

State of Mississippi
General Population Shelter Operations in a COVID-19 Environment
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What does Hurricane Evacuation General Population Shelter Operations in a COVID-19 environment look like?

A. There will be 3 distinct areas within a hurricane evacuation general population shelter: Screening prior to entry, dormitory area, and isolation care area.

- Hurricane Evacuation General Population Shelters are for evacuation and of short duration up to 72 hrs.
- Residents and workers will be required to wear masks/cloth face coverings.
- Space allocation is 60 sq. ft. per person.
- The isolation care area space allocation will be 110 sq. ft. per person.
- Cots will be disseminated based on medical need.
- Accessible evacuation shelters will be indicated in a press release upon opening.

Q. How will feeding be conducted in a Hurricane Evacuation Shelter?

A. Snack and water will be served in evacuation shelters. Only individually packaged snacks produced by vendors, school cafeterias, or community partners will be used. Staff handling snacks will wear a mask and gloves. Anyone with special dietary needs should plan to bring their own snacks with them.

Q. What should I bring with me to an Evacuation Shelter?

A. Anyone planning to evacuate to a general population shelter should consider bringing the following items for a minimum of 72 hrs.

- Cloth face coverings or face masks
- Hand sanitizer
- Medication
- Special dietary items (to include baby food and formula if needed)
- Toiletry and hygiene items (to include infant items if needed)
- Bedding (pillow, blanket or sleeping bag)
- Durable medical equipment, if needed for independence
- Medical supplies, if needed
- Personal Care Assistant or Caregiver, if needed
- Cell phone and charger
- Personal information
- Important documents
- Cash
- Entertainment items (books, toys, puzzles, magazines, etc.)
- Supplies for Service Animals, if applicable

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Q. Will pets be allowed in general population evacuation shelters?

A. Evacuation shelters may not allow pets due to the shortage of space for people. Pet owners who evacuate should make arrangements to take their animals with them to the homes of family, friends, or pet-friendly hotels or make other arrangements, such as boarding kennels, veterinary offices, or animal rescue organizations. Service Animals are allowed to accompany their owners in shelters or any place their owners are allowed.

Q. What does General Population Shelter Operations post-landfall in a COVID-19 environment look like?

A. There will be 3 distinct areas within a general population shelter: Screening prior to entry, dormitory area, and isolation care area.

- Short Term General Population Shelters may accommodate residents for up to two weeks.
- Residents and workers will be required to wear masks/cloth face coverings.
- Space allocation is 110 sq. ft. per person.
- The isolation care area space allocation will be 110 sq. ft. per person.
- Cots will be disseminated to all residents as soon as possible.
- Limited medical needs can be addressed in short term shelters.
- Shelters accessible to people with disabilities will be identified in a press release upon opening.

Q. How will feeding be conducted in a Short Term Shelters?

A. Extra precautions will be added to the feeding process:

- Hot meals will be provided as soon as it is feasible to do so.
- Food will NOT be served in bulk from cambro containers or trays.
- Food will not be served in a congregate dining area.
- Only individually packed meals produced by partner organizations or vendors will be used.
- Staff handling food must wear a mask and gloves.
- Food will be served in a “set it down and step back” fashion.

Q. How will general population shelters provide a safe and secure environment?

A. Shelters will provide a safe and secure environment by:

- Ensuring all residents and staff wear masks or cloth face coverings, social distance, and follow protective measures
- Providing shelter rules to all residents
- Providing on-site security
- Ensuring all residents and staff are treated with dignity and respect

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Q. Will shelters supply face masks or cloth face coverings to residents who arrive without them?

A. Individuals are encouraged to bring their own face coverings to general population shelters in accordance with CDC and Mississippi State Department of Health guidance for the public as well as state and local executive orders. If a shelter resident does not have a face covering, one will be provided.

Q. What will COVID-19 screenings look like in general population shelters?

A. COVID-19 screenings will include the following:

- Temperature check with a no-touch infrared thermometer at the forehead
- A series of questions regarding COVID-19 symptoms

Q: What if someone is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival at the general population shelter?

A: If an individual is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms arrives at a general population shelter, he or she will be allowed to register along with their family members. Each shelter will be equipped with an isolation care area where symptomatic residents can receive care away from other shelter residents.

Q: What if a shelter resident develops COVID-19 symptoms while in a general population shelter?

A: If a general population shelter resident develops COVID-19 symptoms while sheltering, space in the isolation care area will be provided so the resident can receive care away from other shelter residents. Public health partners will also be advised and symptoms monitored.

Q. What if my medical needs cannot be accommodated in a general population shelter?

A. Shelter residents whose medical needs cannot be accommodated in a general population shelter may be referred to a state or regional medical needs shelter or a hospital.

Q. Will additional cleaning and disinfecting be performed during shelter operations due to COVID-19?

A. Yes, general population shelter staff will use enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices throughout the shelter to include high touch areas.