Frequently Asked Questions about Disaster Relief Training

1. **Why is training required to respond to a disaster?** Security is becoming a growing issue in disaster areas. Our national partners (Red Cross, Salvation Army, FEMA, VOAD) ask that we bring credentialed volunteers to a disaster area. Therefore training is required for our Disaster Relief Volunteers.

2. **Where are training events held?** Each year IBSA plans three major training events. The northern training location is at Camp Streator in the spring. The Central location is usually hosted by a local church somewhere in the central part of the state. It is also held in the spring. The southern training location is at Camp Sallateeska in the fall.

3. **Are all the classes available at each location?** Our highest demand classes (chainsaw, feeding, mudout, chaplaincy, & childcare) are available at each location. Other classes may vary based on demand, available teachers, and the cost of transporting equipment.

4. **Can I take more than one class?** The Introduction to Disaster Relief 101 is scheduled on Friday evening. This class is required for new volunteers. Then there are two class periods on Saturday (morning and afternoon). If you choose an all-day class (chain saw, childcare, chaplaincy) then you can only take one class. Otherwise you can choose a class in the morning and different class in the afternoon.

5. **What is the cost and what do the fees cover?** The cost for new volunteers is $30. This covers your training, t-shirt, hat, background check, and credentials badge. The cost for a current volunteer who needs their badge renewed is $10 for a background check. If a current volunteer comes for additional training and does not need a badge renewed, there is no charge. Lodging at the camp locations are an additional $10 per person.

6. **Why do I need a background check?** FEMA now requires a criminal background check every three years for all disaster relief volunteers.

7. **Do I need previous experience to sign up for a DR class?** All classes are open to new volunteers with the exception of Assessment. We prefer that students in the Assessment class have had some previous experience with Disaster Relief callouts.

8. **Who leads the training classes?** Our classes are all taught by our own IBSA Disaster Relief leaders who have years of experience in Disaster Relief leadership and callouts.

9. **Can both men and women serve as chaplains?** Yes. Chaplains are tasked with meeting the spiritual needs of homeowners while other team members are responding to their physical needs. Women are needed and effective in the chaplaincy role.

10. **How often should I attending training?** You can attend DR training as often as you desire. However, when you receive your credentials badge it is good for three years. During those three years you must take additional training OR respond to a Disaster Relief callout in order to have your credentials renewed for an additional three years. A new background check is also required.
11. I'm a new volunteer and can only come on Saturday. What classes can I take? The Introduction to Disaster Relief 101 class is taught on Friday evening and Saturday afternoon. So you would be required to take the 101 class on Saturday afternoon. You can then choose any of the half day classes to take in the morning. If your only interest is in an all-day course (chainsaw or childcare) then you can take an abbreviated class in one of those areas on Saturday morning and still take the 101 class on Saturday afternoon. You would not be able to take the Chaplaincy class unless you can begin on Friday afternoon.

12. Can I sign up for Blue Cap Training? Most Disaster Relief volunteers are called “yellow hats.” However a Unit Leader receives additional training in order to be qualified to lead a team during a callout. A Unit Leader is called a “Blue Cap.” They wear a blue shirt and cap so that people know they are unit leaders. New Blue Cap candidates must be recommended by an Associational DOM or by another Blue Cap and then be approved by the IBSA Disaster Relief Executive Team in order to be eligible to take Blue Cap training.

13. What are the lodging options during a DR training event? At the camp locations, dorm style lodging (usually bunk beds) is available for an additional cost of $10 per person. You must bring your own bedding. Men and women sleep in separate locations. The Central Illinois location is held at a church so the best lodging option is a local hotel which is an additional cost. Sometimes the host church will allow DR volunteers to sleep on their floor (similar to a DR Callout). But showers are generally not available at the church.

14. What meals are provided during a training event? Dinner on Friday, Breakfast and lunch on Saturday are provided at no additional cost. The meals provided are similar to the meals that a volunteer would eat during a Disaster Relief callout.

15. What is the age limit for Disaster Relief Volunteers? You must be 18 years old to be a credentialed Disaster Relief Volunteer. We sometimes allow teenagers under 18 to attend the training. But their badge credentials cannot be issued until they turn 18.

16. Can I attend training if I am not a Southern Baptist? We do allow other denominations to attend out training events. However, we cannot issue Southern Baptist Disaster Relief credentials to a DR volunteer unless they are a member of a Southern Baptist Church.

17. Is child care available during a Disaster Relief training event? Child care is not available during training events. It is normally not a good idea to bring children to Disaster Relief Training.

18. What type of clothing should I wear? Casual and comfortable clothing is the norm for Disaster Relief training. Current volunteers are welcome to wear their yellow Disaster Relief apparel to a training event.