



**COMPREHENSIVE VOLUNTEER COORDINATION SYSTEM**  
Executive Overview

A PRODUCT OF



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## I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the summer of 2004 multiple hurricanes hit the state of Florida and the **Disaster Help Network** was there to help recruit and coordinate more than 10,000 volunteers across 17 affected counties. The networked technology facilitated communication and logistics but, more importantly, helped to identify and mobilize the right people for the right jobs.

Volunteerism has a very important place in American history. Volunteers impact every major social, political, and environmental and health issue. The American spirit of volunteerism is ever- present in providing disaster relief.

The **Disaster Help Network** (DHN) system coordinates volunteers for medical disaster relief by supporting Points of Distribution (POD's), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), Strategic National Stockpiles (SNS), Disaster Volunteer Reception Centers (DVRC's) and other components. There are the concerns for shelter, food, medical, and mental health services which your department may be involved with. Volunteers provide assistance to those in need, enabling these individuals to resume their normal daily activities. The widespread willingness to serve of volunteers is critical to achieving "return to normalcy."

To be effective, this willingness to serve must be accompanied by leadership and tools for organizing the work of volunteers. The **Disaster Help Network** provides just such tools for the recruitment and management of volunteers and donations. Our consultants facilitate classes in disaster volunteer response modeling as well as strategic consulting when putting together documents like bio-terrorism plans and exercise support objectives. Our partners provide full exercise support and management that includes methods for handling volunteers using our technology.



DHN is not just about disaster relief, however. It is really an extension of the nations largest commercial non-disaster software system, manufactured by Samaritan Technologies. With more than 1,300 deployments in countless settings such as universities, community Volunteer Centers, school districts and corporations Samaritan is the #1 choice when networking resources together makes sense. In the 2004 hurricanes many of our customers in Florida reinforced the statewide system with their own banks of coordinated volunteers.

## II. PRODUCT OVERVIEW

When disaster strikes, citizens are often faced with the disruption of utilities and services. Medical facilities can become inaccessible and medical care unobtainable. Schools can become shelters, retail outlets can be lost, and highways are often impassable. In response to these situations, hundreds—sometimes thousands of volunteers come forward, eager to help. Donations are given; public and private corporations offer reconstruction help and equipment leasing. The **Disaster Help Network** system was created to help communities coordinate volunteers and donations and deploy these resources effectively across multiple jurisdictions during special event planning and for emergency preparedness and response.

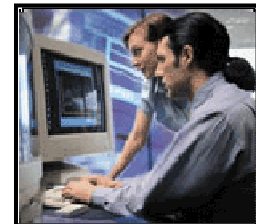


The **Disaster Help Network** system is designed to recruit and manage resources and needs for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. The system is designed to network multiple agencies and jurisdictions. By registering and processing community volunteers, donations and assistance requests, the Disaster Help Network's centralized database of expertise and support provides the documentation for a comprehensive public response system. During the 2004 hurricane season, the **Disaster Help Network** system provided Florida and Alabama, for the first time, with a State-wide, deployed and integrated volunteer, donor and public assistance system. The Disaster Help Network's Web portal was the sole resource for thousands of citizens involved in this response, including those needing assistance.

The **Disaster Help Network** system provides:

- **Compliance with National Protocols (HAN, CAP, HRSA, NIMS, etc.).** This country's only system to integrate volunteer, donation and direct assistance databases across community boundaries as outlined by the National Response Plan.
- **Automatic Database Networking.** Agencies are able to quickly share volunteers and reconcile diverse attribute sets (like medical skills) automatically.
- **Multi-Function Components.** Volunteer, donation and direct assistance operations are integrated into a user-friendly, single tracking system, expediting aid and reducing training time for new staff.

- **Response Modeling.** Customizes the pre-loading of existing response models to include requested agency types and positions/volunteers by event (including supply and equipment donors).
- **Multi-Site Support.** Maintains volunteer position postings across multiple Web sites providing “network-wide inventory management” of volunteers, positions, and schedules.
- **Command Level Architecture.** Controls with a secure, “master” database that accesses data across multiple agencies and jurisdictions. Non-master agencies retain content control of their own data/Web site and can block sharing of private information.
- **User Level Security.** Locks down data.
- **PC/Internet Redundancy.** Only the Disaster Help Network combines multi-site web-based volunteer management tools with synchronized redundant PC-based software for making local backups, or coordinating volunteers at times or locations when the Internet is unavailable.
- **Spontaneous Agency Access.** Creates new networked databases “on demand” for adding agencies to activate immediately. During the 2004 hurricane response, launched a new network connecting 13 Florida Volunteer Reception Centers and local Web sites to the State of Florida Recruiting Center.
- **On-Demand Customization.** Adapts both on-line and paper application processes. During the 2004 hurricane responses, 100% of Alabama’s new system requirements for registering victims and their needs (including property damage) were implemented within hours of the request.



By integrating private and corporate resources with individual requests for assistance in a single, secure, and networked system, the **Disaster Help Network** system matches “helping hands” with “those in need.”

### III. SYSTEM CAPABILITIES

Due to the variety of agencies involved with victim assistance, volunteer coordination and donation management, the **Disaster Help Network** system software compartmentalizes records associated with each of these agencies in separate (yet networked) databases. There is one database for each of the three primary functions—volunteers, donations, and direct assistance. Each database can be customized, allowing local jurisdictions to build volunteer applications, donor profiles, etc., and by permitting the adjustment of logistical information (such as the location of a donation, transportation options, etc.). The Disaster Help Network was utilized by the State of Alabama to track over 4,000 requests for hurricane relief assistance.

The **Disaster Help Network** system capabilities include:

#### Volunteers

- Identifying organization/contact person information
- Matching skills and availability to a geographic area after disaster
- On-line viewing of scheduling and report dates
- Tracking volunteer certifications, licenses, and background checks

#### Donations

- Tracking donations of supplies, equipment, services, funds, etc.
- Documenting all schedules and logistics (e.g., construction)
- Posting donation requests, including urgent needs
- Providing customized templates for reimbursement

#### Direct Assistance

- Entering and receiving requests can be done directly on the Internet from the same Web site used for volunteers and donors (if desired)
- Organizations providing coordinating services receive requests electronically
- Networked relief agencies may electronically receive requests from a coordinating resource group and/or directly from the Internet)

#### IV. DETAILED FEATURES:

##### **Volunteer Public Functions:**

- Finds ways to get engaged in Homeland Security activities.
- Conducts searches by local geographic areas, personal interests, availability and skills. Searches for skills desired by volunteers (example: CERT).
- Posts searchable needs for volunteers and donations. Requests are managed directly by Web-based software administered by one or more agencies.
- Posts urgent needs for volunteers.
- Citizens review schedules and sign up for schedule slots on-line.
- Citizens return to the Web site and login to check schedules, report service, take custom surveys, and view suggestions for how to get involved.
- Citizens receive automated e-mails when registering. E-mail templates are customized.
- Web site html can be hosted and maintained locally. Customized DHN forms can be accessed from designated websites.

##### **Volunteer Administrator Functions:**

- Propagates changes to database requests on-line.
- Determines and records which local users can perform different record-keeping activity within each database (e.g., establish security levels).
- Modifies standard applications for volunteers and donors to customize a record of damage.
- Reviews on-line registrations of volunteers before committing them to the main database.
- Refers and/or places volunteers and donations with appropriate projects, as designated by a specific response activity.
- Refers victims to services provided by different agencies. If the agency belongs to the network, the request for service is transferred electronically.
- Automatically e-mails selected volunteers, donors, victims, agency representatives, from database records.
- Creates logbook entries for each volunteer or donor. Logbook records, including custom surveys, can be updated by citizens on-line.
- Produces .pdf reports with custom labels for each record, multiple records, schedules, phone rosters, mailing labels (e.g., popular Avery formats), and custom fields.
- Schedules volunteers for specific positions. Schedules are Internet interactive.
- Schedules multiple volunteers for each position and/or schedule slot. Displays and reports on schedule slots that need to be filled.
- Develops a complete categorization of response resources for different types of disasters, and this data is pre-loaded into the system.
- Enters and edits data on volunteers, positions and agencies from the Internet and/or PC software.
- Provides "on demand synchronization" between PC software, Internet databases and multiple web sites.
- Expands to include additional programs, agencies and organizations that assist in disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

## V. ENHANCED FEATURES

Integrating resources people, processes, and technology when planning, responding, and recovering from and equipment for disaster response and recovery require very careful pre-planning and an effective implementation in order to avoid duplication of efforts or gaps in services. The **Disaster Help Network** system, in addition to being a full-service volunteer and donation management system with enhanced features, also provides other features designed to implement customized volunteer response needs and requirements, monitor strategies, and offer special matter expertise and instruction. Enhanced features include:

- Coordinating disaster and medical volunteer consultation, including fundraising.
- Providing subject matter expertise with experts in several disaster areas, either onsite- and off-site.
- Providing on-line 24/7 help-desk support to answer system questions, technical or otherwise.
- Producing on-site on-site training programs.
- Researching potential grant options and funding sources.
- Badging
- Integrating background checks, certifications, and licenses to provide immediate deployment.



The **Disaster Help Network** system provides all the expertise, planning, technology and support to build a comprehensive, cost-effective, volunteer response system. Regardless of whether you need a single function such as volunteerism or multiple integrated databases, we can help you. **Disaster Help Network** system can be customized to support both man-made and natural emergency response protocols, while successfully addressing client needs and goals.

## VI. SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY



The **Disaster Help Network** system's base software for coordinating volunteers, "eCoordinator," is hosted at a facility which has multiple Internet "feeds" with several backup power generators. The database is backed up daily, both on location and offsite. The **Disaster Help Network** system guarantees 100% Internet uptime. An XML/SOAP based web services interface provides the means for exchanging data with external software and databases. Our web-based system uses Sybase™ on Linux as the backend database technology, but Microsoft™ SQL Server on Windows 2003 Server is also available for customers who want to host the software on their own servers. The **Disaster Help Network** system also provides fully functional PC-based software, called Coordinator CS, that looks and operates like and synchronizes with the web-based eCoordinator software. Only the **Disaster Help Network** provides an integrated web-based multi-site capable disaster volunteer coordination system that synchronizes with a redundant PC-based system for times and places where the Internet is unavailable.

Using the **Disaster Help Network** system's Web-based database software requires Internet access (Internet Explorer version 5.5, or a later version) and Adobe Acrobat reader (a free download for reading .pdf files).

## VII. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS

Since September 11, a number of standards have been developed which are designed to improve the ability of government and non-government agencies to recruit and manage volunteer resources. These standards include compliance with:

- The National Incident Management System (U.S. Department of Homeland Security)
- The National Response Plan (U.S. Department of Homeland Security)
- Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Healthcare Personnel—Guidelines and Standards Development (U.S. Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration)
- Public Health Emergency Response Guide for State, Local, and Tribal Public health Directors (the U.S. Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

## VIII. TECHNICAL FAQ's

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions about Samaritan's ASP and selfhosted web-based products, eCoordinator, Recruiter, and Sign-in. Please contact us directly if you have questions about Coordinator C/S our product for standalone PCs and local area networks.

### 1. Does the product use a Web interface? Yes

### 2. What are the supported browser clients?

- For Windows PC's: IE 5.0 and above for all products (eCoordinator, Recruiter, Sign-in).
- Firefox 1.5 or above (Recruiter and Sign-in only).
- For Macintosh: IE 5.1 and 5.2 or Firefox 1.5 or above for Recruiter and Sign-in only.

Note that eCoordinator is the (private) interface used by volunteer Coordinators only. Recruiter and Sign-in are the (public) interfaces used by volunteers.

### 3. What are the supported client O/S platforms?

- For volunteer coordinators running eCoordinator
- Windows 95, 98, 98 second edition, ME, NT 4.0 or above, 2000, XP running IE 5.0 or above
- For volunteers accessing Recruiter or Sign-in
- Windows 95, 98, 98 second edition, ME, NT 4.0 or above, 2000, XP running IE 5.0 or above or
- Firefox 1.5 or above.
- Mac OS 8, Mac OS 9, Mac OS X, running IE 5.1 or 5.2 or Firefox 1.5 or above.

### 4. What form of browser-level encryption is used?

- 128-bit SSL encryption for all data. MD5 hash for all passwords.

### 5. What kinds of security restrictions does the application support or require?

- All access to the administrative tools, eCoordinator accounts, or individual volunteer profiles
- requires a user ID and password.
- All passwords are encrypted at the browser and transmitted and stored in encrypted form only.

- All volunteer coordinator logins have an expiration date.
- All key features within the products can be enabled or disabled per client login, using the
- administrative tools internal to the product (the Account Management System or AMS).

## **6. Does the application support user authentication and individual user accounts?**

Yes, there are separate authentications and accounts for each volunteer, volunteer coordinator and administrative user.

## **7. What are the User ID rules?**

- Volunteer logins do not have expiration dates
- User ID length: minimum 6 characters, maximum 30.
- User IDs may consist of any alphanumeric character or special characters such as #, \$, %, or may be restricted to numeric only as a configuration option.

## **8. What are the password rules?**

- Password length: minimum 6 characters, maximum 20.
- Passwords may consist of any character alphanumeric or special characters such as #, \$, %.
- More secure password support is available.

## **9. Is the data backed up?**

Yes, backups are performed nightly. Additionally, running the PC-based version of our software you can manually download / backup the data in the ASP software to a local PC or notebook computer on demand.

## **10. Can we host the software on our own servers?**

Yes. We support the following configurations for self-hosted environment:

- 1) Operating System: Microsoft Windows 2003 Server  
Database: Microsoft SQL Server 2000 Enterprise edition  
Web Server: Microsoft Internet Information Server 6.0  
Scripting Language: PHP 4.3.7

- 2) Operating System: Microsoft Windows 2003 Server  
Database: Microsoft SQL Server 2000 Enterprise edition  
Web Server: Apache HTTP Server 1.3.29  
Scripting Language: PHP 4.3.7
  
- 3) Operating System: Microsoft Windows 2000 Server or Advanced Server with Service Pack 3  
Database: Microsoft SQL Server 2000 Enterprise edition  
Web Server: Microsoft Internet Information Server 5.0  
Scripting Language: PHP 4.2.3 or PHP 4.3.7
  
- 4) Operating System: Microsoft Windows 2000 Server or Advanced Server with Service Pack 3  
Database: Microsoft SQL Server 2000 Enterprise edition  
Web Server: Apache HTTP Server 1.3.x  
Scripting Language: PHP 4.2.3 or PHP 4.3.7

**11. In what programming language is the product written?**

C, PHP, SQL, XML/XSLT, HTML, DHTML, JavaScript.

**12. What is the frequency of upgrades?**

We have between 2 and 3 upgrades per year.

**For More Information:**

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