

# EMERGENCY SHELTER VOLUNTEER FACT SHEET

Contribute to your community's safety by getting involved in volunteering opportunities at emergency cyclone shelters across the Top End.

## 1. What is an emergency shelter?

Emergency shelters are public buildings that are used by the community as safe accommodation to protect life during emergencies including cyclones and floods.

The Department of Education is responsible for managing emergency shelters and making sure they are suitably resourced in the event of an emergency. Many of our facilities, mostly schools in the Top End, are designated emergency shelters.

The community may use these shelters if they believe that their residence does not meet the National Construction Code of Australia (the code). Emergency shelters must be declared open before they can be used by the public.

## 2. What is an emergency?

"Emergency" means an event that requires a significant coordinated response using the combined resources of the Territory and non-government entities within the Territory, as defined by the *Emergency Management Act 2013*.

## 3. What are a volunteer's required duties at an emergency shelter?

Volunteers will be involved in a number of supporting roles and activities involved in the management of emergency shelters in the event of cyclones, floods, fires and other natural disasters.

These duties may include car park marshalling, sign posting, providing directions to shelter visitors, assisting with shelter communications, maintaining and distributing stores such as food and water, counselling and cleaning common areas. Volunteers will be expected to help in a variety of ways, which are not limited to the above mentioned duties.

## 4. Where can I volunteer?

We are looking for volunteers to assist at the following emergency shelters:

- Berry Springs Primary School
- Casuarina Senior College
- Cox Peninsula Community Government Council Office
- Dripstone Middle School
- Girraween Primary School
- Nightcliff Middle School
- Palmerston Senior College
- Rosebery Middle School
- Supreme Court Building
- Taminmin College
- Marrara Stadium
- Hindu Society Malak

**5. Who will I be helping?**

You will be helping anyone who uses a Department of Education-managed emergency shelter. This could include young children, adults, retirees, the elderly, people from a range of cultural backgrounds and people with disabilities or minor injuries.

**6. When will I be required to perform my duties as a volunteer?**

During a Cyclone Watch you will be required to be on standby to assist at your nominated emergency shelter. You will be advised by the appropriate Shelter Manager when you are required at that shelter.

**7. What information and training will be provided?**

You will be provided with a half day of training about how a shelter operates during an event. This training will provide you with an understanding of how to manage the various scenarios you could may encounter at an emergency shelter. The training will be provided at no cost to you. During the cyclone season regular bulletins are also issued to provide information.

**8. How often will be training provided?**

Annual training is provided prior to commencement of the cyclone season. Each shelter manager will also undertake checks and rehearsals during the cyclone season.

**9. Do I need any experience to be a shelter volunteer?**

You don't need any professional qualifications or experience to be a cyclone shelter volunteer. Volunteering is a great way to give back to your community and learn some new skills that you can apply in your career and in life.

**10. How will I get to the shelter? (Will I need a drivers licence?)**

Most volunteers choose to volunteer at a shelter in reasonable proximity to their residence. Volunteers will need to make their own transport arrangements to meet their individual needs.

**11. Will my travel and lunch expenses be paid?**

Volunteers are advised to be prepared by maintaining an emergency kit and to plan to bring their own food and any other necessities to the shelter.

**12. I have small children: Will I be able to bring them with me to my volunteer position?**

Everyone is welcome at cyclone shelters, and this includes your children. We just ask that you ensure that appropriate plans are in place for another carer, parent and / or guardian to look after your children while you are working as a volunteer.

**13. How safe is volunteering at a shelter?**

Although volunteering at a shelter is not without its risks, all cyclone shelters are built in accordance with the Building Code of Australia, cyclone shelter code. NT Police manage public order at shelters.

**14. Are volunteers required to have a First Aid Certificate?**

First Aid is managed by St Johns Ambulance at the shelters. However a certificate is highly desirable, not just for volunteering but for also for day to day knowledge of first aid at work and home.

**15. Can I volunteer to work in other regional and remote centres?**

Volunteers are needed to be on standby throughout the cyclone season. However from time to time there is a need to manage the operation of selected public buildings designated as emergency shelters during other emergency events.

Contact your Local Emergency Committee or write to the email address below for more information about volunteering in your local community.

**16. Do I need a Working with Children Clearance (Ochre card) to volunteer at emergency shelters?**

Yes, you will be required to apply for a volunteer Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card). The Department of Education will cover the costs of obtaining the clearance.

**Want more information?**

To register as an emergency shelter volunteer or for more information email [Infrastructure.DET@nt.gov.au](mailto:Infrastructure.DET@nt.gov.au) or visit [www.education.nt.gov.au](http://www.education.nt.gov.au)