

- Relief personnel on the ground can lose valuable time sorting and distributing items which are frequently available locally, or much closer to the area in need, at less cost.
- Donations of out-of-date medicines and medical supplies can do more harm than good. Food and clothing may be inappropriate for the region. In some parts of the world, items such as used clothing and blankets are subject to import regulations which require their fumigation or wrapping.
- An emergency is not the time to start trying to establish a distribution network in unfamiliar territory.
- The need for search and rescue, life-saving first aid and other immediate medical procedures is usually short-lived and can be handled by nearby health services. The presence of foreign medical or paramedical personnel who are unfamiliar with the local language and conditions may not be helpful. They become extra people who must be fed and sheltered.

Canadians can assist the victims of disasters and emergencies abroad by contacting international organizations such as:

