

Memo: Hurricane Harvey Donations

We have received numerous inquiries regarding where and how to make donations to the victims of hurricane Harvey in Texas. Other than the donations of cash through the American Red Cross, no donation system has been established for "hard" goods. The first responders and volunteers are still responding to rescue missions and operating shelters and do not have the assets at this time to perform donation management.

Donation management is a very large and difficult process. It requires large amounts of space to sort and categorize donations and large numbers of people to sort, issue and deliver "hard" donations. As we have seen in the news, space for shelters alone is at a premium and there is currently a shortage of people to operate the shelters never mind operating donation centers. Even if they had the space and people to open shelters, the victims have no place to store the donations while waiting to get back into their homes. Sending "hard" donations to Texas at this time would create more of a problem for both the incident commanders and victims and they already have more problems than they can handle.

When managing a large scale disaster such as what the people in Texas are doing, there is a process and order that needs to be followed. It's like building a house, you don't order the building materials before the land is cleared; you don't order the concrete before the foundation is dug and formed; and you don't install the roof before the walls are constructed. Please allow the incident commanders, first responders and volunteers to determine exactly what is needed, where to send them and to prepare a donation management and distribution process before sending your "hard" donations to Texas.

Charlie Coggins, Director