

# Disaster Recovery Center SOP

## Table of Contents

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<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Services Provided .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Types of DRCs .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Alternatives to establishing a DRC.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Roles and Responsibilities .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DRC Coordination Task Force .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Local Responsibilities .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Facility Responsibilities .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Identification of Sites.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Pre-Disaster Identification .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Post-Disaster Identification .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Operations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Activation of Sites .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Management of Sites .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Demobilization .....</b>	<b>7</b>

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

A Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) is a temporary facility established in the disaster area following an Individual Assistance (IA) major disaster declaration. It may be staffed by representatives from Federal, State, Local and/or Tribal government, and volunteer agencies/organizations for the purpose of providing technical assistance and disaster relief information to individuals, businesses, and certain non-profit organizations affected by the disaster. The number of DRCs required in a disaster area is determined at the JFO in cooperation with FEMA, State, Local, and Tribal leadership and is based upon the anticipated need in the affected communities.

### **A. Services Provided**

At a DRC, survivors seeking disaster assistance can meet with representatives of Federal, State, Local, or Tribal government, and volunteer agencies to:

1. Discuss disaster related needs for all programs and available assistance through Federal, State, Local, and Volunteer Agencies
2. Register for disaster assistance
3. Receive updates on FEMA application status
4. Obtain clarification on written correspondence received
5. Receive instructions on completing the Small Business Administration (SBA) Loan Application
6. Receive mitigation information
7. Receive housing assistance and rental resource information

### **B. Types of DRCs**

The DRC Coordination Task Force, in cooperation with Local and Tribal partners, will determine the location, priority and delivery (method-fixed facility or mobile unit). Any deficiencies with the utilities, communication systems, and transportation routes in the community at the DRC site will be identified by the FEMA DRC Site Inspection Team with recommendations for correction.

#### **1. Fixed:**

The preferred type of DRC is a fixed facility. A fixed DRC is established in a permanent structure with available utilities. It may be supported by a Mobile Communication Office Vehicle (MCOV). Typically permanent DRCs are located in cost-free local community or government buildings with available utilities. If needed FEMA may provide direct support in identifying a site. If a donated space is not an option, FEMA can deploy General Services Administration (GSA) representatives to explore leasing facilities if the need for a fixed site exists. The location for a fixed DRC site will have to meet specific criteria and should be pre-identified (for details see SC DRC Pre-Identification Checklist).

**2. Mobile:**

A mobile DRC (MDRC) uses a MCOV which is designed to be self-contained and quickly mobilized to support the recovery operation. Generally, mobile units are used where a DRC will not be needed longer than seven days. It can also be used to “rove” from one location to another to accommodate rural communities that have been affected but do not have a population density large enough to support a fixed DRC. Whenever possible, the location for the MDRC should be in an area that will accommodate the needs of the local community, with available utilities and parking spaces. In extreme cases where there are irresolvable deficiencies, a MDRC can be established using a large tent for a limited time until a fixed facility can be identified or the need has been met. MDRC sites should also be pre-identified.

**3. Facility Size:**

The size of a DRC will vary dependent upon the number of anticipated applicants to be served. Size is also dependent upon the space required by Federal, State, Local, Tribal, and Voluntary Agencies that maybe co-located at the DRC.

<b>DRC Size Chart</b>	
Small:	1500-3499sq.ft
Medium:	3500-4999sq.ft
Large:	5000sq.ft-Above

**C. Alternatives to Establishing a DRC**

Depending on the scope of the IA mission in an area, a DRC may not be necessary. DRCs are not intended to be the sole platform for providing disaster survivors with information, support, services, and a means to apply for disaster assistance. The following are alternatives methods for survivors to access Individual Assistance resources.

**1. Disaster Survivor Assistance Team**

A Disaster Survivor Assistance Team (DSAT) is made up of FEMA disaster specialists and can be sent to communities to provide one-on-one registration support to residents that need additional aid. Request for these teams should be made through SCEMD (ESF 14).

**2. Community Outreach Meeting**

Held in the style of a town hall, these one-time meetings connect survivors with representatives from FEMA, SBA, agencies/organizations who can provide recovery assistance. Request for these events should be made through SCEMD (ESF 14).

**3. FEMA Helpline**

1-800-621-FEMA is a toll free helpline survivors can contact to speak with a representative to ask questions, register for assistance, and receive information on appeals.

#### **4. Disaster Assistance Website**

<https://www.disasterassistance.gov/> is a website that provides survivors with information Federal disaster assistance programs. Survivors can quickly apply for assistance, check the status of their application and submit appeals all on one website. This is where most survivors register for assistance.

## **II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Disaster Recovery Center Coordination Task Force (DRCCTF)**

Upon the decision to initiate DRC operations, a DRC Task Force will be established to coordinate DRC deployment, operations, and demobilization. The Federal Coordination Officer (FCO) and State Coordination Officer (SCO) will each appoint a DRC Group Supervisor to co-chair the DRCCTF.

#### **1. Responsibilities of the State DRC Group Supervisors (SDRCGS)**

- a. Identify the need for a DRC by coordinating with the Local Official, State Individual Assistance Officer (IAO), and FDRCGS.
- b. Coordinate with local officials to determine potential DRC locations to provide to the DRCCTF for inspection.
- c. Ensure information flow is timely and accurate.
- d. Ensure daily activity reports and situational updates are provided to State and local partners where DRCs are located.
- e. Confirm that all State and local partners have 72 hours' notice prior to DRC closure.
- f. Provide recommendations for adjusting DRC operational hours and closures.
- g. Maintain visibility on any issues arising from DRC operations and inform State IAO. (e.g. adjustment of hours of operation, temporary DRC closures, etc.).
- h. Obtain concurrence for DRC closure through coordination with FDRCGS and local officials.

#### **2. Responsibilities of the FEMA DRC Coordination Group Supervisors (FDRCGS)**

- a. Identify the need for DRCs by coordinating with the State IAO and FEMA Individual Assistance Branch Director (IABD).
- b. Provide daily activity reports and situational updates to State and local partners where DRCs are located.
- c. Facilitate the inspection of potential DRC locations. FEMA may provide assistance in identifying potential sites prior to deploying GSA to lease a space.
- d. Identify and Staff DRCs by providing the approved activation requirements to appropriate support personnel to facilitate deployment through the Automated Deployment Database (A.D.D.) and assigning staff with appropriate program permissions.

- e. Announce DRC locations and opening dates and operational hours as soon as possible to the IA Branch Director, DRC partners and the National Processing Service Center (NPSC) Coordination Team, after concurrence from the state.
- f. Manage DRC operations by communicating regularly with DRC managers using all available tools to monitor operations, and quickly identify any issues that need resolution.
- g. Prepare for DRC closures through coordination with the State IAO and IABD.

### **3. Responsibilities of DRC Coordination Task Force Members**

- a. **FEMA Security** – Establish and monitor contract security for all DRC locations and serve as the POC for any incidents that may occur.
- b. **FEMA Logistics** – Ensure that MOUs for all DRCs are obtained and signed prior to occupancy of any facility, private or otherwise. Setup, maintain, and breakdown the DRC, to include the handling of furniture and supplies.
- c. **FEMA External Affairs/ State PIO** – Responsible for handling media inquiries, drafting and publishing announcements, and documenting DRC operations with photos. Coordinate and announce DRC locations and opening dates and hours as soon as practical to internal and external partners.
- d. **FEMA Disability Integration Advisors** – Ensure that all FEMA operating facilities servicing the public are Section 508 compliant and have the appropriate disability integration equipment on hand and operable.
- e. **FEMA Planning** – Provide Geographic Information System (GIS) resources as needed by the task force and attend meetings to gather information for the Strategic Timeline and overall situational awareness.
- f. **SBA** – Staff each DRC to assist survivors with low-interest disaster loans for individuals, businesses and certain non-profits. SBA may choose to convert a DRC into a Disaster Loan Outreach Centers (DLOC) when the DRC is demobilized.
- g. **FEMA Safety** – Conduct initial safety inspection of proposed locations and follow on inspections once a DRC is established. Serve as the POC for all accidents and injuries.
- h. **FEMA Mitigation** – Staff each DRC to provide survivors with information on mitigation measures to consider when rebuilding. Provide mold and mildew remediation guidance and information on the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in coordination with appropriate State agencies (e.g. SCDHEC, SCDNR, and SCEMD).

#### **B. Local Responsibilities**

1. Submit a request through the State for FEMA to activate a DRC to assist survivors
2. Recommend site(s) for the DRC(s)

3. Facilitate coordination between the facility owner and FEMA as necessary. **NOTE:** The MOU must be signed by the owner of facility. The county should not sign a MOU for a property it does not own

### **C. Facility Responsibilities**

1. Sign an MOU (or GSA lease, as applicable) with FEMA. **NOTE:** The MOU should ONLY be signed by FEMA and the facility owner
2. Negotiate any costs the facility will expect FEMA to cover prior to the MOU being signed and DRC opened

## **III. IDENTIFICATION OF SITES**

The need to establish DRCs early in the disaster is a major priority for the State and FEMA. According to the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, there is an increased expectation that DRCs will be open for business within days of a declaration. To facilitate individuals in getting information and assistance, the DRC Coordination Task Force will coordinate with the State Individual Assistance Officer, FEMA IABD, and the local official to establish an appropriate number of DRCs in the disaster area in a timely manner.

### **A. Pre-disaster Identification**

FEMA has established guidelines for determining the suitability of a site to serve as a DRC. During a disaster, FEMA conducts inspections of every facility before establishing a DRC. To allow for rapid deployment of DRCs to an area where a disaster has occurred, Counties should pre-identify locations that meet the FEMA requirements.

1. Counties should identify potential DRC sites with SCEMD assistance.
2. Counties should conduct site visits using the SC DRC Pre-Identification Checklist to determine the suitability of the site with SCEMD assistance.
3. Each County should pre-identify a minimum two fixed facilities and one mobile site.
4. Counties should review and update their DRC site lists annually.
5. SCEMD will maintain a master list of pre-identified locations and share it with FEMA region IV.
6. To the extent possible, DRCs should not be co-located with sites being used for DSNAP, MARCs, Points of Distribution (PODs) and shelters.

### **B. Post-disaster Identification**

During a disaster the need for additional DRC sites may occur

1. SDRCGS will work with local officials to identify additional possible locations for DRCs
2. FEMA may provide technical assistance in identifying potential sites prior to deploying GSA to lease a space

## **IV. OPERATIONS**

### **A. Activation of Sites**

1. DRCCTF will inspect the proposed location to assess suitability based on FEMA requirements
2. The appropriate MOU or GSA lease is signed between FEMA and the owner of the location. (See Sample DRC MOU). This is sample language and the actual MOU used in any given disaster may differ.
3. DRCCTF will begin preparation for opening
4. DRCCTF will coordinate with State PIO and FEMA EA to release the DRC opening announcement

## **B. Management of Sites**

A FEMA appointed DRC manager for each DRC will be responsible for the establishment and daily operations of their DRC and ensuring it is properly staffed with trained personnel. Additional oversight may be provided by the appointment of State DRC managers. DRC staffing includes representatives from appropriate Federal, State, Local, tribal, and voluntary agencies to include those listed below.

### **1. Agencies that may be located at the DRCs:**

#### **a. Federal Partners:**

- i. U.S. Farm Service Agency – Provides assistance and information to disaster survivors relative to low-interest disaster loans to cover agricultural and farm losses.
- ii. U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) – Provides low-interest disaster loans to cover losses to individuals, businesses, and certain non-profit organizations.
- iii. National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) – If not located in the DRC, FEMA mitigation representatives will provide information on NFIP.
- iv. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) – Provides tax information and assistance to individuals, businesses, and non-profit organizations.
- v. Veteran’s Administration (VA) – Provides assistance to include death benefits, pensions, insurance settlements, and adjustments to VA insured home mortgages.

#### **b. State, Local, and Tribal Partners:**

- i. SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) – Assists survivors with unemployment compensation claims and Disaster Unemployment Assistance (if activated).
- ii. SC Department of Insurance (SCDOI) – Provides technical assistance with insurance policies, claims, and refers complaints to Office of Consumer Services (as requested).
- iii. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) – Provides survivors with information about the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) as well as outreach assistance for all types of disasters.

- iv. SC Department of Revenue (SCDOR) – Provide tax information and assistance to individuals, businesses, and non-profit organizations.
- v. South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) – Provide assistance and information to disaster survivors relative to low-interest disaster loans to cover agricultural and farm losses.
- vi. SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority (SC Housing) – Provides information and guidance on available state housing resources available to individuals displaced by disaster. (e.g. SCHousingSearch.com, Housing Trust Fund, SC HELP, etc.).
- vii. SC Department of Mental Health (SCDMH) – Provides mental health services through crisis counselors (if activated).
- viii. SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) – Provides information regarding public health and environmental concerns specific to the disaster.

**c. Non-Governmental Organizations: (may be located at a MARC)**

- i. Members of SCVOAD and NVOAD
- ii. Other voluntary agencies and non-governmental agencies

**2. Hours of Operation**

Initial operating hours as well as any subsequent decision to scale down DRC hours will be determined jointly by the FDRCGS and SDRCGS. Any changes will be announced through the Joint Information System/Center (FEMA EA/ State PIO).

**V. DEMOBILIZATION**

DRCs are intended to be temporary facilities. DRCs operate long enough to meet the immediate individual assistance needs of a given community until more sustainable recovery resources become available (e.g. long term recovery groups, case management, etc.). Planning for demobilization should begin as soon as the decision is made to activate DRCs. A DRC may be converted into a Disaster Loan Outreach Center (DLOC) on the recommendation of the SBA and with the concurrence of the local officials and the DRCCTF.

**A. Criteria that may indicate closure**

One or more of the following factors may indicate that the community recovery needs are being met through other sources and the DRC can be demobilized:

- Average daily visitor traffic for a 6 day period is 25 visitors or less.
- A DRC has 10 or less visitors for 3 consecutive days.
- The owners of the DRC location require the space be vacated. (DRCCTF and Local official may consider opening an alternate DRC if necessary).
- Local official requests DRC closure.

**B. Notifications of Closure**

1. It is essential to give survivors the maximum amount of time to utilize the resources provided by a DRC. Internal and external notifications must begin 72 hours and press releases must go out 48 hours in advance of closure.
2. In anticipation of concluding DRC operations in the State, public notification should begin as far in advance as possible. This will allow survivors the opportunity to conclude ongoing business with the DRC and ensure the continuum of care remains intact by connecting survivors with alternative recovery resources in the community.