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News Release
NEWS RELEASE

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American Red Cross Responds to American Samoa Tsunami

[SPOKANE], September 30, 2009 – The American Red Cross is on the ground in American Samoa where a tsunami swept across the island after a powerful earthquake hit the South Pacific.

The Red Cross has dozens of volunteers already providing food and supplies to those on the island. A team of 50 volunteers is en-route to supplement the efforts of the local Red Cross team. The Red Cross has a warehouse on American Samoa supplied with cots, flashlights, and cooking and clean-up supplies, and will be sending in additional supplies as quickly as possible.

“We will get there as quickly as we can with what we can,” said Joe Becker, senior vice president for Red Cross Disaster Services. “Our first priority is to provide food and water and needed supplies.” After yesterday’s 8.0 magnitude earthquake and resulting tsunami, a significant portion of American Samoa is without power or water amid widespread damage.

The Inland Northwest Chapter of the American Red Cross has deployed one volunteer who specializes in assisting victims with coping with traumatic experiences to American Samoa. Several other local volunteers are on stand-by.

Getting information out of the island is very slow at this time. The Red Cross urges those who have been able to contact loved ones on American Samoa to register them with Safe and Well, the best way to share information about their status. You can register on the Red Cross Safe and Well Website at www.spokaneredcross.org or www.redcross.org. If you do not have internet access, call 1-800-REDCROSS to register your loved ones. The information you post will let other loved ones know about the well-being of those on the island. Please note - Safe and Well works only on American Samoa. The service will not work on Samoa.

American Samoa, a group of seven islands about 2,300 miles southwest of Hawaii, is a United States Territory. American Samoa and the independent country of Samoa make up the Samoan group of islands in the center of Polynesia. According to news reports, four tsunami waves about 15 to 20 feet high came ashore on American Samoa after the earthquake in the South Pacific.

Your financial support will help the Red Cross respond to disasters like those in American Samoa and across the United States. You can make a donation to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund by calling 1-800-REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767) or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish), or visiting redcross.org. On those rare occasions when donations exceed Red Cross expenses for a specific disaster, contributions are used to prepare for and serve victims of other disasters. Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for disasters and provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance to victims of all disasters. Call 1-800-REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767) or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish). Contributions to the Disaster Relief Fund may be sent to the Inland Northwest Chapter of the American Red Cross or to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013.

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