



Shelter Handbook for Volunteers

Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds Team

Overview

This manual outlines the five key areas of the grounds for sheltering evacuees in the event of an emergency: Main Gate (welcome and direction), Carnival Lawn (car camping), Lot B (RV/Camper parking), Herzog Hall (food service), and the Main Exhibit Building (congregate shelter). The grounds also provide the use of the Beverly C Wilson building (medical) and the barns (livestock evacuation) but these areas are managed by other groups and outside the scope of this handbook. They may be mentioned from time to time.

Introduction

In the event of an evacuation emergency, the fairgrounds will open up as quickly as possible. A PPSC Strike Team will come, set up the shelter, and receive the first evacuees. While that is happening, you'll be contacted to come in and relieve them. You, as part of the core volunteer team, will assist in some or all of these areas while the shelter is active. Every event is different and conditions change rapidly so we appreciate your flexibility and we want to be prepared when that happens. This handbook outlines the duties of the key areas, the communication structure between Petaluma People Services and the Fairgrounds, and best practices when working with evacuees. Thank you for your willing and generous service!

1. Leadership & Communication Structure
2. Overview of Shelter Areas
3. Detailed Duties by Area
4. Best Practices when Working with Evacuees

Volunteer Registration with PPSC

If you have not registered to become part of Shelter Volunteer Team, you may do so here:

<https://petalumapeople.org/want-to-serve-as-a-disaster-volunteer/>

During a disaster, check your email and social media!

Volunteer opportunities will be announced via email.

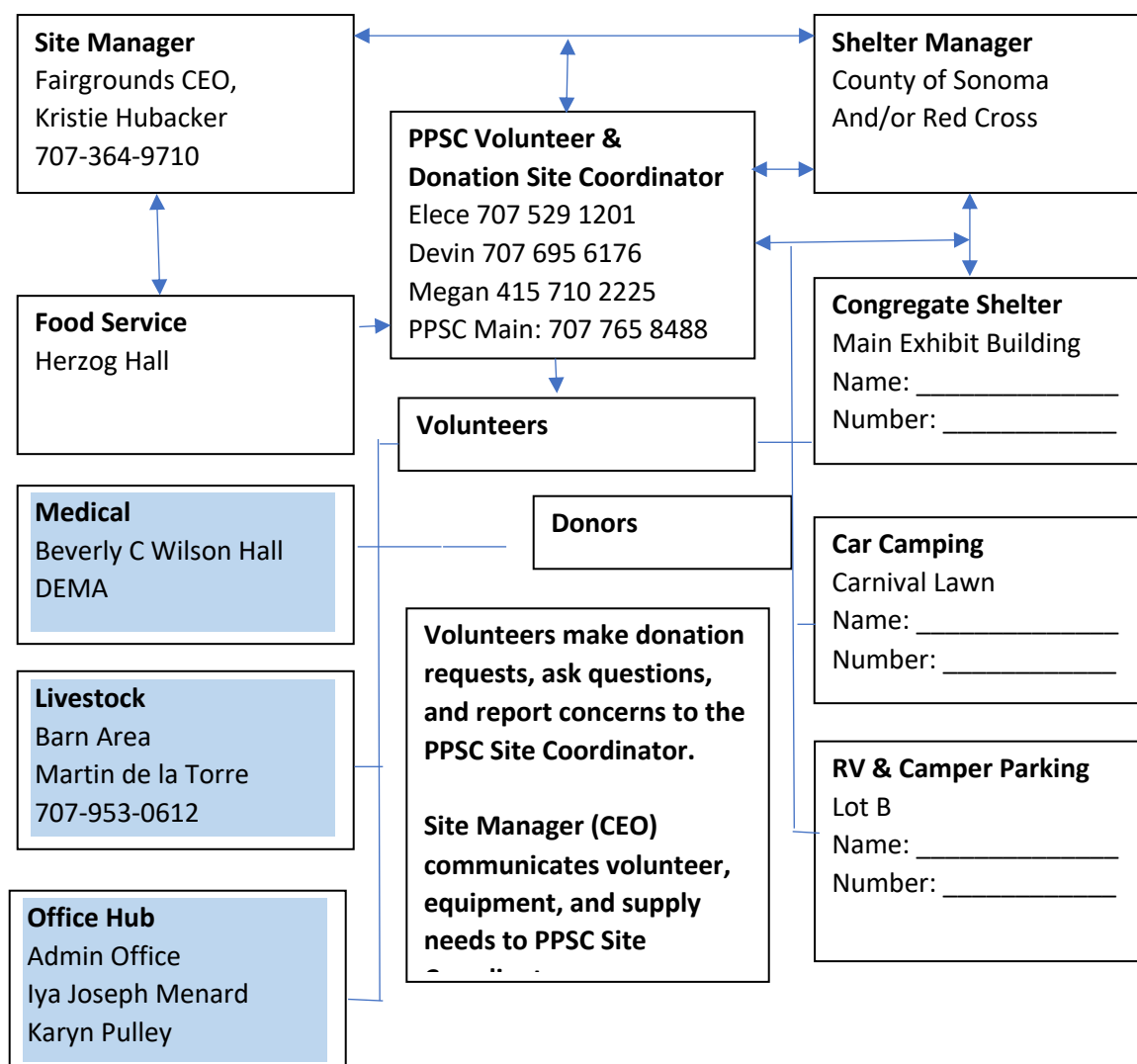
Donation opportunities will be announced on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PetalumaPeople>



1. Leadership & Communication Structure

The management of the Sonoma-Marín Fairgrounds Shelter is a combined and collaborative effort of many agencies who come together to provide a safe environment for evacuees.

The shelter team includes staff and volunteers from PPSC and the Sonoma-Marín Fairgrounds, as well as other agencies who may be assigned to this specific shelter (i.e. mental health, County DHS).





2. Overview of Shelter Areas

MAIN GATE & CONCOURSE

This is where people arrive and are directed to the appropriate area for their situation, whether they are car camping, need a cot, or have an RV.

CARNIVAL LAWN

This area is dedicated to car camping, including those with tents and/or pickup trucks. People with pets are asked to stay on the carnival lawn area and not bring their pets into the congregate shelter for safety and the comfort of others. All who stay on the carnival lawn are still welcome to access the dining hall.

LOT B

This dirt parking lot usually serves the Petaluma Speedway. During evacuations, this area is a designated space for RVs and camper vehicles. The lot can hold approximately 200 vehicles. There are no hookups, only dry camping. The large lights are turned on each night for safety by the Speedway owner.

MAIN EXHIBIT BUILDING

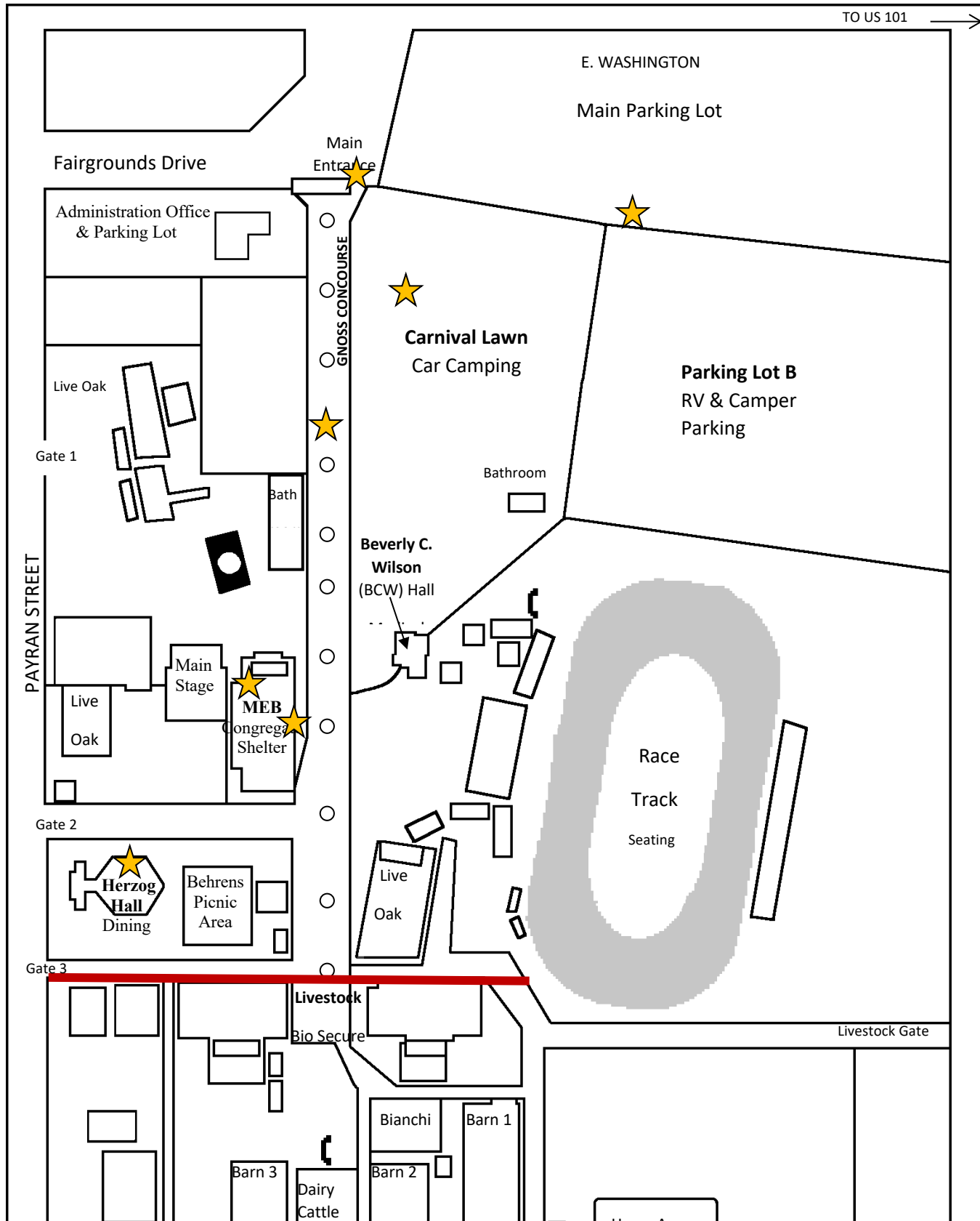
This building becomes the congregate shelter and the main location for evacuees to register to be on site. The building is set up for intake, and has a small first aid station, cot area, and water station.

HERZOG HALL

Herzog becomes the dining hall for the entire evacuation center. A separate team will come to set up meal service, but the Strike Team will set up coffee, tea, and light snacks. The Hall always stays open.



Sonoma-Marín Fair (Petaluma)





3. Detailed Duties

The following pages outline the set-up and duties upon activation for each area. All of these areas are opened up when the Fairgrounds is activated as an evacuation site.

When you arrive for your shift, you may be relieving someone who was part of the Strike Team and very tired. They may not be able to relay as much information to you as they would like. Be sure to know who the PPSC site coordinator is and who is in charge of your area if you are serving in the kitchen or in the congregate shelter. These folks can answer your questions.

Please review the following areas. Each one has its own duties and different types on contact with the evacuated guests. The volunteer should choose the position best suited to their talents and comfort level. It is also helpful to the entire team for each volunteer to have a secondary duty they know well. This way volunteers can be deployed to the area most needed, and redeployed as conditions change.



MAIN GATE & CONCOURSE

The Main Gate crew is the first contact an evacuee has with the shelter site. The main gate team needs to be calm, comforting, and welcoming.

Job Assignments and Duties

Security Guard (at Gate)

- ☐ Professional Event Services (PES), the Fairgrounds' security partner, will provide a guards as soon as possible upon activation.

Greeter (at Gate)

- ☐ Once Guest has been allowed in by security it is important that you greet them with a reassuring attitude. When you check in for this position or take over from someone else there will be a clipboard where you will ask what Evacuation Zone they are coming from. If they don't know ask the city and location. If they are not on the evacuation site you will ask them to check in with PPSC Site Coordinator, who will be positioned near the office area of the Fair Grounds.

Traffic Director (at mid concourse)

- ☐ Check with guests as they approach. Direct them to the appropriate place to park, the school parking lot, the concourse, or the carnival lot
- ☐ Guests with mobility needs should be directed as close to the main exhibit building as possible.

NOTES:



CARNIVAL LAWN

Hundreds of cars can fit on the carnival lawn if they are parked in an organized fashion. Parking guides can help make sure this happens.

There will be large amounts of time when a parking guide is not needed. It may be that we pull volunteers from another area to assist with parking if we have a surge.

Job Assignments/Duties

Traffic Director (curb)

- ☐ Post at the spot where the curb dips.
- ☐ Flag the cars so drivers can see where to turn.
- ☐ Direct the driver to the next flagger/traffic director who will help them park

Traffic Director (mid lawn)

- ☐ Post at the place where the next car will need to be parked
- ☐ Flag the car coming onto the lawn so the driver can see you and knows where to go
- ☐ Park cars with at least 10 feet between vehicles and 20 feet between rows
- ☐ Be aware of flags and help drivers avoid them. These are sprinkler heads

NOTES:



LOT B – RV & CAMPER PARKING

Job Assignments & Duties

Greeter(s)

- ☐ Welcome guests as they arrive
- ☐ Log guest name and vehicle type, license plate on form
- ☐ Confirm their evacuation Zone
- ☐ Provide information hand out
- ☐ Direct guest where to park (larger rigs in the middle; smaller vehicles at the perimeter)

Guard (Provided by Professional Event Services)

- ☐ Provides back up assistance and support to volunteers

NOTES:



MAIN EXHIBIT BUILDING

Job Assignments & Duties

Entrance Monitor

- ☐ Post outside of main entrance
- ☐ Answer Questions/give directions

Registration Clerk (4)

- ☐ Give guests registration form to fill out
- ☐ File registration form in binder
- ☐ Give guest blanket, pillow, comfort kit, and anything else that has been provided
- ☐ Ask guests to find a cot, place personal items under cot
- ☐ Explain location of bathroom, dining hall, and communication board
- ☐ Assist the Shelter Manager as requested (you may be asked to deliver items on another part of the grounds, go to the office to make copies, or escort a guest to medical).

NOTES:



HERZOG HALL

Herzog Hall becomes the dining hall for the entire facility. The Hall is open at all times for coffee water, and snacks. Our volunteers will provide stocking of “always available” items and assist with meal service and clean up.

Part of Herzog Hall is often also used as a children’s play area, story area, or movie watch space. This is to help keep children and families entertained while making sure the congregate shelter can be made as quiet as possible for rest. Often an activities organizer will set up an area in Herzog and may need your help with something. **If someone comes into provide entertainment for the children, they will have to have completed a PPSC volunteer form and be assigned to provide this volunteer task. No one is allowed on to just come in and “help”. They will need some form of ID from the front gate.**

Job Assignments & Duties

Beverage Monitor

- ☐ Monitor beverages; replenish as necessary
- ☐ Keep area clean and sanitary

Snack Monitor

- ☐ Monitor snack table
- ☐ Keep area clean and sanitary

Busser/Cleaner

- ☐ Clear and wipe down tables
- ☐ Check bathrooms and wipe down surfaces
- ☐ Take out trash when needed/re-line trash cans

Meal/Server

- ☐ Assist with the serving line
- ☐ Follow COVID protocols
- ☐ Support the Kitchen Staff as requested.

NOTES:



4. Best Practices

Here are some helpful things we have learned by serving evacuees:

1. Pack a “go bag” for your volunteer shift. A few layers, water bottle, medication, and anything else that will need for your shift.
2. Be prepared to do some waiting. A fire and the evacuation pattern is unpredictable. We could have no one coming onto the grounds, or anything really happening then a shift in the wind will bring dozens of people very quickly. The idea is to be ready for when that happens.
3. Be sensitive to people’s concerns and sensitivities. Not everyone is comfortable providing personal information or being in a congregate setting. You may make conversation as a way of making people more comfortable, but do not ask personal information. If someone wants to talk, listen respectfully. Sometimes they just need to talk.
4. Respect the privacy of the shelter setting. Do NOT divulge sensitive information. Do not allow members of the press to come on site to interview evacuees or take photos. All press should check in at the Fairgrounds office and must be escorted by Fairgrounds staff or a dedicated media escort.
5. Be flexible. The key to a successful shelter is a combination of both detailed planning and the flexibility to shift the pieces of that plan as conditions change. Also keep in mind that conditions may change at nearby shelters, and you may be re-assigned.
6. Donations: All donors should direct their inquiries to POSC. Donations can then be centralized and given to the shelter with the greatest need. PPSC will also know the current needs of each shelter and what exactly needs to be donated.
7. Livestock should be delivered through Gate 4 on Payran Street (next door to Toby’s Trucking yard). Only pre-screened and trained volunteers are allowed in the Livestock area due to biosecurity measures.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

Red Cross Shelter Fundamentals – Training Power Point Presentation

http://www.riema.ri.gov/berhodyready/files/Shelter_Fundamentals_Powerpoint.pdf

Red Cross Shelter Fundamentals – Handbook

<https://crcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/American-Red-Cross-Sheltering-Handbook.pdf>

City of Petaluma Emergency Prep & Response

<https://cityofpetaluma.org/departments/emergency-prep-response/>

Know Your Zone

[Know your Zone - Sonoma County Evacuation Zones Maps - Sonoma County Emergency and Preparedness Information \(socoemergency.org\)](#)

Cal Fire Incidents

<https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/>

On Facebook

Sonoma County Scanner Updates

<https://www.facebook.com/SonomaScanner>

Cal Fire – Sonoma, Lake, Napa Unit

<https://www.facebook.com/CALFIRELNU>