

How are disaster response organizations coping with disasters and COVID-19 precautions at the same time?

Disaster organizations, including the Churches of Scientology Disaster Response, contend with wildfires, hurricanes, windstorm and the threat of getting COVID.

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, September 17, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- By Rev. Susan Taylor, National Director, [Churches of Scientology Disaster Response](https://www.churchesofscientology.com/disaster-response) (CSDR)

While COVID-19 has restricted many activities around the country, disaster response organizations continue to think outside the box on figuring out how to deploy volunteers to help with the most recent weather disasters of the California wildfires, Hurricane Laura along the Gulf coast and the Category 2 windstorm in the Salt Lake City area.



A family of Volunteer Ministers help to rebuild a home destroyed by fire.

“

If we all help in some meaningful way in collaboration with others at the disaster sites we will pull through. This is the American way.”

Rev. Susan Taylor, National Director CSDR.

Federal Emergency Management Agency Voluntary Agency Liaison (FEMA VAL) reports have highlighted several organizations and what they have been able to do despite the social distancing and masking restraints.

My colleagues across the country are on constant alert. We can't help but wonder: What can we expect next?

In California they dread looking out the window to see what they call the red devil sky, and are saddened by the incredible losses across the state from the horrible fires.

The question remains, what can be done so we can still be safe during this pandemic?

The Church of Scientology [Volunteer Ministers](#) and Churches of Scientology Disaster Response (CSDR) have continued much of their work from home working the phones offering emotional and spiritual care.

In other cases, it has been important to respond in person at food banks distributing needed supplies to the first responders attending to the northern California fires. One team of volunteers reached out to neighbors whose homes were destroyed by fire and worked out ways to help them rebuild. Since the team members were all members of the same family it made the logistical challenges of taking COVID-19 precautions much easier.

Following Hurricane Laura in Louisiana, volunteers deployed in small teams to help with cleanup, noting that COVID-19 has made things much more difficult. They commented that prior to the pandemic most disaster response organizations would respond in numbers of 50 to 100 or even more, but this is not possible now. Most areas were not opening up shelters due to the pandemic protocols and those needing shelter went to hotels. Because the hotels were filled with evacuees there were fewer accommodations available for the deployed disaster response teams.

CSDR has found the best way to mobilize is with small teams of local volunteers to help as best they can and not rely too much on out-of-state assistance. Each team has the duty and challenge to ensure that hygiene protocols of hand washing, masks, and social distancing remain a priority



Church of Scientology Volunteer Ministers sanitizing drinks to be delivered to first responders at the Northern California fires.



Red devil sky engulfs the landscape

not only within their own team but with those they are helping.

Each organization figures out how to respond in its own unique way. Another CSDR team had hygiene kits made in one state which were then personally delivered to Louisiana by a small team driving across country.

The recent Salt Lake City windstorm appeared out of the blue. My

counterpart, Deputy Director of CSDR Joava Good, could not believe what she saw on the media and rushed out to do an assessment of the damage in her area. She said, "These last few weeks have been almost overwhelming with the fires in California, hurricane in Louisiana, unpredicted windstorms in my home town and now the Gulf Coast faces Hurricane Sally. Being prepared is a must for all of us. You never know what will occur. All we know is that we must believe that 'something can be done about it.' That is the motto of our Volunteer Ministers. So, we grab our disaster bags and respond as we can to help others."

COVID-19 has affected all walks of life and all sectors making things much more challenging. But with these challenges disaster volunteers continue to work from home or in the best way they can to help those in need – neighbors and strangers alike. There is always something that can be done about it. We can make hygiene kits or cleanup kits or we can offer donations of funds in order to help.

"If we all help in some meaningful way in collaboration with others at the disaster sites we will pull through. This is the American way," said Rev. Susan Taylor, National Director CSDR.

<https://www.volunteerministers.org/news.html>

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Northern California home totally destroyed by fire

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