

# **Southern Baptist Disaster Relief**



## **Shower Unit Manual**

**North American Mission Board, SBC  
May 2004**

## Introduction

God continues to bless Southern Baptist Disaster Relief with significant growth. During the early 90's, the national fleet was small in number and type, being limited to feeding units, recovery units, a few childcare units, and a sprinkling of other types of units.

As the interest in disaster relief has grown following major disasters, more people have become involved. The logistical support for disaster responses has also diversified. Different types of units require different types of support. Along with the growth of more units has been a multiplication of the number of volunteers.

The needs of volunteers remain the same—a place to sleep, food to eat, and a means to clean up. Most volunteers are involved in a response from five to seven days. The work is often hard, strenuous, and hot. Volunteers often work 12 to 15 hours a day. They sleep in church Sunday School rooms, gyms, fellowship halls, school classrooms, or some such place. Most of these types of facilities do not have showers. Without a nice warm shower, it is difficult to rest when it is time to lie down at night. By their nature, chainsaw and mud-out are very difficult and dirty types of work. In the case of mud-out, volunteers are handling many kinds of unknown materials and substances.

The victims in disaster-affected communities are also caught without many of the basic necessities of life. They are also working to recover. Often they are salvaging their belongings or camping out on their property. They also need a means of taking a warm shower.

In 1994 during the Tropical Storm Alberto disaster relief response in Albany, Georgia, it became apparent that there was an urgent need for portable showers—for volunteers as well as families affected by disaster. Volunteers were willing to come and help in whatever way needed. However the old problem persisted—how to shower?

The answer was obvious to the Mallory Baptist Association rebuild coordinator. We need a shower trailer! A conversation with the national disaster relief director confirmed there were no shower trailers in the fleet. The rebuild coordinator was encouraged to build one.

Charles Freeman started working with a dedicated group of volunteers in Albany. Cans were placed on breakfast tables. Offerings came from churches. Gifts came from individuals, agencies, corporations, and foundations. Over the next two years with the assistance of volunteers, the first shower unit was built.

What a blessing! A thirty-foot Pace cargo trailer with six shower stalls, two water heaters, a generator, and a washer and dryer. The funds also provided for a dually pickup truck to pull the shower trailer.

From these humble beginnings the shower unit ministry has grown to 28 units in the national fleet. God continues to bless. Churches, associations, and state conventions see the need for more shower units and continue to build units. Every disaster response now requires the support of the shower units.

In addition, laundry units now grace the fleet! Multiple washing machines and dryers on these units provide a way to daily clean hundreds of laundry loads for volunteers and disaster victims.

The shower unit ministry has grown to support other types of mission events. Construction projects, Baptist Student Union projects, Strategic Focus City events, Crossover events, and World Changer projects are just a few of the different events that shower units have been used to support volunteer involvement.

Please accept the gratitude of other volunteers and disaster victims for your willingness to become involved in this ministry. God will bless your willingness to minister in this way.

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## Unit One Mission of the Shower Unit

“When did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you anything to drink? Or a stranger, and help you? Or naked, and clothe you? When you did it to these my brothers you were doing it to me.”  
Matthew 25: 37-38, 40

The primary mission of the shower unit is to provide hot, safe, and refreshing showers for disaster relief volunteers and disaster victims. The shower trailer ministry also supports volunteers who respond to other Southern Baptist mission events.

## Unit Two Stages and Alert System

The system to activate units and teams begins with the affected state placing a call for help. Southern Baptists adopted the following process for the activation of units and volunteers.

In addition, pre-event preparation may include communication with state and national disaster relief leadership.

1. **Alert** – the first level of response at any level—national, state, or individual—is alert. The primary question is “can you go?” If so, it’s time to begin making plans. If no immediate response is needed, this stage is updated about every 24 hours.
2. **Standby** – the second level of response is standby. At this point, there is a probable need for a response. The unit/team will depart as soon as it is requested to respond. Prepare all personnel and equipment to leave immediately. If there is some delay, this stage will be updated every 12 hours. If the unit/ are not asked to respond within 48 hours, they may revert to alert or be taken off the potential response plan.
3. **Go/No Go** - The third level of response is go/no go. If the decision is no go, then the status of the unit/team may revert to standby, alert, or it may be taken off the response plan entirely. Go means a response is definite. The disaster relief unit will move within six hours or less.

The following vital information is given or will be coming with the activation call.

S E M A C is the acrostic that is used:

S – Situation: specific circumstances at the location

E – Environment: location and how to get there or to the staging area

M – Mission: specific assignment of services

Notes

- A – Administration: contact person, who to report to
- C – Communication: report to state director and national offsite coordinator every four hours en route.

The next step is when the state director activates the state units/teams, giving its members essential details and determining the number of volunteers needed along with their shift length.

A designated person will begin contacting other volunteers to go as relief teams at intervals determined by the circumstances—usually five days to a week. The incident commander and state disaster relief director will coordinate the location and length of service of all volunteers.

4. **Closing** – The final stage of response is closing. The mobile unit is no longer needed at that location. It may be reassigned to another location or allowed to return home. The decision to close or terminate will be made in collaboration with the affected state disaster relief director and the incident commander.

### **Unit Three**

#### **Transportation of the Shower Unit**

Prior to or during the pre-trip inspection of the unit, the unit director and the drive team members should plan their expected travel route. Planning will be based on alert status and arrival time request. Select a route, departure time, and intended time of arrival. In the event of a change in plans due to road delays, detours, breakdowns, etc., immediately contact the offsite coordinator.

Prior to departure, the team designated to move the unit should be made aware of emergency procedures for their particular unit. Every unit will have procedures in place in the event of a pull-vehicle breakdown, unit breakdown, sickness of a team member, or an accident.

An inspection checklist for the pull vehicle and trailer should be completed prior to departure and done on a regular basis.

- Verify that insurance information, vehicle registration, and accident report forms are in the unit.
- Secure the offsite contact phone number and other activation information.
- Inspect tires for proper condition and inflation. Include the spare tire in this inspection.
- Verify the unit contains a proper tire tool, jack, and cribbing.

**Notes**

- Check to make sure that safety items, including a first aid kit, road triangles or cones, and fire extinguishers, are on the unit.
- Insure that all lights are in working order, including the running, flasher, and brake lights.
- Insure that tools needed for the maintenance and repair of the unit are on board.
- Verify that all items assigned to the unit are in their proper location, are secure, and in proper working order.
- Inspect washers and dryers to verify they are secured with tie-downs.
- Inspect the propane tank(s), generator, and fuel tanks to verify they are secure and meet all regulation for transportation of these materials and equipment.

## Unit Four Hook-up Procedures

Follow established safety procedures when attaching the trailer to the truck.. The tow truck will require a class 4 or 5 frame mount tow package. Trailers having shorter safety chains should have an extension that can be used to lengthen the safety chains. These extensions should be kept in the tool box assigned to the unit.

The break-away cable for the emergency break should be attached by a separate clevis or “D” ring attached to the truck frame. These instructions are designed for a hitch pull or as some would say a tag along. We recommend a minimum class 4 receiver. Some larger trailers require a class 5 receiver and stabilizer bars. Some state conventions, associations, and churches have units that are fifth wheel, goose neck, and vary in length and design.

The procedures of hook-up will vary according to unit, but we emphasize the importance of a “buddy system” to insure proper hook-up.

**Step 1:** Align the truck and trailer using a “buddy” (a second person). Be sure the trailer is chocked to insure it will not move during the hook-up procedure.

**Step 2:** Lower the trailer on to truck hitch and latch down with the securing device.

**Step 3:** Attach safety chain from trailer to truck. Use a clevis or D ring to attach the safety chains.

**Step 4:** Place block under jack foot and lift the trailer until rear of truck is raised approximately 6 inches. This is a safety procedure to insure the

Notes

hitch is locked in place for a bumper hitch pull method before the trailer is moved.

**Step 5:** Once it is determined the hitch is attached properly, lower the jack. Then position jack in the up position (travel position) and attach break-away cable to clevis or “D” ring on truck frame. Place wheel chocks inside of truck or trailer for travel.

**Step 6:** Attach electrical system and check all running lights, brake lights, turn signal lights and emergency flashers.

**Step 7:** Adjust the trailer brakes using the actuator and manufacturer’s instructions.

Equipment required for the transportation of a shower unit:

- 2 5/16” hitch ball
- Class 4 or 5 tow system attached to truck frame
- 7 prong electrical hook-up
- Clevis or “D” ring attached to the frame of the truck to secure trailer chain
- Wheel chocks
- Lock or pin for hitch
- Safety chain extensions

## **Unit Five**

### **Transit of the Shower Unit**

While the unit is in transit to the disaster site, the unit director is responsible to contact the offsite coordinator every four hours. Preset contact times will provide the offsite coordinator with valuable information and help to maintain operational efficiency. The unit may be staged or assigned to another site and the offsite coordinator will pass this information on to the unit while it is traveling. The offsite coordinator will also keep the incident commander informed on the unit’s travel and expected time of arrival.

Once the unit has arrived on site, the unit director should contact the offsite coordinator to provide arrival time and unit status. During a multistate response, the incident command team should be contacted for additional instructions.

**Notes**



## Unit Six Site Survey

Upon arriving at the designated site, check in with the offsite coordinator and complete other check-in requirements that may have been given during activation of the unit. To minimize confusion, if other units are arriving or setting up, stage off the property until your set-up location is determined. Have volunteers stay with the unit.

1. Meet with the site coordinator or contact person of the facility. You will need to determine the layout of the facility, their future schedule of activities, other assigned units, and the mission of the location.
2. Determine the location of the gray water drain, water supply, and electrical supply. **Do not discharge gray water on the ground or in a storm sewer unless you have direct approval from the local authorities in writing.** The unit director will provide the name and phone number of the local authority to the incident command team.
3. The unit director in consultation with the local contact person and site coordinator will determine any security issues that should be addressed; always keeping in mind this is a 24 hour operation.

## Unit Seven Set-up of the Shower Unit

1. Based on scheduled activities and available gray water drainage, select a location that will provide support to other units. This support may include but is not limited to water, electricity, and utilizing the facility and parking lot space effectively. The site for the shower unit should insure that all equipment is safe and secure. The convenience for volunteer use and safety should also be kept in mind during unit set-up.
2. Level and stabilize unit using jacks and cribbing as required.
3. Select best method of disposing of gray water.
  - a. Option 1: A 2" PVC or plastic pipe secured to a local sewer tap. Make sure there is no leakage of the gray water into the local environment.
  - b. Option 2: Establish a catch basin system. Use a bladder, tank, or child's swimming pool to capture the gray water as it exits the showers. Connect a sump pump to 5/8" hose and move the gray water to a sewer tap.

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- c. Option 3: Build bladder system as outlined in Option 2 and contact a local contractor to transport the gray water to a proper disposal facility.
4. Secure water supply.
  - a. Option 1: Connect to the facility water supply where the unit will be set up.
  - b. Option 2: Secure a water buffalo or tanker through the incident command team. Feeding units may already have these services provided by one of the Southern Baptist partners that often support us during disaster responses. This option will require a shallow well pump that will pressurize the water supply system in the unit. The pump will require a two-inch intake. The discharge of the pump should have a minimum of a triple manifold for discharge.
  - c. Option 3: Connect a 5/8" water hose from other unit(s) that are located on the site.
5. Connect the shower trailer electrical cords to the facility or unit generator. Care should be taken to insure that electrical cords are connected to different circuits.
6. Attach gas line to propane bottle. (Note: 100 lb. cylinder or less will need an external support (top and bottom) of tank to keep cylinder from falling over.)
7. Place orange safety cones at tongue of trailer, gas cylinder location, and rear of trailer, allowing at least six feet of clearance.
8. After the systems are connected, activate the water, gas, and electrical supply systems. Check for leaks. If leaks are found, secure them immediately.
9. If the unit has a water heater with a pilot light system, light it. Make sure the heaters are working properly.
10. Check shower stalls and make sure the valves are off. Prepare shower area for use.
11. Make assignments for the volunteers that are working the shower unit for the next two days.
12. Report unit status to incident command team and turn in all information on the volunteers, the site, and other pertinent information.

**Notes**

## Securing the Gas Bottle

To insure a safe working environment, the following procedures must be followed:

- All size gas bottles must have the plastic screw in plug in place when not in use.
- When transporting or at work site, all bottles will have **top and bottom** secure.
- Bottles not in use need to follow the same requirements as stated above. NAMB has installed a 2"x 4"x 4" piece of steel on the tongue frame to secure the gas bottles during operation. NAMB units will transported gas bottles only during an emergency operation. Two tie-down straps must be used to attach the gas bottles to the frame.

## Unit Eight Cleaning Procedures for the Shower Unit

Shower units should be cleaned at least once daily but more often depending on the amount and type of use. In addition to cleaning, the shower stalls and floor are to be sanitized daily. A log will be kept of the cleaning times and work performed.

1. Remove all trash and clothing from trailers.
2. Empty trash cans and replace with new trash can liner.
3. Sweep floor of shower unit.
4. Wipe down chairs and stack outside during the cleaning procedures.
5. Use shower stall cleaner and scrub brush to clean floor and walls. Rinse walls and shower head well.
6. Apply one cup (8 oz.) of chlorine to shower walls and floor and let stand for 30 minutes before rinsing.
7. Spray shower curtains with disinfectant.
8. Fill mop bucket with water and pine sol cleaner (3 oz. pine sol cleaner per gallon of water).
9. Clean thoroughly around washer and dryer, removing all detergent and clothing.
10. Clean lint from dryer after each use.
11. Return clean chairs to the dressing area.

## Unit Nine Breakdown of the Shower Unit

When the shower unit has been released from the disaster response, the following steps should be followed in packing and preparing the unit for transport home.

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1. Remove all trash, soap, towels, and clothing from the trailer.
2. Clean trailer per guidelines stated above.
3. Place chairs in shower stalls and put steps in front compartment of trailer.
4. Turn off gas and disconnect gas bottle. Secure gas bottle in the proper transport position..
5. Turn off water and roll up water hose. Place hose in 30-gallon trash container and place in front compartment of the trailer.
6. Drain water heaters. (Note: Never transport the shower unit with water in the heaters. They will rupture and have to be replaced.)
7. Disconnect electrical lines and place them in their assigned transport location inside trailer.
8. Secure gas line on trailer. Verify the gas bottle is closed properly and also secured.
9. Raise stabilizer jack and remove cribbing. Place inside trailer in assigned travel position.
10. Secure washer and dryer. Place all items (detergent and other supplies) in assigned transport position.
11. Lock all doors and prepare to connect the trailer to the truck.

### **Unit Ten**

#### **Inventory of the Shower Unit**

- 200 feet of 5/8" standard water hose
- 2—5/8" "Y"
- 1—pressure nozzle
- 50 feet (5 @ 10 feet each) two-inch PVC drain pipe
- 30 feet —two-inch blue flex drain hose
  - 5 each—two-inch rubber connector
  - 2 each—two-inch rubber "Y"
  - 2 each—two-inch caps
  - 3 each—90-degree rubber connector
- 1—100 foot extension cord (attached to trailer)
- 1—50 foot extension cord
- 1—100 foot extension cord
- 2—five-gallon buckets (to be used for trash cans)
- 1—35-gallon plastic can for water hose storage
- miscellaneous cribbing
- 1—sump pump
- 2—100 feet of 5/8" gray water hose
- 2 each—lighters
- 1—water valve key

**Notes**

## Unit Eleven

### Drive Team Supply Box Inventory

#### One Storage Box

- First aid box
- Tire tool and bottle jack
- Chain extension
- 1—100-foot extension cord
- 1—3/8-inch drive and socket set
- 1—crescent wrench
- 2—screw drivers
- 1—vice grip pliers
- 1—helpers bar for lug wrench
- 3—safety cones
- miscellaneous parts

**Notes**

## Appendix

### Facts and Figures

#### Electrical:

- 3—20 amps circuits required using 12-2 extensions cords (basic electrical receptacle in church)
- Lights, washer and dryer on one circuit
- A/C on one circuit
- Lights and heater on one circuit

#### Water usage:

- Average shower usage per person.....4 gallons
- Average daily usage of unit..... 400 gallons
- Joint operation excluding laundry unit per day..... 2000 gallons
- Military “Buffalo” water capacity.....450 gallons
- Tanker semi water capacity..... 9,000 to 12,000 gallons