property, s/he should assess the situation and elicit opinions from the

volunteers before choosing one. Often, a variety of tasks could all be chosen as primary concerns, necessitating a deciding voice.

- Regular thanks and tchotchkes, coupons, personalized thank-yous (there were general ones in July of 2024, which were welcome) can serve to boost enthusiasm and morale. Broader messages on social media, Front Porch Forum, and the Waterbury Roundabout are also suggested.

Supplies and Equipment

The items here should be stockpiled on a permanent basis. One option is to rent storage units. NOTE: In a major disaster, the Red Cross, state Emergency Operations Center, and church groups will provide buckets. Other materials available through state and regional channels via the town's official emergency manager include gloves, masks, Tyvek suits. A task of the DPRC will be to determine the necessary quantities of the items below that the town should have in stock. If information is unavailable based on past disasters, then we suggest employing some basic and very rough math: So, for example, calculate an average of three volunteer visits, with four volunteers per team, for 200 homes including a complete kit of items for each visit.

- Folders
- Forms and Checklists (see corresponding section below)
- Clipboards and pencils
- Flat-tipped shovels
- Muckers/squeegees
- Tyvek suits
- Safety glasses
- Bulk Simple Green to use for smaller spray bottles
- Spray bottles as part of the volunteer kit for decontamination of boots/clothes
- N-95 masks
- Long rubber gloves
- Work gloves
- Respirators and replacement filters (to the limit of what the budget will allow)
- Garbage bags
- Boxes/buckets for volunteer supply kits
- Buckets
- Large and small sponges
- Paper towel
- Shop vacs
- Push brooms
- Dust pans
- Brooms
- Duct tape
- Moisture gauges
- Voltage testers
- Small step ladders
- Tarps
- Utility knives
- Batteries
- Headlamps
- Battery-powered lamps
- Dehumidifiers (labeled)
- Hats

- Pry bars/nail pullers
- Construction lights
- Extension cords
- Industrial water
- Tyvek suits in a variety of sizes
- Goggles
- Filled sandbags
- Whisk brooms
- Handouts to be left with residents (see Forms and Checklists): Flood Recovery Resources form, Immediate Response Resources/Short-Term Crisis Counseling form (two sides of the same sheet), and Guide to Available Red Cross Services
- Muck boots (loaned out, not for keeping)

Equipment That Should Be Considered for Purchase by the Town

Industrial dehumidifiers

These range in price from about \$370 to \$14,500 and, after use, require maintenance. Otherwise, it appears they can be stored without issue.

Gas-Powered Water Pumps, aka “Trash Pumps”

These range from under \$200 to about \$500 for non-industrial versions.

Vactor truck

The cost of a truck ranges from \$79,500 for older, used models to \$339,900 for new.

Trash Disposal Units

The issue is that the existing dumpsters fill up quickly. Bagsters are a possibility and are being investigated.

Sandbag Filling Machine

These vary widely. Some are automated and quite expensive. Other systems are manual: <https://thesandbagger.com/products/gravity-fed-2-chute/> Pricing is very difficult to obtain without contacting the companies. The Vermont National Guard has two that they rent out by the day. NOTE: Volunteers and improvised equipment can most likely handle this role as well.

Storage Facility for Supplies and Equipment

This could be a trailer or space in a town-owned or town-leased building, including a storage unit.

Forms and Checklists

The forms below were originally developed in July 2023 and updated for additional events by the Waterbury Flood Response Team consisting of Dani Kehlmann, Amanada McKay, Alyssa Johnson, and Liz Schlegel. The forms have been further updated for inclusion in this manual.

[Flood Damage Assessment Form](#)

If impacted by a flood event, please fill out the form to the best of your ability. This will help officials and volunteers respond in a timely and efficient manner.

Resident Name(s):

Date:

Street Address:

Town:

Resident Phone 1:

Can we text this number? Yes No

Resident Phone 2:

Can we text this number? Yes No

Resident email (if any):

Preferred communication: Call Text Email

(circle one) Renter Owner

Please describe, in as much detail as you can, the main issues (for example, "A foot of water in the basement" or "Debris in the yard" or "Soaked items in the basement")?

How high was the water In:

basement: _____

first floor: _____

other: _____

Did it reach the electrical panel or other utilities? Circle: YES / NO

Is there debris in the basement? Yes__ No__ (We can't use the vacuor if there is anything of significant size in the basement)

Is there evidence of hazardous waste (paints, oil, gas, paints, insecticide, etc.)?
Yes __ (please specify) No__

Are there appliances that need to be removed?
Yes__ (please specify) No__

Where are you now in terms of pumping (pick one)? Pumping Complete ____ Working On
It/Have a Pump____ Need a pump (and someone to operate it) _____

Do you have power? Yes____ No____

Do you have heat? Yes____ No____

Do you have hot water? Yes____ No____

Do you need a plumber or electrician? Yes____ No____

Please choose from the options below to best describe your needs:

- Clean up (muck/debris)
- Construction (demolition/drywall/foundation/etc.)
- Both of the above

Is it safe to enter the premises? (i.e., are there hazards such as chemical spills or electrical issues?) Circle YES / NO

Do you need a dehumidifier? Circle YES / NO

If we bring an industrial-sized dehumidifier and/or pump to your home, do you have extension cords that we can use to connect it to power? Circle YES / NO

Where should volunteers leave trash? (Leave blank if not applicable)

If you have items that are wet but essential to be saved, where would you like volunteers to put them? (Leave blank if not applicable)

Estimated hours to perform cleanup (a best guess is fine):

Do you consider your home livable, or do you plan to temporarily move out?

- Livable
- Plan to temporarily move out

Do you have any other needs at this time? Select all that apply:

- Food
- Water
- Access to electricity
- Other (please specify) _____

We are sending as many volunteers as we can to as many properties as possible. Flood recovery requires many hands over a short period of time. Additionally, flood cleanup does not require specialized skills. Therefore, please list how many members of this household can be available to assist in the following efforts at this property:

Heavy-duty work including mucking and hauling of debris: _____

Light-duty work including sweeping: _____

Notes / anything else you'd like us to know?

Questions? Call, email or text: (Contact information needed here)

Flood Response Task Ticket

This ticket will be given to lead volunteers each day when sent to an individual property. It should outline who and where they are helping and tasks planned for the day. This should help determine how many volunteers and what supplies are needed. Upon completion of the day's work, leads make notes on this form then should return to HQ to provide a 'download' of what was accomplished and what still needs work.

Date: _____

Lead Volunteer Name & Phone Number: _____

Property Address: _____

Resident Name(s): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Tasks:

Debris removal (from flooded area) Demolition (sheetrock, etc.)

Mucking + Cleaning Hazardous materials removal

Cleaning (mucking complete) Other

Debris hauling (from home to dumpster)

Estimated Number of Volunteers Needed: _____

After-visit notes:

*Please be extra respectful of property owners and residents. Take a moment to chat and to check in with them about their welfare. Make sure to check with them about the work you are going to perform.

Questions? Call (contact information needed here)

Short-Term Crisis Counseling

This form exists and was used in the summer of 2014. It was printed on the reverse side of the “Flood Recovery Resources —July 2024” form from CReW. This document will live on the town’s website and be distributed to affected households in paper form. NOTE: This was from Washington County Mental Health and as their services are dependent on funding and are not always available, the DPRC is advised to check in periodically with the organization.

It is entitled “Short-Term Crisis Counseling”

Subtitle: “Come talk to us about your flood-related stories:

Bullet points:

- Would you like someone to talk to at Washington County Mental Health Services with no waitlist?
- Call 802-229-0591 and ask to speak to someone about your flood-related stress today.
- You can receive three to five sessions at no cost to you.
- There is no record kept, so you are not in any file as a patient of WCMHS.
- If you decide you need more services, we can help you find that.

Immediate Response Resources

(This is a CReW form that will change with the hiring of a DPRC by the town as this person will handle response while CReW shifts to long-term recovery and mitigation. This document will live on the town's website and be distributed to affected households in paper form.)

CReW Flood Recovery Resources

(This is taken from an existing form and was printed as the reverse side of the Short-Term Crisis Counseling form)

Contact: outreach@thecrewvt.org

802-585-1152

- This is a message-only phone number; you can leave a message about your needs to get connected with support.
- Come to the Waterbury Municipal Office (or the current designated response center), 28 North Main Street; we are open seven days a week during disaster recovery

If you were impacted by the flood:

Please submit your information to our Help Request form at <https://bit.ly/GethelpCREW>

Document, document, document!

Take photos and keep receipts for what you purchase.

Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS):

For information, see reverse side.

Flood Clean-up and Mold Remediation DIY Best Practices:

Remove water and debris before doing any other clean-up. We will share the location of dumpsters.

If you need help with clean-up, email outreach@thecrewvt.org or leave a message at 802-858-1152 NOTE that this number is not the same as the one above.

Check the CReW website for mold prevention and treatment information at www.thecrewvt.org/mold-prevention-treatment

Try not to use fans before you treat for mold, since they can spread mold spores. Remove water, shovel out, and use a dehumidifier to get things dried out first.

Flood Recovery Resources

(This form includes both preparation and recovery information. Once the DPRC is on the job, some information in this document will likely change as this person takes on the response and CReW shifts to recovery. This document will live on the town's website and be distributed to affected households in paper form.)

CReW Resources Page: <https://www.thecrewvt.org/resources-news-media>

- General information and links to how to stay informed including local, state, and national sources: Waterbury website and Facebook page, Vermont Emergency Management, National Weather Service, New England road closures, VT Alert
- Links to multiple flood cleanup resources

Vermont

Vermont Emergency Management (link on CReW resources page): <https://vem.vermont.gov/>

Vermont Preparedness Page (link on Vermont Emergency Management page):
<https://vem.vermont.gov/preparedness>

- Links to emergency resources
- Links to preparedness information and workbooks for individuals, families, businesses, schools, some flood-specific resources
- Link to information about assistance after a disaster

Vermont.gov flood resources: <https://vem.vermont.gov/flood>

- July 2024 specific page contains a lot of resources:
<https://www.vermont.gov/flood#gsc.tab=0>

Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Has in the past provided helpful information: 2024 flood recovery page - mostly FEMA info and deadlines for applying for assistance: <https://www.vlct.org/topics-all/flood-recovery>

This is the link to the current CReW request for help form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSexrT5-jKvMOvEn41B2vNDRIJrXZEnPtJz_wBPnGhY9Qii7g/viewform

Waterbury NDPC Mold Response Summary

(This document will live on the town's website and be distributed to affected households in paper form.)

After a flood, immediate action is essential to prevent mold growth.

Mold Cleanup and Treatment:

- **Remove Items from Affected Area:** Remove all furniture, belongings, and items from the flooded area immediately to prevent additional moisture retention and protect them from potential mold. Relocating items also allows for more thorough and efficient drying.
- **Begin drying the space within 24-48 hours** using fans, dehumidifiers, and open windows (if possible) to increase airflow.
- **Inspect for Visible Mold and Damage:** Before inspecting for mold, aim for an environment where floors, walls, and other surfaces feel dry to the touch, and humidity is consistently below 50%. There are moisture meters available through the town of Waterbury. Once the area is dry—ideally within 48 hours—check all affected surfaces for visible mold, especially on basement walls, lower sections of drywall, and in crevices where moisture may linger. This inspection will help determine which materials can be cleaned and which may need removal.
- **Discard Absorbent Materials if Needed:** Remove and discard heavily soaked absorbent materials, such as carpet, drywall, or insulation, if mold is visible or drying isn't feasible. These materials can retain moisture deeply, increasing the likelihood of mold growth even after surface drying.
- **Targeted Cleaning:** Clean areas with visible mold. For basement walls, scrub moldy spots with a solution of detergent and water using a stiff brush, then dry thoroughly. Use vinegar as a mold deterrent by applying it lightly to surfaces in a mist and letting it air-dry fully with fans or dehumidifiers. Avoid overapplying vinegar or any other liquid to prevent excess moisture (which can, in turn, promote more mold growth).

Long-term Prevention: To reduce the risk of mold growth in the future, maintain indoor humidity between 30-50%, using dehumidifiers and exhaust fans in areas prone to dampness, like basements and bathrooms. Regularly inspect for leaks and promptly fix any issues in plumbing or foundation cracks. For high-moisture areas, consider using mold-resistant materials like specialized drywall, paint, or insulation to further prevent mold growth. For persistent or

extensive mold issues, professional remediation may be necessary to ensure long-term effectiveness. Finally, do not store personal possessions in flood-prone parts of your home.

For more detailed guidance, please refer to the EPA website on mold:

<https://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-and-your-home>

Volunteer Liability Waiver Form

Municipality Name: Town of Waterbury

Municipal contact in charge of volunteer:

Scope and duration of volunteer work or services (to be specified by municipality):

--

Volunteer Acknowledgement

I, _____, affirm my desire to provide uncompensated volunteer services to this Municipality as such services are described above.

In performing the specified volunteer service, I acknowledge that:

- I am 18 years of age or older and know of no reason, medical or otherwise, which would prevent me from performing the tasks that are required by the above scope of work;
- I have acquainted myself with what is required to perform those tasks, and I represent that I have the skill and ability to perform them;
- I assume full responsibility for my own safety and agree to hold the above-named municipality harmless for any injury to me or damage to my property, except where such injury or damage results from the negligence of the municipality or its employees;
- I am a volunteer worker and therefore am not covered by the town's workers' compensation policy;
- I will perform the volunteer service in compliance with the standards and specifications established by the municipality and further agree to use any personal protective equipment (if any is required) in accordance with guidance from the municipality; and
- I agree that if I will be working with children, the elderly, or other vulnerable populations, I consent to the municipality performing a background check on me.

Volunteer:

Date:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Attest:

Date:

(municipal representative)

Guide to Available Red Cross Services

To request a wide range of Red Cross Services, the DPRC can prompt the town emergency manager to contact the disaster Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Services that the Red Cross potentially can provide include the following:

A. Damage Assessment

B. Individuals whose homes are identified by Red Cross Damage Assessment as having major damage, are destroyed, or are uninhabitable are eligible for Recovery services. Sometimes Recovery workers provide outreach in the affected areas. Alternatively, Recovery services are available at Recovery Centers, such as Multi-Agency Recovery Centers (MARC).

C. Recovery workers may provide some funds to a household to help with immediate needs. They can also provide referrals for needed services in the community. The Recovery worker may refer the client and/ or their family for Individual Disaster Care services such as Disaster Health Services (e.g., to replace medications or eyeglasses that are lost), Disaster Mental Health (temporary disaster counseling to assist with social-emotional concerns), and Disaster Spiritual Care, which is especially helpful when people experience severe losses. The Red Cross also provides help (Integrated Condolence Care) for those who have a family member who passed away because of the disaster. Money may be available to assist with bereavement expenses.

If the town of Waterbury does not request Red Cross services through the Emergency Operations Center, individuals or families who need emergency assistance, can call the American Red Cross at **1-877-272-7337**. Service is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Other Red Cross resources are available online:

Red Cross Resource Directory: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/resources.html> A wide range of resources are provided based on location.

Disaster Relief and Recovery Services:

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services.html> Information is provided about the location of open shelters; tips are provided about how to get back in touch with family members if individuals are separated after a disaster or emergency; information is provided about recovering from a disaster, such as steps to take to stay safe, ways to check a home's safety, recovering emotionally, and recovering financially. There also is an Emergency Resource Library with strategies for preparing for, responding, and recovering from specific disasters and emergencies such as floods, earthquakes, extreme heat, home fires, hurricanes, tornados, and power outages.

Information and Referral Services for Military Families:

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/military-families/information-referral-services.html>

Local Red Cross offices develop and maintain relationships with key community partners.

Military families rely on the Red Cross to help them identify their needs and connect them to the most appropriate Red Cross and community resources. This key Red Cross service ranges from responding to **emergency needs for food, clothing, and shelter**, referrals to **counseling services** (e.g., financial, legal, mental health), **respite care** for caregivers, and other resources that meet the unique needs of local military members, veterans and their families.

Non-emergency information and assistance can be obtained by contacting the local Red Cross office. Military families can enter their zip code at this site to locate the nearest Red Cross office.

Specific Requests: The Town of Waterbury can also make Specific Requests by contacting the Red Cross Representative at the Emergency Operations Center for materials such as:

- Clean-up supplies
- Personal care kits
- Feeding at a specific site (e.g., having food for clean-up crews) or requesting an ERV (Emergency Response Vehicle) to drive through disaster-affected neighborhoods.
- Sheltering: if approved, the Red Cross may set up a local shelter with cots and meals.

Post-Response Canvassing Form

(This form was last updated in the fall of 2023. The NDPC is not aware of this form being used in 2024. The use of this form should be discussed as it contains items that either the DPRC's Volunteer Corps or CReW can/should address, and we will want to avoid overlap. The NDPC suggests that a post-disaster canvassing effort is likely more appropriate for CReW.)

The form can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AhaFmXUDvuqz7VzPYLENFNGs5lsgdvYw6x2HMMSJ5XQ/edit?ts=66ccb1af>

Volunteer Checklists

(These should also be hung on the walls of the municipal building or alternative response center as well as appearing in this manual)

If you're mucking ...

- Be willing to follow best practices, e.g., wearing suitable PPE. If you do not wish to wear PPE, you can be reassigned to another, less hazardous task.
- Check the Assessment form and Flood Response Task Ticket for information on the tasks needed, including information on possible hazards.
- Bring a copy of the Flood Response Task Ticket to the location for guidance on tasks that need completing.
- Show up with muck boots (or, at minimum, high waterproof winter boots) and a hat.
- Bring shoes to wear in the car (to avoid bringing muck into the vehicle).
- Bring a box or trash bag to put soiled clothes and boots into after the cleanup.
- Put on a Tyvek suit.
- Make and wear a name tag (orange for team leaders, blue for volunteers).
- Take one mucking kit for five volunteers (kit consists of shovels, squeegees, garbage bags, duct tape, tyvek suit, masks, rubber gloves, disposable gloves, spray disinfectant, hand cleaner, drinking water, snacks, headlamps, utility knives, safety glasses or goggles, rags, appropriate forms (if it's the first visit, this includes Flood Recovery Resources form, Immediate Response Resources/Short-Term Crisis Counseling form (two sides of the same sheet), and Guide to Available Red Cross Services).
- Wear a mask whenever you are in the basement or affected areas of the house.
- Bring water and snacks to the work site.
- Update the to-do list on the Flood Response Task Ticket after ending work for the day, either with a volunteer at the municipal building/response center or via the paper copy that will be added to the home's file in the same location for the next volunteer crew.

If you're supplying the household with mold remediation information and supplies, bring ...

- Mold kit consisting of vinegar, spray bottles, rags, sponges, spray pump, paper towels, instructions
- Safety glasses, mask, rubber gloves
- Tyvek suit

If you're serving as an assessor or doing canvassing, bring ...

- The proper forms
- Clipboard
- Writing utensils

If you're serving as a response coordinator at the municipal building/response center, bring ...

- Laptop computer and power supply
- Phone
- Pen
- Paper
- Additional layer of clothing
- Food and drink

Kit Assembly Checklist

Mucking Kit

When a volunteer shows up with an incomplete kit, time is wasted. It is better to show up with too much gear than too little. A mucking kit—which will consist of a couple of work buckets due to the number of items-- should include:

- Tyvek suits for the whole team
- Rubber gloves
- Work gloves
- Safety glasses
- Masks
- Water
- Non-toxic spray disinfectant (for hands, boots, etc.)
- Two utility knives
- Headlamps for the whole team
- Alcohol
- Drinking water
- Trash bags
- Duct tape
- A note telling the team to pick up shovels, squeegees, and muck buckets outside the municipal building/response center

Mold Remediation Kit

- Instructions
- Vinegar, spray bottles, rags, sponges, spray pumps, paper towels, instructions
- Safety glasses, masks, rubber gloves
- Tyvek suits
- Bucket or trash bag for wet rags