

A first-time Shelter Manager takes on roles and responsibilities and addresses issues with understandably limited experience. First-time Shelter Managers are selected because they have completed Shelter Manager training, have experience as a supervisor, or are receiving a temporary field promotion.

Immediately Upon Being Named Shelter Sites Manager:

- Get the name and contact information for the HQ Sheltering Manager or District Sheltering Coordinator that you report to. This is your primary contact for direction, advice, supplies, and workers and where to escalate difficult issues.
- Print or download the following guidance documents from the [Sheltering Toolkit](#) on The Exchange:
 - *Operating a Shelter Job Tool*—activities that you must complete
 - *Operating a Shelter Checklist*—a short reminder list of the Operating a Shelter Job Tool
- Quickly look at the list of [Sheltering Tip Sheets](#) in the [Sheltering Toolkit](#) on The Exchange so you know which may be helpful if issues or challenges arise.

Arriving at a Shelter That is Opening:

- Introduce yourself to the facility representative, exchange contact information, and establish a working relationship. As soon as possible get a copy of the *Facility Use Agreement* from the HQ Sheltering Manager/ District Sheltering Coordinator. It will indicate what areas can/cannot be used and what services the facility provides.
- Determine where to establish reception, registration, dormitory, and feeding areas.
- Quickly size up the staff and ask them about their GAPs, experience, and abilities. Record their contact information.
- Organize the workforce; assign workers to reception, registration, and dormitory tasks immediately. Put strong, experienced volunteers at reception/registration.
- Locate the shelter trailer and inspect the supplies. The trailer should have a shelter management/administration kit with registration and other basic forms and startup supplies.
- Direct teams to unpack and inventory supplies and set-up reception, registration, dormitory, and feeding areas.
- Use the *Operating a Shelter Job Tool* and *Checklist* to remind you of set up and opening tasks.

Operating the shelter:

- The priority is to provide a safe and clean location for clients and address their current needs. Let that priority guide how you operate the shelter.

- Only allow residents and authorized persons into the dormitory area. It is a private space.
- Contact the HQ Sheltering Manager or District Sheltering Coordinator **immediately** if any of these occur:
 - Unaccompanied or separated children arrive;
 - Media or public officials arrive;
 - Law enforcement or government officials want to review registration or other shelter records;
 - Any client or worker is injured in the shelter;
 - The facility operator, emergency manager, or law enforcement try to keep people out of the shelter;
 - The shelter or clients are endangered in any way, including approaching flood waters, wildfire, or lack of security.
- The HQ Sheltering Manager or District Sheltering Coordinator arranges feeding with the Feeding activity. Inform them of how many meals you need to serve each day. Check with clients to determine if they have special dietary requirements (like vegetarian, gluten free, diabetic, kosher, or halal).
- Do the best you can do with the supplies, resources, training, and guidance you have. You can request additional supplies and resources through your HQ Sheltering Manager/District Sheltering Coordinator. They may take 72 hours to arrive.
- As issues and challenges arise use the job tools and Tip Sheets on the [Sheltering Toolkit](#) on The Exchange to obtain guidance. If you cannot find the answers, call the HQ Sheltering Manager/District Sheltering Coordinator **at any time of day**.
- Doing anything for the first time may create uncertainty or anxiety. Take time to breathe deeply, be flexible, and smile.
- Your workforce and the staff at DRO Headquarters and the District Office are there to help you. No one expects you to know everything as a first time Shelter Manager. You are expected to be asking a lot of questions.
- Lead your team to provide a safe and clean location for clients to begin recovering as they figure out what they will do next.