



# LIONS **ALERT** PROGRAM

Providing Emergency Response and Assistance



# Disasters occur.



Jesús Jaime

## When they do, people need help.

For decades, Lions have provided humanitarian assistance to people affected by disasters.

Lions remain dedicated to serving their communities, especially in times of crisis.

The mission of the Lions **ALERT** program is:

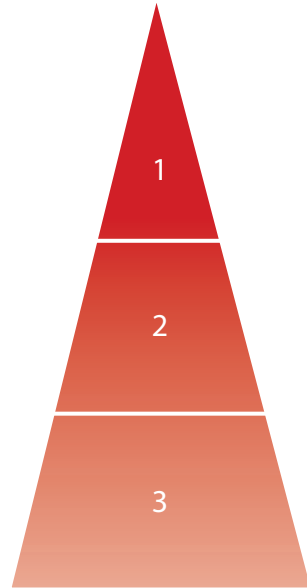
*To provide Lions with a standardized structure and network to deliver needed services to people in emergency situations.*

Some emergencies affect a single family; others affect entire towns, cities, or countries. The severity of an emergency dictates the level of response. Lions can prepare themselves to serve as an important resource or “force multiplier” to aid in addressing needs during a crisis and the consequent phases of an emergency or disaster.

A **Level One emergency** affects a few people. As a local emergency, a local response is needed. A house fire or localized flood may be an example of a Level One emergency. A single Lions club may provide the affected people with assistance and supplies such as drinking water, food, shelter, or clothing.

A **Level Two emergency** affects a larger geographical area. A tornado, hurricane/cyclone, or mudslide may be an example of a Level Two emergency. A coordinated district response may be necessary for a Level Two emergency. At this level, governments and other relief agencies may become involved in relief efforts, as first responders. Districts may be eligible to request a Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) Emergency Grant.

A **Level Three emergency** affects hundreds or thousands of people. A multiple district or several multiple districts can provide aid for victims of a catastrophic event such as a tsunami or an earthquake. Governments and other relief organizations such as the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies would be among the first responders to the disaster and Lions could work alongside these and other relief agencies to provide humanitarian aid to Level Three victims.



## ORGANIZE A LIONS ALERT COMMITTEE

---

Districts and multiple districts can organize Lions **ALERT** committees to respond to emergencies in their respective areas. District governors or council chairpersons can appoint team members including:

- A chairperson/liaison to Lions Clubs International Headquarters
- A vice chairperson
- Committee chairpersons
- A government liaison
- A NGO (non-governmental organization) liaison
- A community liaison
- A media liaison
- A team of emergency response experts/volunteers

**A district/ multiple district Web site** should post information about each team member's responsibilities. The Web site will become the central location for essential information related to management of the emergency.

Members of the district/multiple district Lions **ALERT** committee can include:

- Lions who are experts in providing emergency services
- Lions who are willing to receive training from local agencies in emergency response techniques
- Non-Lion emergency responders such as:
  - Law enforcement personnel
  - Fire fighters
  - Emergency health services providers (paramedics)
  - Health care professionals
  - Public health and welfare workers
  - Aid agency workers
  - Transportation specialists who are familiar with highways, airports, seaports
  - Media representatives
  - Community leaders from local churches, businesses, etc.
  - Leo club members and other young people, including students.

People who share a common bond as emergency service providers are encouraged to form a local **ALERT** Lions club. Emergency preparation can be an excellent way of gaining new Lions club members.

## DEVELOP AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

---

Together, the Lions **ALERT** committee members can develop a plan customized for the needs of their respective area. The plan should identify local risk factors such as flood plains or earthquake fault lines.

The Lions **ALERT** chairperson should contact local authorities to determine whether a community-wide emergency plan already exists. If it does, then Lions should collaborate to identify unmet needs.

The emergency response plan should include specific instructions for coordinating with other emergency management organizations as well as specific training and practice schedules to prepare for the emergency. The Lions **ALERT** committee should put in place procedures to evaluate, and modify, if necessary, their emergency response plan on an annual basis. The committee should also identify a central meeting place that can be used as an operations center.

Effective plans should answer the following questions:

- Who is most likely to be affected by a particular disaster (e.g. a wildfire, hurricane)?
- Who is available to provide immediate response?
- Where can emergency management coordination take place?
- How will the emergency be managed?
- What is the situation? Does it require evacuation or home confinement?
- To what location can people be transported if evacuation is necessary?
- What is the timeline for each action?

Local government and disaster relief agencies (e.g., the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies) can help answer some of these questions. In addition, many emergency agencies, such as fire departments, offer training in emergency procedures such as Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).



There are **four phases of emergency management**. Response plans, where possible, should address all four phases of an emergency. The severity of each situation will determine the level of Lions' response.

**Mitigation (Prevention)** is a cost-efficient method for reducing the impact of hazards through preventative measures.

**Preparedness** involves the development of a plan of action in case of emergency. An emergency operations center and a practiced emergency response plan are two elements of the preparedness phase.

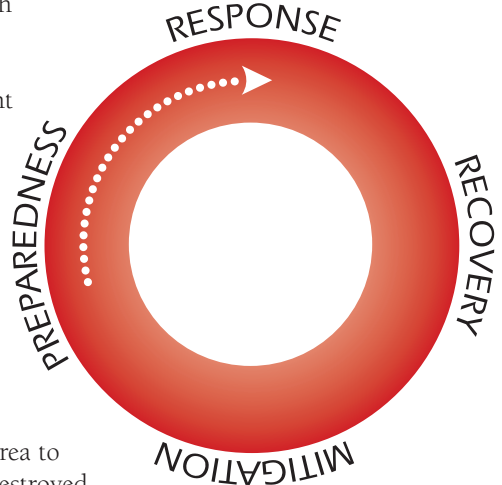
**Response** includes the mobilization of emergency services as defined in the emergency plan.

**Recovery** aims to restore the affected area to its previous state, such as rebuilding destroyed property, infrastructure and re-employment.

The Lions Clubs International **insurance program** provides liability coverage for Lions and volunteers serving on a Lions project. Lions insurance does not include medical malpractice.

Districts or multiple districts should establish their own Lions **ALERT emergency assistance fund** to finance the preparation and implementation of their emergency response plans. The Lions **ALERT** committee is encouraged to seek in-kind donations and financial contributions from government sources and other organizations supporting disaster relief.

Upon development of a Lions emergency response plan, inform local officials and first responder organizations about Lions' willingness to provide assistance during a crisis.





## A PRO-ACTIVE PLAN FOR A HEALTHCARE EMERGENCY

---

Three global influenza (flu) pandemics occurred during the 20th century.

- The first flu pandemic occurred in 1918. More than 50 million people died worldwide.
- The second flu pandemic occurred in 1957. Worldwide, between one and two million people died as a result of contracting the Asian Flu (H2N2).
- In 1968, 700,000 people died worldwide after contacting the Hong Kong Flu (H3N2).

In 1997, the first case of avian (bird) flu (H5N1) was reported in Hong Kong. In 2003, the first case of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) was reported in China. Worldwide, 8,098 people contacted SARS; 774 people died.

Although there are still flu viruses, there is a notable decrease in the number of flu deaths. This is a result of improved sanitation, healthcare, and education about the spread of the flu. As community leaders, Lions can educate others about flu prevention techniques.

## FUTURE PANDEMICS

It is predicted that future flu pandemics may affect more than 30% of the population. Unlike a seasonal flu, humans have a lack of natural immunity to a pandemic flu virus. Several weeks or months may pass before health officials identify a particular strain of the flu and develop a vaccine.

In the meantime, precautions are necessary.

In July 2007, The International Association of Lions Clubs agreed to help the US Department of Health and Human Services disseminate information about pandemic influenza (flu) preparedness. The Association can work with health agencies in other countries to provide similar life-saving information.

## LIONS ALERT PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY

Many communities already have pandemic flu preparedness plans. If this is the case in your community, volunteer to help local government and healthcare officials prepare the public for this healthcare emergency.

In communities without pandemic flu preparedness plans, use the basic Lions **ALERT** plan format to develop a Lions **ALERT** pandemic flu preparedness plan.

## BASIC GUIDELINES

Flu germs transfer through close personal contact such as shaking hands, sneezing, and the sharing of common surfaces including doorknobs and tabletops. To minimize the spread of germs during a pandemic, minimize contact with others and follow these basic guidelines.

- Use a disposable tissue when sneezing or coughing. If a tissue isn't available, sneeze into the sleeve of a shirt. Sneezing into one's hands can further spread germs.
- Use soap, alcohol-based hand wipes, or gel sanitizers to wash hands.
- Avoid contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Stay home if infected with the flu virus. This will minimize the spread of germs.

Lions can communicate this important information via:

- a local press conference. Invite a local doctor or healthcare professional to explain how to reduce the spread of germs
- a press release submitted to local media
- a public seminar held in a local school, library, community center, or house of worship
- a local health fair
- distribution of an informational flyer in local schools, day care centers, senior citizen centers, community centers, houses of worship, businesses, and local residences
- flyers posted in public places including Lions club meeting places, government buildings, schools, healthcare clinics, airports, train terminals, and bus depots.
- information shared with the employers of Lions club members.

In addition, Lions can collect non-perishable food items, hygiene items, and non-prescription medications (see suggestions in the personal Lions **ALERT** plan below) for needy persons in the community.

## CLUB, DISTRICT, AND MULTIPLE DISTRICT LIONS ALERT PLANS

Lions can share flu preparedness information through club, district, and multiple district bulletins and Web sites. E-mails provide another vehicle for disseminating information.

During a flu pandemic, Lions clubs may find it necessary to organize meetings via conference telephone calls or the Internet. This may also be necessary for Lions district and multiple district meetings and forums.

## A PERSONAL LIONS ALERT PLAN

Good personal hygiene will help reduce the spread of flu germs. However, during a flu pandemic, the following preparations may be necessary.

- Eat well and exercise daily to stay healthy.
- Use soap, alcohol-based hand wipes, or gel sanitizers to wash hands. Clean off surfaces that are frequently touched such as telephones and computer keyboards.
- Use a disposable tissue when sneezing or coughing. If a tissue isn't available, sneeze into the sleeve of a shirt. Sneezing into one's hands can further spread germs.
- Avoid close contact with others. Consider alternatives to daily routines such as working from home or watching worship services on television.
- If a family member contracts the flu, decide who will provide nursing care.
- Stockpile two weeks' worth of drinking water, non-perishable food items, and prescription medicines in case you become ill or are providing nursing care and cannot go to the store.
- Expect temporary closings of some businesses, schools, and forms of public transportation. Also, expect limited supplies on store shelves.
- Maintain updated health information including allergies and the blood types of all family members.
- Maintain an emergency contact list.

Information about pandemic flu is available on the following Web sites:

- World Health Organization ([www.who.org](http://www.who.org))
- US Department of Health and Human Services ([www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov))





## COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY DURING A CRISIS

---

Effective communication is essential during an emergency or disaster. Communications requires the use of workable computers, cellular telephones, land-line telephones, two-way radios, etc. Through electronic equipment, Lions can inform local authorities, the media, and fellow Lions about the status of the emergency situation. Protocol should be developed to identify the responsibilities of communicators such as: who communicates what information to whom, the priority of the information, and the method for information dissemination.

The local media fulfills an important aspect of the Lions **ALERT** program. Through publicity, the community will learn about the efforts of active, involved Lions club members. This will demonstrate to the community that Lions fulfill the “We Serve” motto.

In addition, Lions can communicate their participation in an emergency through the presence of a large Lions event banner. This will inform persons on-site that Lions are providing humanitarian service. Lions can also wear identifying attire such as a specially created Lions **ALERT** vest, shirt, or hat. This uniform will instill pride in Lions as members of a community-wide response team.

As a result of communicating the contributions of Lions during an emergency, local residents may consider future participation in the Lions service mission.

## COMMUNICATE WITH LIONS INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

---

The district governor or multiple district council chairperson should report the name and contact information of their respective Lions **ALERT** chairpersons to Lions Clubs International headquarters upon appointment so that inquiries and offers of assistance can be appropriately directed. The official list of all Lions **ALERT** chairpersons will be posted on the Lions Web site.

The new **Lions Emergency/Non-Emergency Assistance** database can be a tool for informing fellow Lions about humanitarian needs during a crisis. The database appears on the Lions Web site ([www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org)). A Lions **ALERT** chairperson can post requests for urgent needs on the Web site. Then, Lions in other districts can read and respond to the requests for emergency assistance.

Examples of immediate and long-term assistance include:

- Emergency personnel and machinery to provide immediate aid to the injured
- Medical services to aid the injured
- Eyeglasses to those who have lost their eyeglasses in the crisis
- Manpower, machinery, and materials to remove debris, dig fresh water wells, and begin basic construction of roads, buildings, schools, and homes
- Basic needs including clean drinking water, food, and other basic necessities
- The hosting of displaced persons
- The funding or distribution of UNICEF School-in-a-Box kits or other basic school supplies
- Professionals to provide psychological support.
- Replacement of household items such as bedding, appliances, furniture

## HONOR THE “CODE OF CONDUCT”

---

In 1994, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement adopted a Code of Conduct for relief aid workers. Principal commitments of the code are:

- The humanitarian aid imperative is first and foremost.
- Aid is provided regardless of race, creed, or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
- Aid is not to be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
- Aid is not to be used as an instrument of government foreign policy.
- Aid agencies should respect culture and custom.
- Aid agencies should attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
- Ways should be found to involve program beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
- Relief aid should strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
- Aid agencies are accountable to persons in need of assistance as well as to those who provide resources.
- Aid agencies should refer and recognize disaster victims as dignified human beings, not as hopeless objects.

Lions are encouraged to follow these standards of conduct and register their compliance at: <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/index.asp>.

## LCIF CAN HELP

---

Lions district governors in disaster-affected areas can apply for a LCIF Emergency Grant of up to US\$10,000 for water, food, clothing, blankets, and medical supplies. For complete information, contact LCIF at 630-571-5466 or log onto the Lions Web site at: [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org). Click into, *About Lions*, *LCIF*, then, *LCIF Emergency Grants*.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

For additional information about the Lions **ALERT** Program, contact:

LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL  
300 W 22ND ST  
OAK BROOK IL 60523-8842  
USA

Telephone: (630) 571-5466, extension 315

Fax: (630) 571-8890

E-mail: [programs@lionsclubs.org](mailto:programs@lionsclubs.org)

Lions Web site: <http://www.lionsclubs.org>

## RESOURCES

---

**Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)** is a regional resource center for safer communities and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. The Center provides training, technical services, and special projects. <http://www.adpc.net>

**Disaster News Network (DNN)** is a US-based news service that relays information about disaster response and provides suggestions for assistance. <http://www.disasterresponse.net/>

**The Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Association** is an international organization that assists communities worldwide in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. It is a link for professionals, volunteers, and organizations active in all phases of emergency preparedness and management. <http://www.disasters.org/dera/weblink.htm>

**Emergency Planning Society** is a US-based body for professionals with an involvement in emergency planning, crisis and disaster management. <http://www.the-eps.org/index.php>

**Emergency Preparedness Initiative (EPI)** ensures that emergency managers address disability concerns and that people with disabilities are included in all levels of emergency preparedness from planning to response, and recovery. <http://www.nod.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&PageID=11&>

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** is the US agency that leads the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. <http://www.fema.gov/>

**Global Outbreak Alert & Response Network (GOARN)** is a technical collaboration of existing institutions and networks that pool human and technical resources for the rapid identification, confirmation and response to outbreaks of international importance. <http://www.who.int/csr/outbreaknetwork/en/>

**Health Action in Crises** is the World Health Organization (WHO) program for emergency preparedness and response whose aim it is to reduce avoidable loss of life, burden of disease and disability in crises-prone and crises-affected countries. Their Web site offers technical guidelines and relevant health information for emergency program planning. <http://www.who.int/disasters/>

**The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM)** is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to promoting the goals of saving lives and protecting property during emergencies. <http://www.iaem.com/>

**The International Emergency Management and Cooperation Program (IEMC)** assists foreign governments and international organizations in the development of emergency policy and preparedness infrastructure, emergency operations facilities, emergency procedures, exercise programs, and technical and training assistance. [http://www.nnsa.doe.gov/na-20/inter\\_emer.shtml](http://www.nnsa.doe.gov/na-20/inter_emer.shtml)

**International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** is a major partner of the World Health Organization (WHO) during crises. The Federation's focus includes: Disaster and Emergency Management; Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation; HIV AIDS Prevention; and areas of common interest such as Mental Health and Water and Sanitation in Emergencies. <http://www.ifrc.org>

**Relief Web** is a project of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It is a repository of information on humanitarian initiatives around the world. The site includes a searchable database of emergencies by event and country. <http://www.reliefweb.int>

## **Disclaimer of Endorsement**

*Any reference obtained from this handbook to a specific product, process or service does not constitute or imply an endorsement by Lions Clubs International of the product, process or service or its producer or provider. The views and opinions expressed in any reference document do not necessarily state or reflect those of Lions Clubs International.*

*Lions Clubs International does not make any warranty, express or implied, including warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose, and does not assume any legal liability for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information on this website or the links to other websites provided.*



Publication of:

LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL  
300 W 22ND ST  
OAK BROOK IL 60523-8842  
USA

Telephone: 630-571-5466  
Web site: [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org)