

# "If a Natural Disaster Occurs"



## DEPARTMENT OF PACIFIC AREAS

### NATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF FUND POLICY

#### **GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

**Background and Policy Information:** The National Council of Administration (NCA) adopted a National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF) Policy concerning matching disaster relief funds on 28 February 1998. Due largely to urgings from the Department of Pacific Areas (DPA), the NCA amended the NDRF Policy on 11 October 1998 to include overseas Departments.

NDRF Policy clarifies the requirements and procedures for Departments to apply to National for matching funds to financially assist needy Department members when a local disaster occurs that affects them. National is authorized to distribute up to \$100,000/year to a single Department and up to \$1 million/year for the VFW overall.

In order to request matching funds from National, DPA must first solicit donations by check from members for deposit in an account the DPA QM sets up. A letter requesting matching funds must be submitted to National Headquarters within ninety (90) days of the time that the national disaster has been declared. Accompanying that letter, or as soon as possible thereafter, photocopies of all checks for which matching funds being requested must be submitted to the Quartermaster General for his review and approval. Following review and approval, National will send matching funds by check to the DPA QM for disbursement to the DPA members in distress.

#### DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

**Aim of Guidelines:** The aim of these Guidelines is to establish a system for financially assisting DPA members affected by a local disaster. The assistance, in the form of donations from DPA members, Posts, and Districts, and matching funds from VFW National, can be used only to assist DPA members affected by the disaster. Because confusion always accompanies a disaster, all concerned persons should pay special attention to communications and should adjust to situations as they develop.

**Disaster Criteria** – DPA will take action when the following criteria are met.

1. When the government of a country in the DPA where one or more VFW Posts are located declares a disaster emergency.

2. When the senior District officer in the disaster area requests donations for a Comrade or Comrades in distress because of the disaster.

**Disaster Relief Committee** – DPA will have a Disaster Relief Committee (DRC) with the Department Commander as Chairman and the Quartermaster and District Commanders as members.

When a disaster occurs and the above disaster criteria have been met, the Commander will contact the members of the DRC and appoint an Area Coordinator (AC), usually the District Commander in the disaster area. The District Commander, however, can recommend that the AC be a Post Commander or VFW member residing nearer the disaster and having communications (e-mail, telephone, or fax) capabilities.

When activated, the DRC's members will be the Department Commander, the District Commander in the disaster area, the DPA QM, and the AC if other than the District Commander. All DRC members will be copied on disaster-related correspondence. The DRC will make the final decisions on the size of grants and the Comrades to receive them, based on recommendations from the AC.

After the DRC makes its final report to the Department Council of Administration, the DRC will be deactivated and return to standing committee status.

**Responsibilities and Procedures** – The following are the responsibilities of the DRC members, and procedures they must follow.

- ✓ **Department Commander** – As chairman of the DRC, the Department Commander will:
  1. Activate the DRC after confirming a disaster condition exists that meets the disaster criteria;
  2. Appoint an AC and brief him on all guidelines, procedures and policies;
  3. Confirm that a request for donations has been sent to all Districts, Posts and comrades;
  4. Confirm that these guidelines and procedures follow those of National;
  5. Confirm that National, the DPA Council, and DPA membership are informed of the situation as necessary; and
  6. Confirm that a single line of communications is maintained between DPA and VFW National.
- ✓ **District Commander** – The District Commander will:
  1. Confirm that the initial estimate of the disaster situation is immediately passed to the DPA Commander.
  2. Recommend an AC quickly to the DPA Commander if he feels such a recommendation is warranted.
  3. Assume the AC position, unless unable to or ordered otherwise, when a disaster affects more than one Post in his District, and the Posts are far apart;
  4. Ensure that the DPA Commander and QM are kept informed of all developments relating to the disaster; and
  5. Provide the DPA QM with information for the final DRC Report.

✓ **DPA QM - The DPA QM will:**

1. Prepare the request to DPA Districts, Posts, and members for donations, describing the disaster and providing information on how to make out the donation checks and where to forward them;
2. Set up and maintain a separate account for handling the donations;
3. Ensure that donations are disbursed according to National policy;
4. Maintain close coordination with the AC to ensure that funds are disbursed properly and expeditiously to members in distress;
5. Submit the matching funds letters to National Headquarters and the Quartermaster General as stipulated in NDRF policy;
6. Ensure that the DRC members are kept informed about donations and grants; and
7. Prepare the final DRC Report for the DPA Commander, basing it on information from the DRC members and his own information; after the DPA Commander approves the report it will be presented to the DPA Council for final approval.

✓ **Area Coordinator - The Area Coordinator will:**

1. Keep the DRC members informed of the current situation and the needs of members, and their families, in distress;
2. Make immediate recommendations to the DRC members as required by the local situation;
3. Keep records of all requests and recommendations sent to the DRC members concerning relief funds;
4. Coordinate closely with the DPA QM concerning the availability of funds and their immediate and subsequent distribution;
5. Ensure that all recipients of funds are current DPA members;
6. Send the DPA QM receipts or copies of local checks issued to members in distress as either DPA donations or National matching funds;
7. Ensure that the DRC members are kept informed of all local matters concerning the disaster; and
8. Submit a final report to the DRC members covering all aspects of the disaster, including the distribution of funds, and make recommendations as necessary to improve these guidelines and procedures; this report will be appended to the final DRC Report.

**Submitted by: Special Disaster Relief Committee appointed by the Department Commander at the incoming C of A on June 23, 2000.**

**Approved: At Department Convention, Angeles City, Philippines, on June 21, 2001.**