



City and County
of San Francisco



Disaster Service Worker Guide

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Introduction	1
All City Employees are DSWs	1
What is a DSW	1
When DSWs May Be Needed	1
Notice of DSW Assignment	2
More About DSW Work Assignments	2
What To Do After An Emergency Occurs	3
Systems Used to Respond to Emergencies	3
Required DSW Record Keeping	5
DSW Safety and Well-being	5
Preparing to Serve As a DSW	5
Required Training	5
Additional Training	6
Personal Preparedness	6
Disaster Service Worker Emergency Preparedness Checklist	8
City and County Employee Home-Work-Vehicle Preparedness Kit Checklist	10



Introduction

- This *Disaster Service Worker Guide* describes the role of City and County of San Francisco (City) employees as Disaster Service Workers during a proclaimed state of emergency in the City.
- As part of our efforts as City employees, we help make San Francisco a great place to live, work, and visit.
- One of our most important roles as public employees is to assist in protecting City residents during an emergency.

All City Employees are DSWs

- Under State law and the City's Administrative Code, all City employees are Disaster Service Workers or "DSWs."
- This means that when the Mayor proclaims an emergency in San Francisco, City employees may be required to serve as DSWs to support response and recovery efforts.

What is a DSW

- "Disaster service worker" generally includes all public employees employed by a city, county, or public district, other than police and firefighters.
- DSWs carry out lawful activities, as directed by their DSW Supervisor, to support the City's response to and recovery from a proclaimed emergency.
- When City employees are hired, we take and sign an oath to serve as DSWs if needed during an emergency.
- ***When you receive a notice from the City to report to an assignment as a DSW, you are required by law to report and serve.***

When DSWs May Be Needed

- Types of emergencies that you may be asked to respond to include earthquakes, tsunamis, pandemics, extreme weather events, and other natural or human-caused emergencies that result in disaster conditions or in extreme peril to life, property, and resources in San Francisco.
- When an emergency impacts the City, the Department of Emergency Management may activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), a central location where City departments and partners gather to coordinate the City's emergency response activities.
- If City leaders determine that DSWs are needed to support the City's response to an emergency, the San Francisco Department of Human Resources (DHR) will notify employees that they are being deployed.
- San Francisco activated City employees to serve as DSWs during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Over 4,000 City employees served as DSWs during the pandemic, helping to



save lives and to speed the City's recovery.

Notice of DSW Assignment

- When DSWs are needed to support the City's response to an emergency, DHR works with human resource representatives from other City departments to identify and notify employees being assigned as DSWs, typically through email.
- The DHR DSW Notice includes information about the DSW's assigned position, when and where to report, how long your assignment is expected to last, the name of your DSW Supervisor, and what to bring with you when reporting. Information about your DSW assignment is also shared with human resources representatives for the department you work for (your home department).
- To ensure the City can reach you after an emergency occurs, keep your emergency contact information up to date by visiting the [City Employee Portal](#) and selecting the "My Information" tab.
- If you have a serious health concern, childcare or eldercare responsibilities, or another issue that may prevent you from serving as a DSW, you may file a [DSW Restrictions Self Certification Form](#) with your home department's human resources representative. Your department will review the form and advise you on next steps.

More About DSW Work Assignments

- DHR will make every effort to assign you to DSW positions that call for the same types of skills you use every day or that require special skills you may possess.
- However, it is important that DSWs remain flexible and understand that you may be assigned to:
 - Report to a DSW Supervisor who is not your normal work supervisor.
 - Perform work that is different from your normal work duties.
 - Report to a location that is not your normal worksite.
 - Work a schedule that is different from your normal schedule.
- ***You will not be asked to perform work as a DSW that you do not know how to do or for which you have not received training.***
- Examples of the type of work you may be asked to do as a DSW include:
 - General duties such as clerical support, damage assessment, driving, food preparation, sorting, packing, or loading.
 - Specialized duties depending on special skills you possess such as language translation, public outreach and communication, data analysis, or driving a forklift or a commercial vehicle.
- Let your home department human resources representative know if you have special skills that you do not use in your regular position, such as language skills, a commercial



driver's license, or CPR training.

- During your DSW assignment, your home department should not ask you to perform your normal work duties.
- If you have questions about the responsibilities of being a DSW, contact your home department's human resources representative.

What To Do After An Emergency Occurs

- Immediately after an emergency occurs, your first duty is to make sure you and your family are safe.
- Once you are sure you and your family are safe, follow the steps below:
 - **If you are at work:** Report immediately to your assigned emergency reporting location (e.g., department staging area or department operations center). If you have no such assignment, report to your department supervisor for instructions.
 - **If you are at home or away from work:**
 - Follow the procedures for reporting to your normal work location or designated emergency reporting location.
 - If you have not received any reporting instructions, contact your immediate supervisor for instructions.
 - If you are unable to contact your supervisor, listen to KCBS 740 AM or 106.9 FM on the radio to receive possible reporting instructions.
 - **If you receive a DSW Assignment Notice:** Follow the reporting instructions in the notice.
- When you report to work after an emergency or to a DSW assignment, bring your City DSW Identification (ID) Card and your state driver's license or state ID card with you.
 - You will need your DSW ID Card to check in at your DSW work site. You may also need your DSW ID and state driver's license or ID to access emergency transportation.
 - For more information on your DSW ID Card, see the [DSW ID Card FAQ](#).

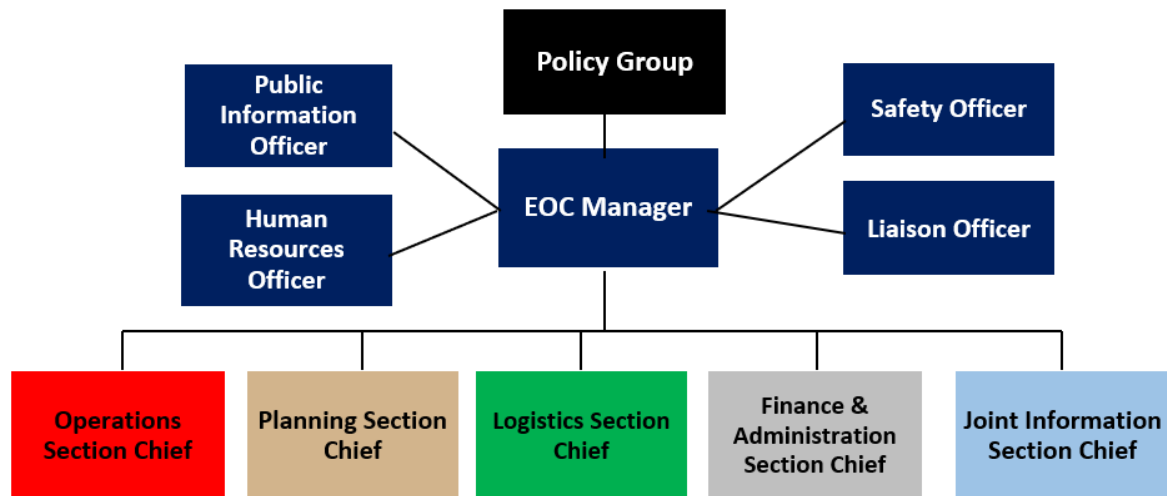
Systems Used to Respond to Emergencies

- You may be assigned to work at the City's EOC, at a Department Operations Center (DOC), or at a field location such as a staging area, food or medicine distribution site, shelter, or first aid station.
- No matter where you are assigned, the City will use the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the State's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) to successfully coordinate our response efforts.
- NIMS and SEMS include the Incident Command System (ICS), a standardized emergency management model that provides responders with an organizational structure and

common terminology. Using NIMS, SEMS, and ICS allows different City departments and City partners to work together during response efforts. It also allows us to work with regional, state, and federal partners who assist us when a disaster occurs.

- The City is required to use NIMS and SEMS to receive federal and state funding to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.
- Under ICS, responders work within a “chain of command” structure. Chain of command is an orderly line of authority within the City’s incident management organization.
 - As part of chain of command, you will be assigned to report to a single DSW Supervisor.
 - You are expected to follow directions given to you by your DSW Supervisor.
 - You are also expected to keep your DSW Supervisor informed regarding the work you are doing and any issues that you encounter during your DSW assignment.
 - If you have questions about your DSW assignment, see your DSW Supervisor.
- DSWs assigned to work at the City’s EOC may work within an organizational structure like the one shown below.

Simple EOC Organization Chart



- The EOC organizational structure may change depending on the size and needs of the emergency.
- DSWs also may be assigned to work in a Department Operations Center (DOC), where a similar structure may be used.
- City departments may open DOCs in an emergency to ensure that the essential functions of the department continue to be performed, and to coordinate and provide support to staff working in field-level response efforts.
- Your DSW Supervisor should share information with you about the organizational structure at the location where you are assigned.



- For more information about NIMS, SEMS, and ICS, see the Preparing to Serve as a DSW section below.

Required DSW Record Keeping

- While serving as a DSW, you will be expected to fill out forms and records to help the City keep track of the work done to respond to and recover from the emergency.
- These records also help the City obtain state and federal funding for emergency activities when appropriate.
- At a minimum, you will be expected to:
 - Check in when you arrive at your DSW work site for each shift and check out before you leave using ICS Form 211 or a similar paper or electronic form.
 - Keep an Activity Log in which you record the major tasks you perform during each shift using ICS Form 214 or a similar paper or electronic form. Normally, you will turn this form in to your DSW Supervisor before you leave each day.
- DSWs must also report on their normal work timesheet the number of hours they spend each week working as a DSW. Your DSW Supervisor will explain what codes to use to accurately report your DSW work hours.
- If you have questions about required record keeping, ask your DSW Supervisor.

DSW Safety and Well-being

- Maintaining your safety and well-being while serving as a DSW is extremely important.
- If at any time during your DSW service, you feel unsafe, report this immediately to your DSW Supervisor. You may also report safety concerns to your home department human resources representative.
- If you are injured while serving as a DSW, immediately report your injury to your DSW Supervisor and to your home department human resources representative. Your DSW Supervisor will ensure that you receive appropriate assistance.
- Stress prevention and management is a critical part of staying well while serving as a DSW. For information on how to manage stress, review the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [Tips for Disaster Responders: Preventing and Managing Stress](#).
- City employees also have access to free telephone counseling 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the City's [Employee Assistance Program](#).

Preparing to Serve As a DSW

Required Training

- All City employees are required to take the following training to prepare to serve as a DSW:



- Review this Disaster Service Worker Guide; and
- Watch the [Disaster Service Worker Training Video](#)
- [Independent Study \(IS\) 100](#) - Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS)
Introduces ICS and describes the history, features, principles, and organizational structure of ICS. Explains the relationship between ICS and the National Incident Management System.
- [IS 700](#) - Introduction to National Incident Management System (NIMS)
Provides an overview of NIMS. Identifies the purpose, principles, key components, and benefits of NIMS.
- City employees should take the above required training within six months of being hired and should review and refresh the training every two years.
- For information on how to access the IS classes listed above, visit the City's [DSW Training page](#).

Additional Training

- City employees who are designated to serve in the City's EOC or in a DOC may be required to take additional training. For all other City employees, the training listed below is optional, but encouraged.
 - [IS-200](#) - Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response
 - [IS-800](#) - National Response Framework, An Introduction
 - [G606](#) - Introduction to Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)

Personal Preparedness

- You cannot be effective as a DSW if you are worried about your safety or the safety of your loved ones or home.
- Talk with your family about the fact that you may be assigned to serve as a DSW after an emergency occurs.
- Take the following additional steps to prepare yourself and your family for emergencies:
 - [Learn about potential hazards where you live or work.](#)
 - [Sign up for emergency alerts](#) from the city or county where you live.
 - [Make a family emergency plan.](#) Include your [pets in your family planning](#).
 - [Put together an emergency kit](#) for home, work, and your vehicle. A checklist of items to have on hand at home, at work, and in your vehicle is available below.
 - Take free personal preparedness training from the [San Francisco Neighborhood Emergency Response Team](#) or [your local Community Emergency Response Team](#).
 - Make plans for childcare or elder care if applicable.
 - The City may provide childcare assistance to DSWs during their deployment.



- For questions about what assistance is available, contact your home department human resources representative.
- For additional preparedness guidance, see the DSW Emergency Preparedness Checklist included below.



Disaster Service Worker Emergency Preparedness Checklist

You cannot be effective as a City and County of San Francisco Disaster Service Worker (DSW) if you are worried about your safety or the safety of your loved ones or home. Below are steps you can take to prepare yourself and your family for emergencies, and for the possibility that you may be assigned to serve as a DSW if an emergency occurs in San Francisco.

☐ **Discuss emergency preparedness with your family:**

- Take time each year to talk with your family about emergency preparedness and the fact that you may be assigned to serve as a DSW after an emergency occurs.
- Let them know your first step when an emergency occurs is to make sure they are safe before reporting to your DSW assignment.
- Make plans for how you will address family needs if you are assigned to serve as a DSW (e.g., caring for other family members and pets, grocery shopping, doing household chores).

☐ **Learn about potential hazards** where you live and work:

- Visit the state's My Hazards website, <https://myhazards.caloes.ca.gov/>. Type in your home or work address. You'll get information about hazards in your area and how to lessen their impact on your family and home.
- Visit the Ready.gov website at <https://www.ready.gov/be-informed>, to download free preparedness materials for almost every type of hazard.
- You can also visit San Francisco's emergency preparedness web site, <https://www.sf72.org/>, for additional hazard information and preparedness materials.

☐ **Sign up for emergency alerts** from the city and county where you live and encourage loved ones to sign up as well.

- Most cities and counties in California provide emergency alerts via text, email, or phone.
- You can sign up for emergency alerts from San Francisco by visiting www.alertSF.org.
- Sign up for emergency alerts for other California cities or counties by visiting <http://calalerts.org/signup.html>.

☐ **Put together emergency supplies** for home, work, and your vehicle, and encourage family members to do the same.

- The *DHR Disaster Service Worker Guide* includes a list of emergency supplies for home, work, and your vehicle at <https://sfdhr.org/disaster-service-workers>.
- Visit <https://www.ready.gov/kit> for additional guidance on what to include in your emergency preparedness kits.

☐ **Make a family emergency plan.**

- A family emergency plan includes emergency contact information, escape routes, and



safe places to meet if you cannot meet at home.

- For help in developing a plan, visit <https://www.ready.gov/plan>.
- Be sure each member of your family has a copy of and understands the plan.
- Practice your plan with your family each year and keep it up to date.

☐ **Hold periodic home evacuation drills** so your loved ones know what to do and where to go.

- Remember, in an emergency, you may not have time to plan. You may only have time to grab a “go bag” before leaving home.
- Practice going to your established meeting place and meeting up with your family.

☐ **Be prepared at work.**

- Learn the location of exits and evacuation routes for your building. You don’t want to figure this out while the building is filling with smoke or is otherwise unsafe.
- Know the assembly location where your department or floor is to gather if you must evacuate your building. If you are not sure where to go, ask your supervisor or human resources representative.
- Keep a “go bag” at work with items needed for your immediate safety. Visit the *DHR Disaster Service Worker Guide* at <https://sfdhr.org/disaster-service-workers> for a list of items to have in your work supply kit.

☐ **To learn more** about how to prepare for any emergency, take the San Francisco Fire Department’s Neighborhood Emergency Response Team, or “NERT,” training.

- NERT training is free to anyone who lives or works in San Francisco.
- Visit <https://sf-fire.org/nert> for NERT information.

City and County Employee Home-Work-Vehicle Preparedness Kit Checklist



City and County of San Francisco Employee Home – Work – Vehicle Preparedness Kit Checklists



Home Preparedness Kit

- ☐ **Water:** 1 gallon per person per day for at least 5 days.
 - o Regular unscented bleach to purify domestic water if needed (2-4 drops per quart of water).
- ☐ **Food:** Enough to feed your family for 5 days. Choose foods that are:
 - o Easy to store;
 - o Ready-to-eat;
 - o Have a shelf-life of at least 1 year (e.g., canned and dried foods, soups, and canned juice and milk);
 - o Low in salt and require little or no water to prepare.
- ☐ **Cooking supplies:** Alternates such as outdoor grill or camp stove, utensils, manual can opener, foil and plastic wrap, matches, zip plastic bags.
- ☐ **Clothing:** Light and heavy clothing for each person, stored so it stays dry; gloves, rain ponchos.
- ☐ **Safety Supplies:** Flashlight and portable radio with extra batteries, duct tape, good pair of scissors, whistles, rope, sharp knife, fire extinguisher (3-A:40-B:C is best), wrench for utility shut-off.
- ☐ **General Supplies:** Money (small bills and coins), pencil and paper, paper city and Bay Area maps, extra house and vehicle keys.
- ☐ **Hygiene Supplies:** Hand sanitizer, liquid detergent, shampoo, toothbrush and toothpaste, toilet paper, heavy plastic garbage bags, sanitary supplies (sanitary napkins can also serve as pressure bandages).
- ☐ **Medical Supplies:** First aid kit (purchase or assemble your own), first aid book, medications with clear instructions, extra eyeglasses, doctor contact information.
- ☐ **Additional supplies** for infants, children, elderly, and people with a disability, including:
 - o List of people authorized to pick up your child.
 - o Family reunification plan.
 - o Favorite game, book, or toy.
 - o Favorite snacks and boxed juice.

- ☐ **Pet Items:** Water, food, bowls, leashes, medicines, pet carrier, copy of license, cat litter and scoop, picture of you and your pet together, pet chip information.
- ☐ **Your Emergency Information:** Copies of important documents (e.g., driver's license or photo ID, birth certificate, Social Security card, work ID, proof of insurance), your emergency contact information, and family reunification plan.
- ☐ **Shelter:** Consider a tent for indoor use if windows are broken or for use outdoors if needed.
- ☐ **Evacuation Needs:** If you must evacuate you may need a tent, sleeping bags, and a way to carry your supplies (e.g., wheeled cart or luggage).

Once Each Year:

Check and replace water, food, batteries, clothes, first aid, and other preparedness supplies as needed.

Work and Vehicle Kits (aka a "Go Bags")

- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes
- ☐ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ☐ Portable radio and extra batteries
- ☐ Small amount of water and food
- ☐ Extra cash (small bills and coins)
- ☐ Basic first aid kit
- ☐ Contact information
- ☐ Paper versions of Bay Area and City maps
- ☐ Change of clothes

Always keep your vehicle gas tank at least half full!

Gas may be difficult to find and station pumps may not work without electricity.

This checklist is based on materials developed by the San Francisco Fire Department's Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT). NERT provides free preparedness training to anyone who lives or works in San Francisco.