

## Canadian Red Cross Disaster Management: What is registration and inquiry?

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### **Forest fire threatens northern communities in Manitoba**

Like most disasters, the forest fires in northern Manitoba in May 2008 forced hundreds of people from their homes with little or no warning. People in places such as Sherridon had to quickly grab whatever personal belongings they could and were whisked away to safety in other communities where fire was not a threat. In the process, many people did not know the status of loved ones and friends left behind. Did they make it safely out the community?

Thanks to the Canadian Red Cross service Registration and Inquiry (R&I), many people got their answer. R&I allows evacuees to register their personal information with Red Cross. When family and friends contact Red Cross following a disaster, the Society is able to confirm the status of the people they are searching for – as long as they register with the Red Cross.

The Red Cross – Manitoba Region – has agreements with many municipalities and other communities across the province to provide R&I when requested. During the Sherridon evacuation, the Red Cross provided Registration and operated a toll-free line to accept inquiries and changes of addresses during the emergency.

The Red Cross has hundreds of trained Disaster Management volunteers that can be quickly mobilized to help people when they're at their most vulnerable. In fact, in many disaster scenarios over the years in Manitoba, the first people evacuees see following a disaster are compassionate and helpful Red Cross volunteers providing R&I.

In addition to Disaster Management volunteers in Manitoba, the Red Cross can quickly recruit and transport other Red Cross volunteers from all over Canada. Over the past few years, the Red Cross has standardized its Disaster Management training for volunteers. This upgrade in training has streamlined the process for volunteers allowing them to arrive quickly where needed and deploying them into the field immediately.

To further assist Manitobans during times of disaster, the Canadian Red Cross has bolstered its supplies of prepositioned goods – such as sleeping cots. In Manitoba, the Red Cross has 1,000 cots in storage in Winnipeg and most recently made a shipment of cots to Thompson to allow for faster distribution to northern Manitoba communities

when necessary. Having these cots in key locations allows Red Cross to quickly distribute them to communities where many people are left homeless because of a disaster. They provide comfortable, temporary sleeping arrangements and are easily transportable and assembled.

For more information on R&I, call **982-7330** in Winnipeg and toll-free in Manitoba **1-866-685-4250** or email us at [infomanitoba@redcross.ca](mailto:infomanitoba@redcross.ca)