

Thinking of Applying for a Disaster Assignment?

Before you decide, read this carefully:

1. Health Considerations:

Working conditions in a disaster can be harsh. Be responsible: volunteer only if you are healthy, willing and able to handle the stresses and discomforts. Disaster assignments are not appropriate for individuals whose health can be put at risk by stress and overwork; for example, those with back injuries, high blood pressure, heart disease and respiratory illness. Inappropriate workers place an additional burden on the disaster operation.

You may expect to encounter:

- high stress, fast-paced environment;
- long work days, 10 - 12 hours is not uncommon;
- work shifts you are not accustomed to disrupting your normal sleep patterns;
- long work weeks, typically 6 - 7 days before a day off;
- unpredictable, less than optimal working conditions;
- irregular meals;
- inadequate sleep;
- extreme weather conditions;
- very basic accommodation – possibly sharing a room or even group lodging;

2. Deployment and Task Assignments:

- you may be put on alert for days or weeks at a time, with no guarantee of deployment;
- you must be willing to take on any assignment, regardless of whether it matches your level of skill;
- you may be extremely busy at times, idle at other times, as the needs of those affected by the disaster change;
- your task and your location may change or end abruptly;
- you must respect and accept supervision within the affected community's chain of command.

3. Personal Considerations:

Discuss your intent to volunteer outside your community with your family and employer, as they will be affected by your decision.

- your family should be supportive and able to manage without you for at least 7 days;

- your employer should be supportive of your volunteer work and willing to release you from your work responsibilities for at least 7 days, wherever their operational requirements will permit;
- many employers will require that you take vacation time or unpaid leave;
- there is no provision for reimbursement of lost wages while on a volunteer assignment.
- You may be required to provide a credit card when booking into hotel room.

4. What the Province will provide:

- The Province of British Columbia will pay or reimburse for travel, accommodation, meals and other eligible expenses.
- WCB coverage and Liability Insurance