

March 19, 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

For volunteer team leaders and volunteers affected by the cancelled builds

Cancellation of Global Village builds

Q1: Why is Habitat for Humanity canceling Global Village builds?

Our overriding concern is for the volunteers and the people in the communities in which we serve. Many of our Global Village builds take place in communities that may not be prepared to address an outbreak of the virus. We are taking caution to not potentially expose these vulnerable communities to the virus through accidental transmission from our volunteer or staff teams.

Q2: My Global Village build is taking place in a country where there is no COVID-19 confirmed cases, yet it was cancelled. Why?

Proactive cancellations allow us to minimize risk by staying ahead of the outbreak. The rapidly developing nature of the outbreak, coupled with the complexity of our Global Village program, compel us to make this a global action. Volunteers and staff travel from and through multiple cities around the world to reach the Global Village builds, increasing risk of transmission. The wide and growing geographic spread of the outbreak makes it impossible to predict which countries may be affected next. In addition, the Canadian government, along with governments all around the world have imposed travel restrictions.

Q3: Why did Habitat cancel, then resume, and now cancel builds again?

Habitat for Humanity International has been constantly monitoring the coronavirus outbreak and adjusting its response as appropriate. We initially canceled two weeks of builds through mid-February in the Asia-Pacific region. While we were able to resume Global Village builds for a short period, the newly expanded reach of the outbreak compelled us to reevaluate the program. The wide and growing geographic spread of the outbreak makes it impossible to predict which countries may be affected next. Proactive cancellations allow us to minimize risk by staying ahead of the outbreak.

Q4: Will Canadian builds be cancelled?

Yes. To reduce social contact, Canada builds are suspended through to the end of June. Please see the scheduled builds on our website. If that situation changes, we will update you. When making travel arrangements for your Canadian builds, please wait for Habitat Canada to confirm if the build is proceeding. *We highly recommend that you*

either purchase a plan with a “cancel for any reason” (CFAR) option or flexible economy ticket that allows you to make changes.

Your build donations

Q5: My build has been cancelled. What should I tell those who have already donated to my build?

We encourage you to inform your donors that this build has been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, but to please support you on your next build. Should you request a refund, Habitat for Humanity Canada will reach out to your donors individually regarding their donations.

Q6: What happens to my build donation? Can I get my money back?

Global Village volunteers on builds cancelled by Habitat for Humanity have the option of:

- a) receiving a refund of their Global Village build donation;
- b) applying it toward a future Habitat Canada Global Village build within two years of the departure date of the original build (check back on www.habitat.ca/globalvillage for builds later in the year); or,
- c) designating the donation to be used as originally intended, benefiting Habitat’s work in the host country.

The Global Village department will contact you to provide you with the appropriate Build Modification form where you can confirm how you would like to allocate the build donation.

Q7: Can I request a partial refund of my build donation and designate a certain amount to be donated to the hosting Habitat?

Yes, volunteers can choose to designate a certain amount of their donation. Please email us at globalvillage@habitat.ca to request this option, once you have filled out the Build Modification form.

Q8: Can I request a portion of my build donation to be refunded to me and the rest placed on hold for a future build?

Yes, volunteers can choose to put a certain amount of their donations on hold for a future build. Please email us at globalvillage@habitat.ca to request this option, once you have filled out the Build Modification form.

Airfare cancellations

Q9: What should I do about my travel arrangements?

Please contact your airline to cancel your travel arrangements as soon as possible. If you used a travel agent or 3rd party travel coordinator (such as CheapoAir or Travelocity), you may need to contact them and the airline for options for compensation.

Many airlines are offering travel credits with a change fee, even if only the standard insurance was purchased. Compensation policies are constantly changing so please contact your travel or insurance provider. As of March 15, the Canadian government has issued an advisory to avoid non-essential travel to all countries outside of Canada. Please refer to the [Government of Canada's website](#) for the most up-to-date information involving travel advisories.

We have sent all impacted volunteers a letter of support to the airline noting the cause of the cancellation. Also, if you only purchased the standard cancellation insurance, try to file a claim and submit the letter of support from Habitat Canada. Additionally, check the terms and conditions to determine if you are covered in a situation where the primary purpose of your travel was an event which is cancelled.

Q10: Can I get a letter from the Canadian government or WHO?

We are not able to request a letter from the Canadian government or WHO on your behalf. We will provide a letter of support on behalf of Habitat Canada explaining the reason for the cancellation of the trip.

Q11: What happens if the airline does not refund me the full cost of my flight?

We apologize for the inconvenience and personal financial hardship this may cause you. Our priority is your safety, and the safety of the people we serve. This will also be a tremendous loss for the families and communities that Habitat for Humanity partners with in the countries which were anticipating the support of our volunteers. As a not-for-profit agency, Habitat Canada's Global Village program is unable to provide compensation on airfare costs. Please refer to Q6 to find out more about options for your build donation costs.

Rescheduling a build/builds scheduled for later in the year

Q12: For team leaders only: If Habitat Canada has cancelled any of my builds, can we look at booking a slot for later this year?

Yes, if you would like to lead a build later in the year, please touch base with kbonilla@habitat.ca to discuss which build opportunities are available/in need of a team leader.

Q13: I have a build scheduled for later this year and have not fully paid for my build donation nor purchased airline tickets. Should I hold off?

At this point, we are treating all Global Village builds beginning on or after July 1st as business-as-usual. However, when considering your airline ticket purchase, ***we highly recommend that you purchase a travel insurance plan with a “cancel for any reason” (CFAR) option or flexible economy which allows you to make changes.*** Your team leader should advise you when the build is confirmed and when to purchase tickets. Please note that it is possible that further suspensions to Global Village builds could occur, given the unpredictability of the virus.

Q14: Where can I go for more information about the COVID-19?

The World Health Organization is providing regular updates to its guidance about preventing the spread of COVID-19. Visit the WHO's [coronavirus webpage](#) for guidance on hygiene and prevention or visit Health Canada's [website](#).