



Tip Sheet: Managing Shelter Staff Conflicts

Disaster Cycle Services Job Tools
Response/Sheltering

Shelter Supervisors and Shelter Managers must be aware of negative interactions between their staff members. Conflicts may arise due to fatigue, incompatible personalities, cultural differences, and a variety of other factors. Shelter Supervisors and Shelter Managers must maintain a positive working environment to provide the best possible client service and staff well-being. All those supervising staff are responsible for addressing conflicts with corrective or disciplinary action as quickly as possible.

Action Determined by Type of Conflict

- The Shelter Manager or Shift Supervisor are responsible for addressing and mediating staff conflicts.
- The nature and level of conflict determines the appropriate action to be taken by the supervisor/manager.
- Staff supervisors should address all reports of disagreements, differences, and minor conflicts.
- Use conflict resolution and progressive discipline approaches to handle minor disputes.
- More serious or repeated issues require more formalized disciplinary response and action by Staffing and Volunteer Services (See [Volunteer Services Issue Resolution Matrix Steady and Operational States](#)). The steps are verbal warning, written warning, and release from operation. Document all conflicts in the Manager's Log. Determination to release from operation must be made with Staff Relations.
- Staff supervisors must immediately report conflicts involving harassment, abuse, or violence to Staffing, Staff Relations, or Staff Advocate for advice and assistance. These actions require discipline and may require the removal of a staff member (See [Disaster Operation Personnel Issues Standards and Procedures](#)).

Discuss and Solve Conflict with the Individuals Involved

- When learning of a conflict, the Shelter Supervisor or Shelter Manager should speak separately to each individual involved to better understand the perspectives, issues, and concerns of each person.
- Remain calm, use active listening techniques, and don't take sides.
- Determine the nature and causes of the conflict and work to defuse it.
- Request Disaster Mental Health staff meet individually with each staff member to determine their levels of fatigue and stress.
- Hold a joint meeting to mediate the issue.
- Strive for an effective resolution. Ask those involved for possible solutions.
- Remind individuals that their behavior can distress clients, staff and violates policy.
- Document actions and discussions in the confidential Manager's Log.

Sheltering Tip Sheets provide pointers for handling issues within the guidance outlined in Sheltering Standards and Procedures and other Red Cross doctrine. Please send feedback to sheltering@redcross.org.

Conflicts Involving Supervisors/Managers

Conflicts involving Shelter Supervisors and Shelter Managers are particularly concerning because they often rapidly affect morale, reduce effectiveness of client service, and can reflect significantly on the Red Cross.

Report conflicts between staff and supervisors to the Shelter Manager, who should address these issues immediately.

Report conflicts involving the Shelter Manager to the Staff Advocate, Staff Relations, and Sheltering Manager/Coordinator.

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