

Intake Table for “I Am Safe” Messages

Your job is to ensure the paperwork we collect from neighbors is complete and legible so their message can be successfully sent.

Post the provided signage so people have time to compose their message while in line.

Help people understand what is needed for a complete and sendable message.

Assist them to fill out their own forms. If necessary, complete the form for them.

Check their message for completeness prior to the person leaving. An incomplete address will result in an undeliverable message.

Watch the line. If a bottleneck is forming, ask for help.

Once completed, you will pass the forms to the next step in the operation. This function might not be co-located with the Hub. If you need a runner, work with the Volunteer Coordinator to find you one.

When all communications are down, people will want to let their loved ones know that they are safe - or to pass along other crucial information. These messages should be short and concise to convey just that point; no extraneous details. There is a 25-word limit for some types of messages, so we strive to keep all messages to that same limit. Some exceptions are described below. People will be stressed, so keep your tone calm and helpful. **Ensuring that the messages and address information is complete and legible is critical to this task.**

ESSENTIALS

1. Post the help signage and explain the form, if needed

- A sign was created to help people write the most effective messages. Post that so people in line can read it and start composing before they get to you.
- To streamline the sending of messages, numbers can be used to stand in for entire phrases. Make sure people look at the back of the form and select pre-staged numbered messages, if at all possible. It will save time for everyone in the process.
- People can also create their own tailored messages but the whole message must be less than 25 words.

2. Addressing information.

- The Radio Operator will send the messages to all of the addresses provided. If multiple addresses are provided, it is best if both addresses fall into either group 1 or group 2 below. A message with an email and a landline will be transferred into two delivery methods, which might slow things down.

In order of quickness of delivery:

1. Email address or Cell phone with known carrier

Messages using either of these will be sent directly to the loved one.

2. Cell phone with unknown carrier or Landline phone or Physical address

Messages using any of these will be sent into the radio National Traffic System and could take up to 3 days to be delivered.

If only a physical address is provided and the actual street address is not known, collect as much information as possible. City, State and Zip code would be enough clues to deliver the message. Reaching a John Smith in New York city, NY will be hard to ensure delivery, zip code is very important.

3. Review the content length against the way it will be sent.

- Messages that are sent by email, or cellphone with carrier, do not have word limits but brevity should be encouraged.
- Messages that go into the radio National Traffic System have a hard limit of 25 words.

Messages will be rejected if they exceed this limit and we will never know they were not delivered. Review all messages with cellphone with no carrier, Landline phone, and physical addresses against this limitation.

4. Review for completeness and legibility before the person leaves.

- This cannot be stressed enough. If others in the process cannot read something, there is no recourse once the person has left the area.
- Take your time to do this well. If need be, strike words out and rewrite clearly. Character by character corrections sometimes make it worse.

5. Passing the messages to the next step.

- Depending on the situation and volunteers available, you will be passing the form to either the Digitizer or the Radio Operator.
- Ask the Hub Manager how that hand off should be done and how.
 1. You may collect forms and pass them off in batches
 2. You may just hand them to the Digitizer or Radio Operator directly
- Be sensitive to the people in line, don't disappear for every message.

6. If the person does not speak English...

- If someone doesn't speak English, ask the Volunteer Coordinator for an interpreter to help.
- Currently the "I Am Safe" messages can only be sent using an English character set.
 1. A person who wants to send a message in Spanish can do so, but the diacritics (special character formatting like ò) will not come through.
 2. A person who wants to send a message in Vietnamese, with its own character set, will need to have the message translated into English to be sent and the receiver will have to have it translated back into Vietnamese.

7. Keep yourself safe and effective

- Your safety is paramount. If for any reason you feel unsafe (due to people with erratic behaviors or overwhelming needs, for example), reach out to fellow Hub volunteers for support.
- Your stress level deserves attention. If you are feeling hurried, rushed, or irritable, that is a sign that you are stressed. Ask for a break. Step away. Regain your sense of calm before returning.
- This work could be done away from the Hub. If you are working alone, make sure you check in with the Hub or your contacts to make sure you are in sync with what is going on at the Hub. If you have questions, find someone and ask. Do not struggle on your own.

8. Before you start your shift

- Get a safety briefing.
- Learn the overall Hub layout and get an overall picture of how the Hub operates.
- Talk to your predecessor to get any information unique to this position.

9. Before you leave for the day

- Train your replacement for the next day or next shift.
- Let the Volunteer Coordinator know that you are leaving.
- Don't take the job home with you. Relax, knowing that you've helped.

TOOLS in this Book

Quick Start Guide for "I Am Safe" Messages
Standard Operating Procedure for "I Am Safe Messages.

TOOLS that also might be available at the Hub

Hat or vest, or role sign for your jacket

MORE ABOUT PACING, STRESS, and SELF CARE (for all volunteers)

Recovery efforts often start off as a sprint but should readily turn into a marathon. **Pace yourself.**

- Recovery efforts are stressful. Oftentimes people feel unprepared, worried about loved ones, etc.
- Signs of stress include trouble sleeping, irritability, indecisiveness...
- Ways to reduce stress: take frequent rest breaks, take time to do something you enjoy, take a day off.
- See the Psychological First Aid for Volunteers guide for information to help yourself.
- Talk to the Hub Manager or Volunteer Coordinator if you are feeling overwhelmed. We all want to keep each other safe.