

Frequently asked questions by DOVE members:

1. I paid my annual dues for Escapees and for DOVE membership. What do I do now?
Answer: Join a Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC), if you have not done that yet. You must be a member of a Chapter of the American Red Cross.
2. Which Chapter should I join?
Answer: Consider joining the ARC Chapter in the area that you spend the most time in each year. If you travel extensively, choose whichever Chapter you wish. Talk to the Volunteer Coordinator of the Chapter you are considering, make sure they are familiar with the DOVE MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) posted on CrossNet (<https://crossnet.redcross.org>) in the Partner area and also on our website at www.dovebof.org . You may ask if they have DOVEs currently based with them. All Chapters should be “DOVE friendly.”
3. Who are some of the Red Cross Chapters that have a good working relationship with DOVEs?
Answer: We have had good relations with Elkhart, Indiana; Dallas, Houston and Corpus Christi in Texas; Sacramento, California, Knoxville, Tennessee and many other chapters. Go to <http://www.dovebof.org/maps/ShowC.pl> to see where other DOVEs are members.
4. Why do I need to be a member of a Red Cross Chapter, if I’m traveling full-time as a DOVE?
Answer: The Chapter you join will maintain your records. All your training classes, deployments, and other information will be recorded and tracked by your home Chapter. We encourage all DOVEs to serve in their home chapter as much as possible.
5. How do I get deployed?
Answer: Ask your ARC Home Chapter Volunteer Coordinator for an application to become a DSHR (Disaster Services Human Resources) member. NOTE: THIS APPLICATION IS SEPARATE FROM YOUR APPLICATION TO BECOME A GENERAL VOLUNTEER. YOU CANNOT BE DEPLOYED UNTIL YOU ARE APPROVED AND HAVE TAKEN THE NECESSARY COURSES, AS A DSHR MEMBER.
 - a) Fill out and return your application, to the Chapter, to become a member of the DSHR system.
 - b) On Line, Complete the required background check at <http://www.mybackgroundcheck.com> . (You must provide your social security number for your background check—there are no exceptions to this rule. Your information will be confidential , will only be used to check your background, and will be deleted as soon as your background check is complete.
 - c) Obtain and complete a Health Status Report, obtained from your Chapter (you will need complete this form each year and submit to your chapter. They must record this information in your national DSHR information records.

- d) Complete the basic classes that your Home Chapter requires in Disaster Services to become a DSHR member.
- e) Choose 3 Groups and Activities (if not familiar, please view on our web site) you want to **serve** in if your are deployed. Your Chapter must approve your choices and make sure that you have completed the requirements to work in your preferred activities.
- f) Complete any additional requirements from the Chapter, such as CPR training, First Aid—Chapters may differ in regard their basic requirements Disaster Services requirements.
- g) Your home chapter will issue you an official DSHR ID badge and DSHR number. You must take this badge with you on deployments and the number is your national identification. The badge contains your photo, so be prepared to give them a photo or have them take one.

6. What do I do next?

Answer: Ask your Volunteer Coordinator to give you:

- a. Approval and a user name and password to have access to CrossNet, American Red Cross member information hub, and the Neighborhood (this houses current information regarding Groups and Activities).
- b. User name and password to use SABA, our latest Learning Management System. Wherein once can take online classes and track your training.
- c. User name and password to update information on your availability for deployment (<https://dshr.redcross.org>).

7. Will my Home Chapter call me if I'm needed in for a DRO (Disaster Relief Operation).

Answer: No. National Red Cross will select volunteers for deployment from the availability information posted on <https://dshr.redcross.org>. If National selects you, your Home Chapter will be notified and you will be contacted either by National or your Home Chapter. **YOU MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE BY KEEPING YOUR AVAILABILITY INFORMATION CURRENT ONLINE**, preferably every 3 months.

8. How long will I be deployed?

Answer: All National deployments are mandatory 2 weeks, with the expectation that you will work for 12 hours per day, for 7 days with the 8th day off. You may request an extension of your deployment if the disaster operation is still active. Your request will be reviewed by your Home Chapter.

9. What should I take with me if I am deployed?

Answer: There is a Go-Kit list on www.dovebof.org that will give you information.

10. I've been contacted to deploy to a DRO, I'm planning on taking my RV as a DOVE, now what?

Answer: You must obtain written approval by the Volunteer Coordinator or Emergency Response Director in your Chapter of Record, with specific written approval to drive your RV to the disaster site, before you are deployed. There are strict guidelines for being deployed as a DOVE. Please review our MOU on file located on our web site.

11. Is it true that ARC is not deploying people outside of their home area now?

Answer: In general, yes. ARC is being more strategic in how it deploys workers. Volunteers are activated according to their proximity to the disaster and the need for their designated activity. This allows Red Cross to practice good stewardship of donated funds.

12. How can I increase my chances for being deployed?

Answer: The best way to increase your chances of being deployed are:

- a. Make sure your paper and on-online DSHR Profile are up to date!! This is your responsibility as a DSHR member. And you will only be deployed if you indicate you are available for deployment on the on-line system.
- b. Take disaster training classes —the more you cross train , the more useful you will be as a DSHR member.
- c. Choose your 3 Groups and Activities in the most-needed areas. The first people to be deployed are generally shelter volunteers, client caseworkers, staffing personnel, and safety personnel. Be sure you have completed all requirements for your listed activities.

13. What can I do between disaster deployments to become a better disaster volunteer?

Answer: Spend as much face-time in your Home Chapter or the Chapter near to your current location, providing assistance any way you can. Serve on a Disaster Action Team (DAT) Become a HAM radio operator. Volunteer to help raise funds. Please view: https://crossnet.redcross.org/chapters/services/disasters/train/train_disaster_workers.asp to learn about more disaster training opportunities. Train to become a ARC disaster instructor yourself. The list of ways you can serve and become more skillful are endless.

14. It seems like there's a lot of red tape and confusion in all this process. Am I right in thinking that?

Answer: Simplicity and effective communication continue to be significant improvement opportunities for the ARC. The good news is we, DOVE Board Members, can help walk you through the process of serving the American Red Cross.

15. I have many other questions. Who should I ask about them?

Answer: Please feel free to contact any of the DOVE Board Members or any DOVEs you encounter in your travels. If we don't know the answer immediately, we'll find the answer and get back to you as soon as possible.

You can also find additional good information on our web site, www.dovebof.org, on CrossNet at <https://crossnet.redcross.org>, and on many Red Cross Neighborhoods. (<https://neighborhoods.redcross.org/response/default.aspx>). The Neighborhoods are

web sites that provide current information of interest to each activity. You can join any of them except for a few that have restrictions, such as Health Services, and Disaster Mental Health.

We're glad you're part of the DOVE BOF, and we want you to enjoy working together with us and the American Red Cross, as we reach out to disaster clients to provide food, shelter, comfort, and hope.