

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: WORLD TRADE CENTRE AND PENTAGON EXPLOSIONS

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This Information Bulletin is intended for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this stage.

The Disaster

In what is now concluded to be a widespread terrorist attack, on 11 September at between 08:45 and 09:05 EDT, an American Airlines Boeing 767 (Flight 11) from Boston and another large passenger aircraft crashed into both of the World Trade Center towers in New York City. Both towers collapsed soon after the impact. In Washington an aircraft also crashed into the Department of Defense (the Pentagon), causing a fire and forcing the evacuation of the building, a section of which later collapsed. Yet another plane (United Airlines Flight 93) crashed in Somerset County, Pennsylvania (southeast of Pittsburgh), about half an hour after the Pentagon crash. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) subsequently diverted all incoming flights into the U.S., then shut down all airports in the nation.

Information from assessments on injuries and fatalities has been difficult to obtain, but the death toll is rising and initial analysis indicates that as many as 1,400 or more are known or presumed dead, with thousands more unaccounted for (estimates for missing run as high as anywhere between 10,000 and 15,000). Around 1,400 injured were admitted to New York area hospitals, many in critical condition with extensive burns.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The American Red Cross (ARC) responded immediately in New York City, Washington, D.C., and near the crash site near Johnstown, Pennsylvania as well as at airports across the nation. The ARC fanned out across the country and is supporting victims, families and emergency services workers in the weeks, months and even years to come. Specifically, assistance is focused in four different areas:

- The Red Cross is providing relief in all the affected areas, including shelter, blankets, crisis counseling, food and beverages and much more for victims, their families and emergency workers. Under the Federal Response Plan, the American Red Cross is designated to provide mass care for those in need. Hundreds of trained Red Cross mental health workers are beginning to help people deal with the severe emotional stress that is sure to accompany these tragedies.
- The entire national Red Cross blood system is responding to the need for blood. Fortunately, Red Cross blood inventories are higher than they have been in years and are already providing blood to New York City, Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, New Jersey and surrounding areas. The ARC is in regular contact with New York Governor Pataki and his Health Commissioner, Dr. Antonia Novello, and are coordinating with

military and emergency services to deliver the blood to hospitals. All needs for blood or blood products for burn victims will be met - without exception and anywhere in the country blood is needed.

- The Red Cross has activated the Aviation Incident Response (AIR) Team to assist with the aviation tragedies at the crash sites and at the originating and destination airports. The AIR Team is made up of leadership teams from all Red Cross disaster relief functions, the AIR Team responds when activated through the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996. This act charged the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) with designating an organization to provide for the emotional needs of victims, family members and rescue workers. The NTSB selected the American Red Cross because of our nationally recognized mental health counseling program.
- Red Cross mass care teams around the country are also extending assistance to airports to help stranded travelers.

The American Red Cross has requested blood donations, and generous Americans across the country took time to give blood to save a life. The ARC ask that Americans continue to help people in need by scheduling a blood donation appointment (within the first six hours of this disaster, 700,000 people called to schedule an appointment at a Red Cross blood center). Blood donations are needed now and throughout the months ahead.

- To date, the American Red Cross has shipped approximately 3,200 units (pints) of red blood cells to the two Red Cross blood centers closest to New York City and Washington D.C., which will allow the quick supply of safe, available blood to affected hospitals as soon as it is needed. 40,000 units of Albumin - used to treat burn victims and other trauma patients, have also been shipped. The national system enables the American Red Cross to move blood anywhere in the United States to meet patient needs, which is being done for the victims of these terrible disasters.
- The Red Cross Blood Services regions in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore, Maryland, are serving as the central hubs, storing as much blood as possible and preparing to send donations out as quickly as needed.
- The American Red Cross is preparing to send additional blood products -- possibly units of fresh frozen plasma, platelets and Albumin -- to help alleviate the suffering of burn victims.
- The American Red Cross is closely working with the Department of Defense and preparing to ship blood through whatever means necessary to ensure blood needs are met.

For the next several days, the Red Cross will continue to provide support, guidance and referrals to victims and their family members affected by these catastrophes. Red Cross Disaster Mental Health will be a very important part of the relief effort. Mental health professionals that volunteer with the Red Cross will follow up as needed for those emotionally impacted by this tragedy. This is a long-term Red Cross response, and assistance will be necessary for several months and even years. The American Red Cross is still providing assistance for families affected by the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, for example, and today's catastrophes are expected to require a relief effort of even larger proportions.

The Disaster Mental Health Services involve trained Red Cross Disaster Mental Health workers providing crucial emotional support for victims, family members, emergency workers and others in the affected communities. In the wake of these traumatic events lies a wide path of catastrophic psychological destruction in which countless victims will require assistance. Red Cross Disaster mental health workers are already at the scene of the disaster and will continue to be there, looking for victims that are displaying signs of serious stress or emotional trauma. Red Cross mental health workers also will be paying special attention to all the children involved in these catastrophes, providing support and guidance to them and their parents. For example, depending on their age, children may not be able to articulate clearly their fears and anxiety. Mental health workers will encourage them to express their emotions through coloring or play. Also, they will tell parents that they can expect children to look for adults for clues about how to react.

The ARC advises people who are trying to locate immediate family members to call their local American Red Cross chapter. Due to the chaotic environment and the heavy volume of phone calls, callers should be informed that the process will take time. Families are encouraged to try to make contact on their own, and if the family makes successful contact, to let the local chapter know as soon as possible.

The Canadian Red Cross (CRC) is also heavily involved, primarily with mounting a relief operation to help thousands of travelers stranded as a result of the attacks in the United States. Across the country, reception centres have been established at several Canadian airports and Canadian Red Cross Disaster Response Teams are registering stranded travelers so that contact can be made with family members. Local Red Cross offices are working with government authorities to provide assistance and shelter where needed. Canadians seeking information on family members in the affected areas should call their local Red Cross office.

Needs

Countless numbers of people in the U.S. and throughout the world have been moved by this tragedy and have indicated the desire to provide immediate support to help those affected. To assist the victims of this and other disasters, contributions can be made to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund by calling 1-800-HELP NOW or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish). Internet users can make a secure online credit card contribution by visiting www.redcross.org.

In addition, because the American Red Cross is a volunteer-led organization and depends on the time of thousands of dedicated volunteers to respond to more than 67,000 disasters each year, the ARC advises that people who are interested in becoming a Red Cross disaster volunteer are encouraged to contact their local American Red Cross chapter.

In Canada, those wishing to make a financial donation can call 1-800-418-1111 or contact their local Canadian Red Cross office. The 24-hour toll free line accepts Visa and MasterCard. Checks should be made payable to the Canadian Red Cross, earmarked "U.S.A Appeal" and mailed to the Canadian Red Cross National Office, 170 Metcalfe Street, Suite 300, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 2P2. On-line donations are accepted at www.redcross.ca. In-kind donations are not accepted.

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