

MNA Shower Trailer Ministry

Our Assignment:

Mission to North America (MNA) a Permanent Committee of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is assigned the task of coordinating the PCA response to disaster in the United States and Canada. Mission to North America accomplishes this vital task through dedicated staff members who mobilize presbyteries, churches and individuals to use their time, talent and treasure to prepare for disaster and to respond to disaster.

History:

MNA Disaster Response has grown tremendously since the early beginnings in 2004. As of spring 2013, this growing network of relief providers has trained, equipped and mobilized more than 90,000 volunteers to disaster affected communities in desperate need, has rebuilt or repaired at least 19 PCA church physical plants, repaired hundreds of single-family dwellings, provided relief grants to many PCA families, equipped and trained churches and presbyteries in disaster response readiness and provided site management when churches were overwhelmed by disasters.

MNA has responded to every major disaster to strike the US and Canada during this timeframe including Hurricane Sandy--the largest Hurricane, Hurricane Katrina--the most destructive Hurricane, the 2010 Haiti Earthquake--the most deadly and destructive earthquake, the 2011 SE Tornado Outbreak--the US's largest tornado outbreak, and many other smaller events including man-induced calamities. Volunteers assist congregations as they recover and then assist in reaching out into affected communities demonstrating the love of Christ in tangible ways.

When a disaster strikes:

MNA Disaster Response launches several operations simultaneously when a disaster strikes, including the following:

1. Communicates with the larger PCA family that a disaster has occurred and begins channeling prayer support as assessment begins.
2. At the request of local churches and presbyteries MNA mobilizes assessment teams made up staff and/or highly experienced volunteers. The assessment team, collaborating with local leadership, determines the scope of the need and whether the local church can handle the response internally, if assistance from sister presbytery churches can meet the needs or if outside volunteers should be recruited.
3. The assessment team surveys church physical plants to determine damage. They further determine if the church facilities can be utilized to house outside volunteers (adequate sleeping capacity, meal preparation facilities, restrooms and showers, etc). They will determine if the church facility can be utilized as a shelter, or as a supply redistribution center (food, water, cleaning supplies, clothing, etc.).

4. At the same time the assessment team is on the ground, MNA begins conferencing through National VOAD with other disaster agency partners such as Southern Baptists, United Methodists, Catholic Charities, Samaritans Purse, Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc., which are also doing assessments. This partnership prevents duplication of services and allows MNA to leverage our friendships to provide more resources for our church family. We develop relationships with the local government agencies, other relief providers and other local faith based groups.
5. When the assessment is complete a report, completed in conjunction with local PCA church leadership, is presented to MNA including a recommendation about the establishment of a worksite (if needed) and mobilization of short-term & long-term volunteers, site managers, interns. The report also includes data to help determine if a denomination-wide financial appeal is necessary.
6. If MNA is invited to coordinate the response, first response teams are mobilized to the location. The teams work with local diaconates to identify and check on every PCA family within the disaster strike zone, to stabilize the church physical plant and to secure it from further damage or vandalism, and to develop a safe and secure base of operations adequate to sustain future volunteer disaster response teams. A primary function of these teams is to assist the local church leadership get back on their feet as soon as possible so they can in turn help congregational members get on their feet. Teams also assist the local church in reaching out to the greater community beyond the walls of the church through mercy ministry.

The Need for Shower Trailers:

"We can ask our trained first responders to sleep in tents, on storm damaged church pews or in truck beds, and eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. At the end of very difficult physically demanding and spiritually draining days they must have adequate showers. Many times those volunteers are working heroically, in sweltering, nasty conditions. It is only proper for us to provide the tools they need to serve us"

-- Arklie Hooten, MNA Disaster Response Director

Once the decision is made to establish a volunteer worksite at a particular church, the most immediate need is for shower facilities. No showers=no volunteers. Most PCA churches do not have shower facilities within their physical plant and many times places to find adequate showers is either impossible or hugely time consuming. The quickest and best means to provide showers is with a portable shower trailer. Shower trailer deployment teams act as specialized First Responder Teams. Other First Responder teams include worksite development teams, blue-roofer teams (tarring teams), chain saw / debris cleanup teams, food canteen teams, etc. Following the decision to set up a work site, a Site Manager will be mobilized to host and coordinate volunteer teams.

Current Teams:

As of spring 2013 MNA has 5 Shower Trailer Deployment teams located in strategic regions:

1. Team 1 is located in Stanley North Carolina in partnership with First PCA Stanley NC.
2. Team 2 is located in Jackson Mississippi in partnership with Mississippi Valley Presbytery.
3. Team 3 is located in Fort Worth Texas in partnership with North Texas Presbytery.
4. Team 4 is located in Orlando Florida in partnership with Central Florida Presbytery.
5. Team 5 is located in St. Louis in partnership with Missouri Presbytery, Chicago Metro Presbytery, Illiana Presbytery, Central Indiana Presbytery and Northern Illinois Presbytery.

How does it work?

Ideally, a presbytery working through their particular MNA Committee, forms a deployment team made up of volunteers from member churches which commit funds to purchase a shower trailer. This team would serve as a specialized First Response Team.

- A shower trailer deployment team is responsible to not only purchase the trailer, but to store the unit when it isn't deployed, to perform regular maintenance to insure it is ready to go, and to transport the trailer to and from disaster worksites.
- When called upon by MNA to deploy the trailer to a worksite, a transport team consisting of 2 men (or women) utilizing a pickup truck to haul the trailer is mobilized. We recommend each Shower Trailer Team identify at least several vehicle owners with adequate trucks or vans or SUVs capable of pulling the trailer, or to have a dedicated vehicle ready to go at all times.
- The transportation team is self-contained and capable of self-subsistence for at least a few days. Trucks with camper boxes on the beds work best in case a need exists for the team to overnight on the way in or out. Ideally they would arrive, set up the shower trailer, insure it is functioning well, turn it over to the Site Manager and return home. Of course if they would like to serve as volunteers with the work projects they would be welcome to stay and serve according to their availability.
- After an event is over and the trailer is no longer needed at the worksite, the team would return to the worksite to retrieve the trailer. The trailer would be transported home, maintenance preformed, and readied for the next assignment.
- The team members normally consist of those with a mechanical aptitude and a pioneering, adventurous spirit. Retired folks would be good team members and might have the necessary time to commit.

Additional thoughts:

The shower trailer ministry should include the following:

- An operations and deployment manual has been developed by our existing teams and is available for individual team nuance and adoption. Teams must consist of volunteers trained on the setup and operation of the trailer, as well always having an updated roster of team member availability. Disasters cannot be planned and availability of volunteers varies according to their personal commitments. A team leadership structure must be developed.
- A financial structure. The average cost to purchase a new shower trailer is typically between \$20,000 to \$35,000 which is why it is recommended that churches within a particular presbytery work together to develop this ministry. Teams should also develop a yearly budget which includes upkeep, insurance, and deployment costs. The presbytery may want to consider the cost of the purchase of a pickup truck as part of this ministry as well. The first year will be the most expensive, as it will include the purchase cost. Most years it is anticipated that the budget might only be \$2,000 - \$4,000.

(NOTE: MNA may be willing to help with the initial purchase of the trailer if needed.)

Our hope is to one day soon have trailers prepositioned within a one day drive from all points in the US and Canada.

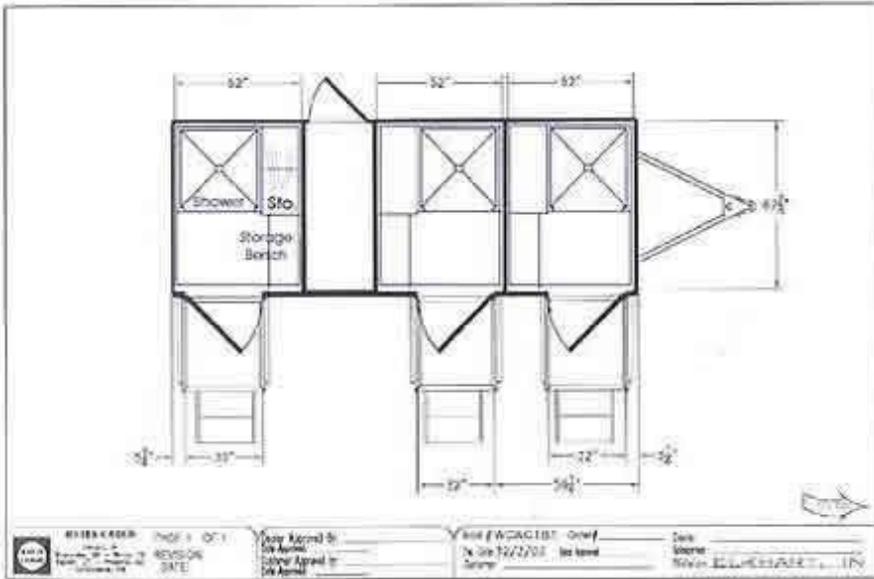
To Build or To Buy:

MNA understands that you may have the ability to build one of these trailers. Let's talk about that if you are so inclined. We have grappled with this for a long time and have considered all the issues. We are confident that buying a factor trailer is the best method. However, this is not set in stone and we are open to further discussions.

We invite your participation!

Let us know if you can help form a team. We are very interested in developing teams in the New England region, the Pacific Northwest, and the Pacific Southwest. For more information please contact Sherry Lanier at slanier@pcanet.org or 678-294-3012.

The following schematic is the layout of our existing shower trailers. Three separate entrances with landing and steps to ensure privacy. The other door provides access to the mechanical room.



The following pictures are some of our existing trailers.



