



# Red Cross continues flood relief effort as state prepares for cresting rivers

January 2 2016 9:55 AM



**ST. LOUIS** - With the start of the new year, the **American Red Cross** continues its relief response across major portions of Missouri and adjoining states following region-wide flooding.

Red Cross volunteers have opened shelters to provide a place to sleep, food and medical needs for all persons displaced due to the effects of the current weather.

As of Friday, the Red Cross was operating shelters in Arnold, Ballwin, Cape Girardeau, Carthage and Pacific in Missouri and **Granite City**, Murphysboro and Ullin in Illinois.

Needs are evolving, but so far the Red Cross has provided 448 overnight stays in shelters and 13,018 meals and snacks in response to this flooding.

“As we enter the New Year, Red Cross volunteers continue their around the clock efforts to provide comfort and assistance to their neighbors in need,” said Cindy Erickson, Regional CEO, Red Cross of Eastern Missouri. “Those who lost their homes and security can continue to count on the Red Cross being there until the job is done.”

Red Cross disaster assessment teams are checking the extent of damage in areas where the flood waters have receded to allow safe passage. The Red Cross volunteers will also

be distributing comfort kits and clean-up supplies, and meeting with those affected to help them plan their next steps in the recovery process.

As the rivers crest, and families plan their return home, the Red Cross reminds everyone to be careful. Danger still exists.

## **SAFETY TIPS FOR RETURNING HOME AFTER FLOODING**

- Never drive through water. If caught while driving on a road with rapidly rising water, get out of the vehicle quickly and move to higher ground. **Remember: Turn around, don't drown.**
- Return home only when officials have declared the area safe.
- Before entering your home, look outside for loose power lines, damaged gas lines, foundation cracks or other damage. Parts of your home may have collapsed or are damaged. Approach entrances carefully. See if porch roofs and overhangs have all their supports.
- Watch out for wild animals, especially poisonous snakes that may have come into your home with floodwater.
- If you smell natural or propane gas or hear a hissing noise, leave immediately and call the fire department or 911.
- If power lines are down outside your home, do not step in puddles or standing water.
- Keep children and pets away from hazardous sites and floodwater.
- Materials such as cleaning products, paint, batteries, contaminated fuel and damaged fuel containers are hazardous. Check with local authorities for assistance with disposal to avoid risks.
- During cleanup, wear protective clothing, including rubber gloves and rubber boots.
- Make sure your food and water are safe. Discard items that have come in contact with floodwater, including canned goods, water bottles, plastic utensils and baby bottle nipples. **When in doubt, throw it out.**
- Do not use water that could be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, make ice or baby formula.

- Contact your local or state public health department for specific recommendations for boiling or treating water in your area after a disaster.

- Monitor local radio and television for updated weather reports. Download the free [Red Cross Emergency App](#). Text **GETEMERGENCY** to 90999; search **Red Cross Emergency** in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, or go to [org/apps](#).

**PLEASE HELP NOW** The Red Cross will be helping people affected for weeks and months to come, while at the same time responding to other emergencies, including helping people whose homes are destroyed by fires. The Red Cross responds to nearly 70,000 disasters each year in the United States – the vast majority of which are home fires.

People can help by donating to Red Cross Disaster Relief to support disasters big and small by visiting [redcross.org](#), calling 1-800-REDCROSS or texting the word REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation.

Locally, the American Red Cross of Eastern Missouri is a proud member agency of the United Way, which makes significant investments every year in Red Cross services.

### **About the American Red Cross of Eastern Missouri:**

*Celebrating 97 years of dedicated service in the region, the American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies. Thousands of volunteers and generous donors provide community support services including disaster relief, preparedness efforts, training in lifesaving skills, service to military families and blood services. The Greater St. Louis Region covers St. Louis City, and 66 surrounding counties in Missouri and Illinois. All disaster relief services are free. To learn more about the Red Cross and how you can help, contact your local Red Cross by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS (733-2767) or visit [redcross.org](#).*