



## Donations in Emergency Situations

It is challenging during an emergency or humanitarian crisis to acquire accurate information, conduct a needs assessment, transport people and resources, and properly store medical products. Experienced responders and local experts are in the best position to handle emergency medical donations. They have access to real-time information and can access locals with familiar with the needs and resources of impacted communities. Most aid organizations, private sector organizations, and individuals are better positioned to respond to a crisis during the recovery phase when the needs can be more accurately determined.

The MSA Emergency Donation Checklist is designed to highlight the MSA Code of Conduct, the World Health Organization, and disaster response organizations guidelines. It is not a replacement for working with seasoned intermediaries on the ground or following the guidance of local authorities, such as the Ministry of Health.

Please use the checklist to evaluate the appropriateness and quality of emergency medical donations before shipping products to disaster or humanitarian crisis settings. The checkboxes identify the essential steps and information required to conduct a needs assessment, select products, and transport them safely. For example:

- During a disaster, MSROs and donors should determine whether outside aid is being accepted and has been requested and respond accordingly.

Guidance: Donors should respect the wishes of local authorities. The government officials and organizations operating with the affected country understand the needs of their communities and are responsible for coordinating the initial response and long-term recovery efforts. Donation guidance is available on embassy websites.

Finally, MSA Accredited Medical Surplus Recovery Organization (MSRO) are available to offer assistance and help donors support the relief and recovery efforts. Links to the MSA Accredited MSROs, the full Code of Conduct and additional guidance visit is available at [medsurplusalliance.org](https://medsurplusalliance.org).

## DONATIONS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS – GENERAL GUIDELINES

### General – Emergency Needs Assessment

Emergency donations should only be made based on an expressed need, at the request of the in-country partner, and after a thorough needs assessment confirms that the donation is appropriate for the setting and there are human resources available to manage, deploy, store and use the products.

### General – Short-Dated Products and Product Condition

During a humanitarian crisis, product donations should be held to the same quality standards as they are in non-disaster situations. Products must be used prior to the expiry date and be in good working order, otherwise donations create a burden and may cause harm.

MSROs and donors should document requests for short-dated product including who is requesting the product, why it is requested, and how it will be transported and used prior to the expiration date.

The following general requirements should be assessed before donating:

- During a disaster, MSROs and donors should determine whether outside aid is being accepted and has been requested and respond accordingly.
- During a disaster, MSROs and donors should determine whether the local population is participating in any assessments and product requests and respond accordingly.
- During a disaster, MSROs and donors should determine whether there is an expedited plan in place for vetting new partners or approving donations and respond accordingly.
- During a disaster, MSROs and donors should evaluate unusually large requests to avoid sending an excess product that might create a disposal issue for the recipient and respond accordingly.
- During a disaster, MSROs and donors should verify customs clearance procedures to determine if they have been waived, modified or forbid emergency medical donations and respond accordingly.
- During a disaster, MSROs and donors should determine that human resources are available to manage, deploy, store and use the products appropriately.

## Other Considerations

In addition to the general guidelines, the following factors should be assessed when determining whether to donate products.

### **Consumable Products - During a disaster, MSROs and donors should:**

- Process and package approved emergency consumable products, medical devices, equipment and pharmaceuticals in the same manner as non-emergency shipments.
- Transport approved shipments of consumable products, medical devices, equipment and pharmaceuticals by the most expeditious means available.

### **Medical Equipment - During a disaster, MSROs and donors should:**

- Determine whether the technology is appropriate for the operating environment.
- Determine whether the number of accessories required is minimal and/or will not pose significant challenges to the operation and maintenance of the equipment.
- Determine and provide necessary operating supplies (particularly disposables).
- Determine whether the equipment has a reasonable tolerance to compromised settings and harsh physical environments.

### **Pharmaceuticals - During a disaster, MSROs and donors should:**

- Determine whether the product being sent matches the expressed need of the receiving organization and is appropriate for treating the affected population.
- Determine whether the recipient organization has the proper storage for the product. This includes storage facilities, shelving, dispensary facilities, refrigeration and security.
- Determine whether the recipient organization has the proper staff for handling and dispensing of pharmaceuticals prior to any donation being made.
- Determine and comply with pharmaceutical import restrictions.

### **Customs Clearance - During a disaster, MSROs and donors should:**

- Determine that the recipient has access to human resources with the capacity to receive the shipment of donated medical resources and the necessary clearance documents.
- Determine that recipient is able to provide transportation from the point of entry to the final destination.

### **Security - During a disaster, MSROs and donors should:**

- Provide for the security of the products and individuals responsible for receiving, transporting, storing or using the products.