

2026

State of Alaska
Mass Care Group (MCG)
Operations Guide



**Mass Care Group
Operations Guide
Version 7, February 2026**

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose. Mass care is the coordinated, multi-agency delivery of essential services to individuals affected by disasters, aiming to reduce immediate suffering and stabilize impacted communities. The purpose of this Mass Care Operations Guide (MCOG) is to outline standard protocols and strategies for delivering state-supported mass care throughout Alaska.

Scope. Disasters resulting in evacuations, displacement of individuals and companion animals, and damage to housing and infrastructure may require mass care services. These disasters may stem from natural hazards or human-caused incidents. Regardless of the cause, mass care begins at the local level. Local governments, incident management teams, Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), and local response organizations initiate and coordinate care using available resources and mutual aid. When local capabilities are exceeded, the State of Alaska activates its mass care operations to support affected communities.

This MCOG applies to all State of Alaska disaster response and recovery activities, including field deployments and operations under a federal disaster declaration or within a Joint Field Office (JFO) coordinated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Depending on the nature and scale of the incident, specific mass care functions may be managed as separate operational components: Sheltering, Animal Services, Volunteer and Donations Management, Feeding, Emergency Supply Distribution, Family Reunification, and Human Services. Each of these areas is supported by a dedicated operations guide aligned under the broader MCOG framework (see Organization section).

Considerations for individuals with Access and Functional Needs are embedded throughout every phase of state mass care operations and addressed within each specific operations guide.

Integration with Alaska’s Emergency Operations Plan and State Emergency Operations Center – Mass Care Group. The Mass Care Group (MCG) operates under the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to oversee mass care coordination across Alaska. This MCOG aligns with the Alaska State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and is compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The MCG consists of representatives from key agencies and organizations identified in Annex K of the EOP.

The MCG directs delivery of mass care services outlined in the EOP, including Annex K (Mass Care), Annex N (Evacuation), Annex M (Pet Evacuation and Sheltering), and Annex O (Volunteer and Donations Management).

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Overall Concept. Mass care services are designed to reduce the immediate suffering caused by disaster events. These services are provided equitably and without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, age, gender identity, disability status, or socioeconomic condition. State-level mass care operations are conducted in partnership with and in support of local jurisdictions, while also respecting the unique cultural and geographic characteristics of each community.

Effective mass care operations rely on integrated coordination across agencies and jurisdictions. These efforts are aligned with the broader State disaster response framework. Since government resources alone may not fully meet the needs of all survivors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), volunteer groups, and faith-based partners play a critical role in delivering services.

At the State level, the Mass Care Group (MCG) coordinates mass care activities, supported by specialized task forces as needed. The MCG supports local jurisdictions and operational partners by allocating resources, setting priorities, and maintaining statewide situational awareness. This Mass Care Operations Guide (MCOG) serves as the operational blueprint for the MCG mission.

Operational Priorities. MCG priorities include:

- Coordinate statewide mass care services in support of local jurisdictions, agencies, and service organizations.
- Support establishment and operation of evacuation centers.
- Support emergency sheltering operations.
- Support feeding missions, including mass and long-term feeding.
- Support emergency supply and commodity distribution.
- Support delivery of health, emotional, and spiritual care services, including crisis counseling.
- Support transition from sheltering to temporary or permanent housing.
- Support family reunification efforts and tools.
- Support volunteer coordination and donation management.
- Support pet and animal sheltering and care in disasters.
- Provide survivors with timely access to disaster assistance, family status, and property information.
- Facilitate the transition from response to recovery phases.

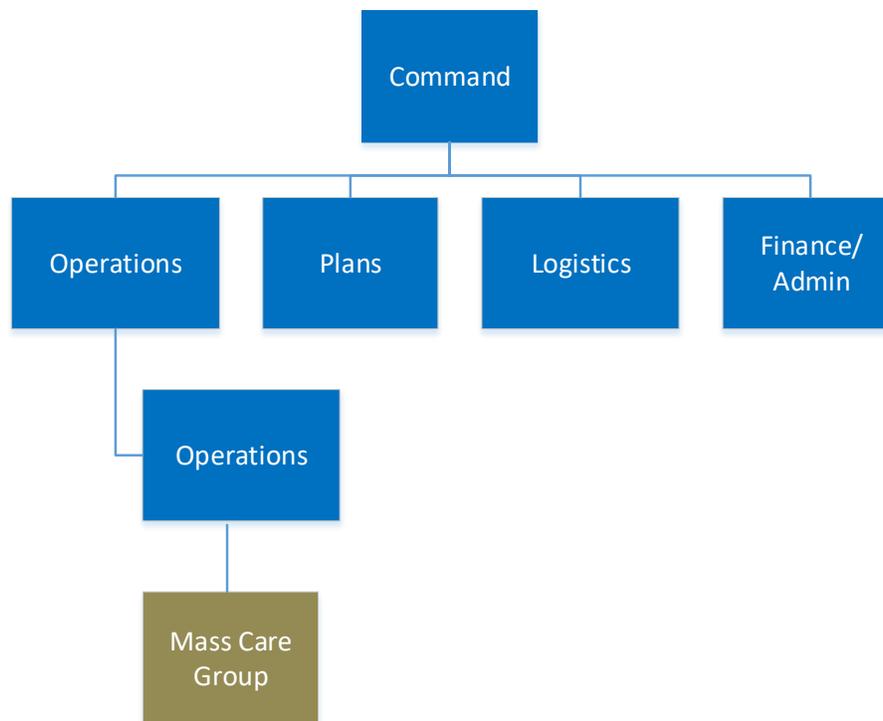
Strategic Approaches. To fulfill its mission, the MCG may implement strategies including:

- Collecting, analyzing, and sharing statewide situational awareness for all mass care-related functions (see "Situation Information").
- Offering technical assistance, resource coordination, needs assessments, and planning support to local communities and partner organizations (see "Coordination with Local Operations").
- Coordinate and deploy mass care equipment, supplies, personnel, and services from MCG partner agencies or other available sources (see below under Resource Provision).

ORGANIZATION

The MCG, pursuant to this guide, operates within the organization of the SEOC, according to standard organizational principles of NIMS Incident Command System (ICS). The MCG is part of the SEOC Operations Section for coordination of mass care services within the overall state disaster response and recovery (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Basic SEOC Organization



SEOC Operations Section. The Mass Care Group (MCG) operates under the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) Operations Section, which is responsible for managing resource requests and directing both SEOC and field operations. The Operations Section may be structured into Branches, Divisions, or Groups, each with specific responsibilities for supporting field operations and coordinating with local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), incident commands, or response teams.

The MCG serves as the designated group under Operations for coordinating statewide mass care services. Depending on the nature and scale of the incident, the MCG may fall under a specific Branch within the Operations Section's Incident Command System (ICS) structure.

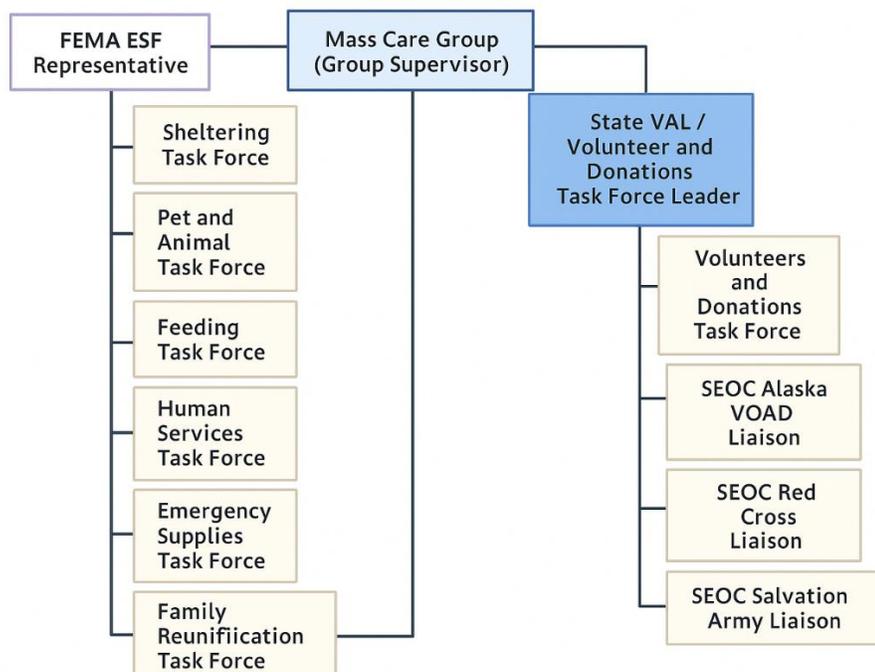
When necessary, specific mass care service areas—such as sheltering, feeding, or family reunification—may be organized into task forces reporting to the MCG (see Figure 2). If a task force is not established for a needed function, that responsibility remains with the MCG. Each mass care function or task force operates according to its own operations guide.

Geographic or function-specific sub-units may also be formed and aligned under any relevant part of the Operations Section. The structure and size of the mass care organization may shift as incident complexity evolves. Initially focused on response, Operations transitions to recovery coordination as conditions stabilize.

Although this guide outlines mass care at the state level, local governments may also conduct their own mass care operations under local incident command. These efforts remain locally led, with the State providing coordination and support as needed.

In the event of a federally declared disaster and the establishment of a Joint Field Office (JFO), FEMA mass care representatives are aligned with State counterparts within a unified JFO structure to coordinate response and recovery efforts.

Figure 2 – Basic MCG Organization



MCG Leadership.

Mass Care Group Supervisor / State Mass Care Coordinator – The Mass Care Group Supervisor (MCGS) serves as the State Mass Care Coordinator, providing leadership and oversight for all mass care operations. This role is the primary point of contact for coordinating mass care services and leading the Mass Care Group (MCG). The MCGS supervises the Voluntary Agency Liaison and any assigned functional task force leaders. This position facilitates coordination with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on behalf of the State and manages communications and collaboration with the SEOC Operations Section and Command and General Staff. A Deputy may be assigned to support this role. This position is staffed by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM). Mass Care Group Supervisor / State Mass Care Coordinator –

Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) – The VAL collaborates with the Mass Care Group Supervisor (MCGS) to coordinate mass care support efforts from key voluntary organizations, including the Alaska Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (AKVOAD), the American Red Cross (ARC), and The Salvation Army. AKVOAD represents the collective of state-level volunteer disaster response agencies. When a Volunteers & Donations Task Force is activated, the VAL serves as its Task Force Leader. This position is staffed by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM). Operational guidance is outlined in the *Volunteers and Donations Operations Guide*.

Sheltering Task Force Leader – A Sheltering Task Force is activated when disaster shelter operations become complex and require enhanced coordination. Leadership for this task force is provided by the ARC or another agency designated by the MCG. Guidance for this function is provided in the *Sheltering Support Operations Guide*.

Pet and Animal Task Force Leader – When an incident requires state-level coordination for the care of pets and service animals affected by a disaster, the Pet and Animal Task Force is activated. This task force is led by the Office of the State Veterinarian within the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC). Functional guidance is outlined in the *Pet and Animal Support Operations Guide*.

Feeding Task Force Leader – A Feeding Task Force is established when large-scale feeding operations are required. The Salvation Army or another organization designated by the MCG provides the Task Force Leader. Operational details are included in the *Feeding Support Operations Guide*.

Human Services Task Force Leader – When a disaster requires coordinated delivery of human services, including health, mental health, and spiritual care, a Human Services Task Force is activated. Leadership is provided by the Alaska Department of Health (ADH, formerly DHSS). Detailed operational procedures are provided in the *Human Services Support Operations Guide*.

Volunteers and Donations Task Force Leader – When managing volunteers and unsolicited donations becomes necessary, the Volunteers & Donations Task Force is activated. The VAL serves as Task Force Leader. Operational guidance is provided in the *Donations and Volunteer Management Support Operations Guide*.

Emergency Supply Distribution Task Force – When emergency commodity distribution is required (e.g., water, blankets, hygiene kits), the Emergency Supply Distribution Task Force is activated. The MCG appoints the Task Force Leader. Guidance is available in the *Emergency Supply Distribution Support Operations Guide*.

Family Reunification Task Force – When coordination is needed to assist displaced individuals and unaccompanied minors reconnect with loved ones, the Family Reunification Task Force is established. The ARC “Safe and Well” program leader typically serves as Task Force Lead. Guidance for this function is detailed in the *Family Reunification Operations Guide*.

Other Agency and Organization Representatives: Numerous state agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) identified in the State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), Annex K, support state-level mass care operations during disaster response. These organizations collaborate within the Mass Care Group (MCG) to fulfill State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) resource requests and contribute to shared situational awareness. Specific responsibilities for several of these partners are detailed in the corresponding functional task force operations guides.

NOGs with established, pre-identified operational liaisons to the SEOC are:

American Red Cross (ARC)

ARC mass care operations are conducted in coordination with local communities and the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). When present, local ARC districts within the affected area initiate and manage operations in collaboration with community emergency management. These efforts are supported by ARC representatives assigned to local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) or incident commands. In areas without a local ARC district, mass care services are coordinated through the ARC Alaska Region Headquarters in Anchorage, which may activate a local or regional Disaster Relief Operation (DRO) Headquarters.

An ARC liaison is typically embedded at the SEOC to ensure continuous coordination. If an ARC representative is unavailable onsite, coordination occurs remotely via teleconference or email.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army coordinates mass care services in partnership with local communities and the SEOC. Within its service areas, local Salvation Army units respond in coordination with local EOCs or incident command. For areas outside existing service zones, mass care support is managed through the Salvation Army's Alaska Divisional Headquarters in Anchorage, which may deploy a field-based Incident Management Team (IMT) as needed.

A Salvation Army liaison is normally present at the SEOC. If a representative is not physically available, coordination is maintained through virtual means, such as teleconferencing and email.

Alaska Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (AKVOAD)

AKVOAD, the Alaska chapter of the National VOAD, unites multiple voluntary and faith-based organizations to provide coordinated disaster support to survivors. A designated AKVOAD liaison is usually present at the SEOC. In some cases, the ARC or Salvation Army representative may also serve as the AKVOAD liaison. Current AKVOAD member organizations include:

- Adventist Community Services (ACS)
- American Red Cross of Alaska (ARC)
- Catholic Charities USA

- LDS Charities
- Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR)
- Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS)
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)
- The Salvation Army
- Samaritan's Purse
- Team Rubicon
- United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
- United Way of Anchorage
- World Renew

MASS CARE GROUP GENERAL FUNCTIONS

Communications. This plan assumes consistent and reliable communication between the Mass Care Group Supervisor (MCGS), the state-level Mass Care Group (MCG), local mass care operators, and supporting public and private agencies. Due to the dynamic pace of disaster operations and competing organizational priorities, regular coordination will primarily occur via teleconferencing platforms, with limited in-person meetings. See *Appendix 3 – Example Daily Meeting Schedule* for reference. Communication protocols with local communities are detailed in the Coordination with Local Operations section below.

Resource Coordination. The MCG is responsible for coordinating and mobilizing mass care resources in support of local jurisdictions, tribal entities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and state agencies engaged in disaster response. Resources may include Equipment, Commodities, supplies, Personnel, and Contracted or donated services

All resource requests, sourcing, and deployment are managed through the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) resource request process, in alignment with Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) protocols. The MCG, in coordination with SEOC Operations, determines resource allocation priorities based on situational assessments and critical needs—ensuring equitable distribution, including support for individuals with Access and Functional Needs (AFN).

To fulfill operational needs, the MCG may draw upon the following sources:

- State agencies and statewide volunteer organizations
- Mutual aid from unaffected local jurisdictions
- Private sector contracts and emergency procurement mechanisms
- Donated goods and services
- Interstate mutual aid via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)
- International partners through the Pacific Northwest Emergency Management Arrangement (PNEMA)

- Federal assets and programs accessed via:
 - Immediate Response Authority
 - Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA)
 - Resource Request Forms (RRFs)
 - Emergency Support Function (ESF) #6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services, in accordance with the National Response Framework (NRF)

Coordination with Local Operations. Local jurisdictions—including municipal governments, tribal nations, NGO field teams, and agency incident command—maintain operational control of on-the-ground mass care activities. These entities assess local needs and direct tactical deployment of mass care services and resources.

The MCG provides state-level support and coordination, which may include:

- Mass care subject matter expertise
- Surge personnel or strike teams
- Technical assistance
- Operational guidance
- Mobilization of state, interstate, or federal resources
- Supportive services for AFN populations

All support efforts are conducted in alignment with locally defined priorities and in partnership with local emergency management leadership to ensure integrated, survivor-centered service delivery.

Statewide Coordination and SEOC Operations. The primary mission of the Mass Care Group (MCG) is to support local mass care operations. Statewide coordination, prioritization, and situational awareness are managed through the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) via the MCG. Coordination typically occurs through regularly scheduled virtual meetings (e.g., teleconferences or video conferences) with participating mass care agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other partners.

Situation Information Management: The MCG is responsible for collecting, validating, and sharing mass care operational data, which includes survivor counts by location and demographics, shelter populations and operational status, feeding and meal service totals, agency and NGO operational reports, geographic and numerical service coverage, and identification of emerging needs or resource gaps.

This information is used to evaluate strategies, adjust tactics, and track progress toward operational objectives. Data is shared with the SEOC Planning Section / Situation Unit for inclusion in the Incident Situation Report (SITREP) and with the SEOC Public Information Officer (PIO) for public messaging as appropriate.

A daily reporting schedule is typically set by the MCG (e.g., 0800 hrs.) to ensure that information is consolidated before the scheduled MCG coordination call (commonly held at 1000 hrs.) see *Appendix 3: Example Daily Meeting Schedule*.

Shelter Reporting

In Alaska, the American Red Cross (ARC) maintains responsibility for all shelter data entry into the National Shelter System (NSS), regardless of shelter operator. The ARC provides daily reports on open shelters, including location, capacity, and population data, to the MCG and SEOC Planning/Situation Unit. This information is generally provided prior to the SEOC Operational Briefing — see *Shelter Support Operations Guide*.

Feeding Operations Reporting

Agencies and NGOs conducting mass care feeding operations — see *Feeding Support Operations Guide* — must report the number of meals and/or snacks served in the previous 24 hours. The MCG, in collaboration with the SEOC Planning/Situation Unit, consolidates this information to produce a daily statewide feeding operations summary by agency and service location.

Other Mass Care Service Reporting

Task forces and agencies supporting the following functional areas must report daily operational data to the MCG and SEOC Planning/Situation Unit:

- Emergency Supply Distribution – quantities and locations served
- Human Services – clients served, types of services provided (health, emotional, spiritual care, crisis counseling)
- Volunteers & Donations Management – volunteer hours, donations received/distributed
- Pet & Animal Services – animals sheltered, reunited, or provided with emergency care
- Family Reunification – number of cases managed, reunifications completed, and services provided

This data is incorporated into the SITREP and used by SEOC Operations Section to assess strategy, adjust priorities, and address gaps.

Survivor Recovery Assistance Information: includes details on available recovery programs and services, guidance on application and registration procedures for assistance, information on grants and benefits, and resources for replacing vital records and essential documents.

All public messaging is developed with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) considerations to ensure inclusivity for diverse populations, including those who are non-English speaking, individuals with limited English proficiency, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and individuals who are blind or have low vision.

Dissemination Methods May Include:

- SEOC PIO coordination for press releases, media briefings, radio, television, social media, and websites
- Disaster Assistance Centers (DACs) or Recovery Centers (DRCs)
- Information points at family reunification centers, shelters, PODs, or evacuation sites
- Mobile teams conduct feeding operations, wellness checks, individual assistance registration, or survivor outreach

Disaster Assistance / Recovery Centers

When an Individual Assistance (IA) disaster is declared for an area, Disaster Assistance Centers (DACs) – during State declared disasters or, Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC's) – during federally declared disasters – are established in the declared area. The MCG coordinates State Mass Care information, representatives, and services at DACs/DRCs.

The number, size, locations, hours and length of operations of the Centers depend on the size and complexity of the disaster incident, State and Federal declarations, and local requests.

The objective of the Centers is to provide a physical location where disaster survivors can easily access disaster services and information under state or federal IA declarations.

The MSG plays the lead role in establishing and supporting the Centers.

Typically, when an IA disaster is declared, SEOC Operations assigns an IA Branch Director (IABD) to oversee implementation of the Individual Assistance program. The MCGS works with the IABD to support Mass Care in the DACs/DRCs.

Typically, DACs/DRCs are a minimum of three days which may include weekends. After this period staffing is evaluated based upon client needs. DACs/DRCs are demobilized in coordination with the IABD and MSG.

REFERENCES

State of Alaska Emergency Operations Plan, Annex K: Mass Care (ESF #6)
Donations and Volunteer Management Guide
Emergency Supplies Distribution Guide
Feeding Support Operations Guide
Human Services Operations Guide
Pet Sheltering and Evacuation Support Guide
Sheltering Support Operations Guide National Response Framework, ESF 6 Annex – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services

APPENDIX 1 – State MCG Checklist

Other Mass Care Checklists appear in the functional Task Force Operation Guide

SEOC MASS CARE GROUP SUPERVISOR CHECKLIST

✓	Action	Position/ Agency / Organization Supporting
	Establish required Mass Care staffing in SEOC	MCGS
	Assess the complexity of the disaster incident and anticipate Mass Care requirements	MSGS
	Notify Mass Care Group primary participants and request those needed to the SEOC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Red Cross - Salvation Army - VOAD - DHSS - FEMA - OSV 	MCGS
	Conduct a preliminary Mass Care Group Conference Call that briefs the current and anticipated situation while arranging a schedule for subsequent calls.	MSGS
	Assess the need for functional area Mass Care Task Forces.	MCG
	Verify Access and Functional Needs are addressed in all Mass Care operations.	MCG
	Survey available Mass Care resources and identify shortfalls	MCG
	Prepare SEOC resource requests for resource needs	MCGS Taskforce Leaders
	Gain Mass Care situational awareness including numbers and locations of evacuees, sheltered, needing food, etc. and coordinate with SEOC Plans/Situation Unit to record, report and update this information.	MCGS
	Conduct regular Mass Care conference calls	MCGS
	Prepared for Mass Care Demobilization	MCG

APPENDIX 2 – State MCG Checklist

DAC/DRC MASS CARE CHECKLIST

✓	Action	Position/ Agency / Organization Supporting
	In coordination with the Individual Assistance Branch Chief, asses the need for Mass Care services at DACs or DRCs deployment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number and locations of DAC/DRCs - Schedule for deployment - Facilities and their requirements including Access and Functional Needs considerations - Representatives from agencies and organizations to staff 	MCGS, IABD
	In coordination with Individual Assistance Branch Chief consider providing the following programs/services at DAC/DRC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disaster Unemployment and Service Center - Temporary Disaster Unemployment - Disaster Case Management 	MCGS, IABD
	Submit SEOC resource requests required to support DACs/DRCs	MCGS
	Prepared for Center Demobilization	MCG

APPENDIX 3 –Example MCG Daily Meeting Schedule

Time	Activity	Purpose	Participants	Information product submission	Recipients	Responsible for submission
0700	MCG AM meeting	Determine: - MCG Priorities - MCG membership and conference call participants	- MCGS - SEOC - VOAD - Red Cross - Salvation Army - TF Leaders			
0800				Agency Situation Reports	SEOC	Appropriate MCG agencies
				Resource Status report, Meal Count	SEOC Plans/Situation Unit	- ARC - Salvation Army - Food Banks
				Shelter Report	MCGS SEOC	ARC
0830	SEOC Operational Briefing	Operational Briefing	All			
1000	Mass Care Conference Call	- Provide current situation - Determine resource needs and shortfalls - Determine priority of resources -	All			
1100	Tactics meeting	Provide information and requests to OPS/IABD so effective tactics can be developed	MCGS			
1400	Planning Meeting	Provide required inputs to IAP as needed through OPS/IABD or Plans/SITU	MCGS			
1830	MCG PM meeting	Review daily activities; resolve issues;	- MCGS - SEOC - VOAD - Red Cross - Salvation Army - TF Leaders			