# FEMA Updates Shelter Locator Texting Feature

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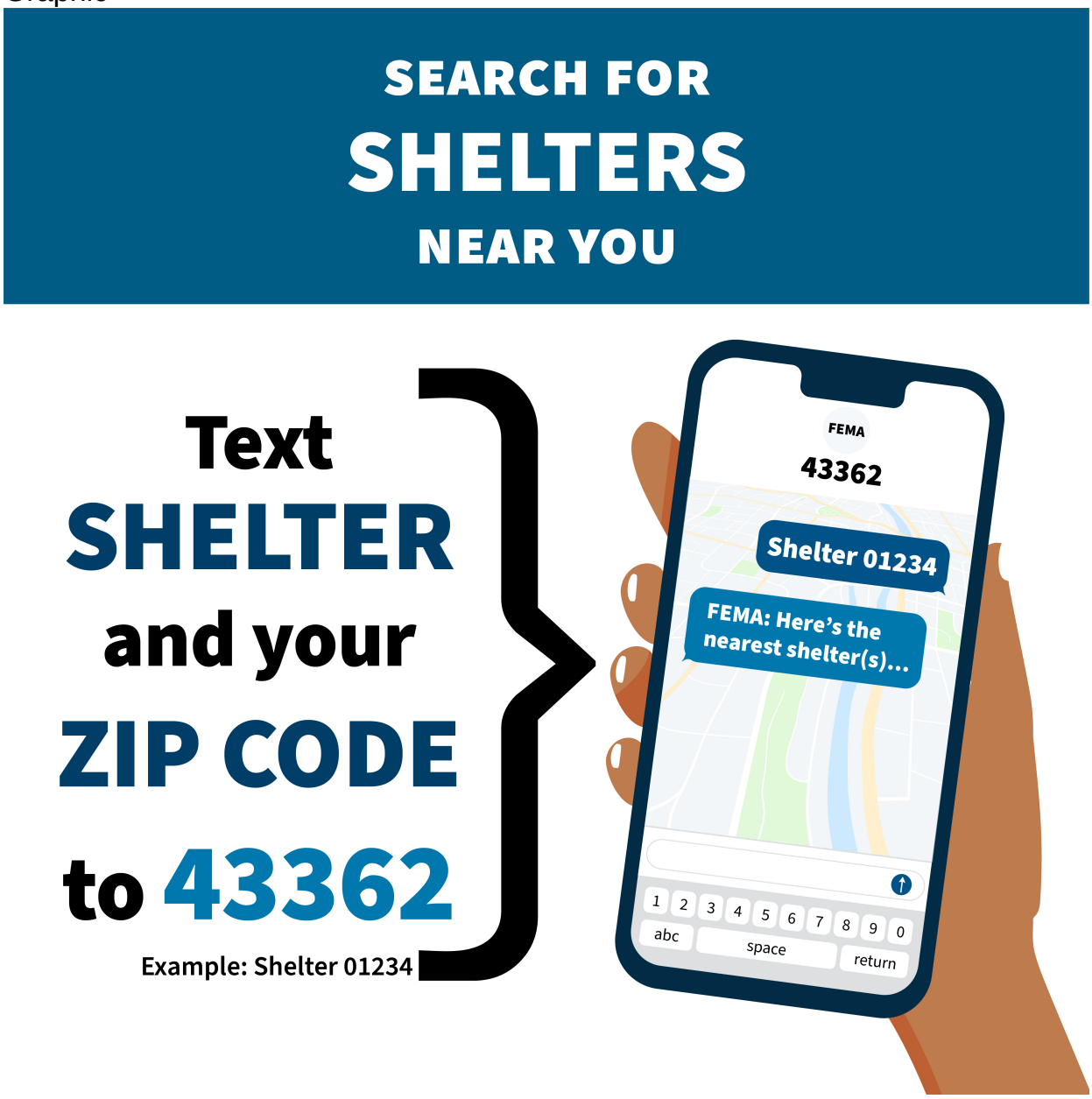
WASHINGTON -- Having the right information at the right time is often key to surviving a disaster. FEMA's updated texting feature allows the public to access shelter addresses when they need it most. Users can text "shelter" and their ZIP code to 43362 to get a list of nearby shelter locations. This effort is made possible through collaboration with the American Red Cross.

"Disasters frequently disrupt communications systems which can leave survivors feeling overwhelmed and helpless when they are trying to locate shelters," said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. "Since texting capabilities are often unaffected during disasters, our updated Text to Shelter option is an easy and accessible way survivors can locate nearby shelters with a tap of a button. This feature will help keep our communities safe."

FEMA's old text feature only showed shelters within the requested ZIP code. This new feature uses Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities to give users shelter addresses within 200 miles of their ZIP code. The texting feature is available across all 50 states and U.S. territories. Standard texting rates with the user's carrier may apply, but there is no additional fee to use this service. In phones with a standard map feature, users will be able to click on the shelter address inside the text message and view directions. The text can be easily shared with friends and family so they know where the user is going or where they themselves can take shelter.

Shelters identified through the text feature are pulled from data managed by the American Red Cross. FEMA does not run shelters. Remember that in a disaster situation it is always important to follow the immediate instructions of state and local officials, as they may be able to point survivors to additional shelters and resources not included in the text feature.

Disasters can strike anywhere, anytime. Save this number, 43362, in your phone today so you'll be able to find a safe space to shelter during a disaster. Information

on different types of shelters and sheltering can be found on Ready. Additional ways to find shelter can be found on FEMA or Red Cross.

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