

Evacuation and Shelter

Unfortunately, there will be times when our residents and visitors find themselves in a situation that requires that people evacuate from their homes or other lodging to remain safe. For localized incidents, evacuation will be ordered by the Incident Commander or his/her designee. Evacuation routes for people to take to safety will be determined at the time of the incident. Generally, emergency responders will identify the major roads leading away from the evacuated areas at the time of the incident. Response agency personnel and/or OEMS staff will notify the affected population of the need to evacuate and routes they can take. The procedures that will be used to notify people can be found in the “Public Warning and Emergency Information” section of the Genesee County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), here:

<http://co.genesee.ny.us/geneseecountynew/departments/ems/uploads/emscemp.pdf>

While most people who need to evacuate their homes typically stay with friends or family, or in hotels, some of them will require short-term shelter. Genesee County partners with the American Red Cross (ARC) to operate emergency shelters throughout the County, in accordance with the existing “Red Cross Sheltering Plan.” The ARC has pre-identified a set of facilities that could be used as emergency shelters. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is included in the criteria that the ARC uses to approve a facility to serve as a shelter, as is the requirement that facilities must be outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). During an incident that requires evacuation of an area, the County OEMS will work with the ARC to activate one or more shelters (depending on the need and the resources available to operate a shelter), and will ensure that the location(s) of the shelter(s) is/are provided to evacuees. How evacuees will be notified of shelter locations is also addressed by the “Public Warning and Emergency Information” section of the CEMP.

During an incident, Genesee County’s emergency management structure will establish a Human Needs resources group to address medical needs, access and functional needs, compliance with the ADA, and other issues that arise during an evacuation. This group is also described in the CEMP, in the “Meeting Human Needs” section.

If you are interested in being a shelter volunteer for the ARC, please contact the ARC Western NY Chapter, at <https://www.redcross.org/local/new-york/western-and-central-new-york/about-us/locations/western-new-york-chapter.html>.