# Guidance

## What is a shelter occupant briefing?

A 15 to 20 minute daily briefing where the shelter manager, or deputy shelter manager, shares verified information to ensure shelter occupants are informed about daily activities, rules and available resources. This is designed to facilitate two-way communication where shelter occupants are encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback.

## Who comes?

Briefings are led by the shelter manager or deputy shelter manager. Attendance of shelter occupants is voluntary.

## When should it take place?

At a regular time each day, or whenever significant verified information becomes available and is important to the sheltering community.

## Where should it take place?

In a common area within the shelter that can accommodate all shelter occupants comfortably.

## Why does it take place?

It ensures all shelter occupants are well-informed and provides an opportunity to ask questions, receive important updates and stay connected, which contributes to a sense of routine and calm at the shelter.

## Common Questions

The shelter occupants may ask the following questions:

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| Question | Possible responses |
| What is the current situation?  What is about to happen? | * If known provide an update on the hazard event. * Advise that as soon as additional information is available it will be shared. * If information is unknown, tell the shelter occupants that information will be sought from relevant agency and try to provide a timeframe for when the information will be provided. |
| Is my house damaged?  When can I go home? | * We know how important it is for you to have this information. * The Survey, Impact and Assessment group which is led by the NT Police is currently out in community looking at impacts on homes. As soon as they have information NT Police will come here and share the information they have. |
| Are the roads open? | * Road closure information is available on [Road Report NT](https://roadreport.nt.gov.au/). * If it is a local road, the regional council may provide this information. |
| Who do I talk to if I have questions, concerns or complaints? | * To the shelter manager or any shelter support staff. |
| Are there any food or medical services available? | * Supplies and services are available, please see a shelter support staff member after the briefing. |
| How long will the shelter be open? | * As long as it is needed. * Provide updates as appropriate as significant information is received. |
| Can I contact my family or loved ones? | * You are welcome to use your own devices. * If shelter occupants’ don’t have devices – You may advise that there are not resources to assist with this, but that you will see what can be done to address the need. * If telecommunications are down – provide that information and updates on when they should be operating again. |

## What if I don’t know the answer?

If you don’t know the answer to a question during a shelter occupant briefing, it is important to remain calm and honest. If you can verify the information after the briefings, reassure the shelter occupant that you will seek the necessary information and get back to them.

If the information cannot be verified, it is important to communicate that clearly while reassuring shelter occupants you will share any information that becomes available.

## What should I not say?

Always ensure that any information you share is accurate, verified and publicly available to avoid spreading misinformation, and to maintain trust and transparency.

## What if there is no information to share?

If there is no information to report it is still recommended to host a briefing. This is because reporting no information is still important and doing so also demonstrates the importance of communicating with shelter occupants to shelter staff.

# Shelter occupant briefing – facilitator actions

## Before the meeting

* Where possible, consult with community leaders or representatives on how to address shelter occupants and ask for their assistance in the briefing.
* If required, request community members to assist with translation.

## During the meeting

* Provide any updates or necessary information, allow opportunities for the shelter occupants to ask questions or provide feedback.

### Proposed agenda

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| Agenda item | Discussion points |
| 1. Introduction | * Welcome shelter occupants. * Explain the purpose of the briefing. * Introduce shelter staff. |
| 1. Shelter updates | * + Provide updated information about the situation of the disaster event, resources available and recovery. It is essential that all information shared is verified and publicly available.   + Announce rules and regulations for the facility.   + Announce the daily schedule or changes to the planned schedule.   + Refer to the community notice board if there is one. |
| 1. Discussion | * + Dispel rumours.   + Discuss and resolve problems. |
| 1. Questions and close meeting | * + Ask if the shelter occupants have any questions or feedback.   + Advise of any relevant next steps.   + Thank the shelter occupants for their attention. |

## After the meeting

* Add any new updates to the community notice board and remove any outdated information.