

# Intergovernmental Affairs Advisory

## **FEMA AND ITS FEDERAL PARTNERS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT LOUISIANA FLOOD RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS**

*Advisory #5*

**August 20, 2016**

FEMA continues to support response and recovery efforts related to flooding in Louisiana and remains in close coordination with state, local, and tribal officials as well as our federal and private sector partners. More than 98,000 individuals and households have registered with FEMA for assistance, and more than \$20 million has been approved to help survivors with temporary rental assistance, essential home repairs, and other serious disaster-related needs.

More than 24,000 National Flood Insurance policyholders have submitted claims for flood loss. Additionally, FEMA has authorized and issued \$4 million in advanced payments to NFIP policyholders in Louisiana who sustained damages by the flood providing expedited relief to disaster survivors.

FEMA is also supporting Louisiana's Disaster Housing Task Force to help Louisiana residents displaced by the flooding find access to housing. FEMA activated its Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) program, at the request of the state of Louisiana, to make participating hotels or motels available for eligible disaster survivors who are unable to return to their homes for an extended

period of time. This program is intended to provide short-term lodging for eligible survivors who are currently residing in a personal vehicle, hotel or motel, shelter, or place of employment. Housing solutions continue to be a top priority. FEMA is collaborating with our state and federal partners to coordinate additional strategies and programs to continue to help find suitable housing for Louisiana residents displaced by the storms.

Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams are on the ground and at shelters to address immediate and emerging needs of disaster survivors including: on-site registration, applicant status checks, on-the-spot needs assessments, and access to partners offering survivor services.

Residents and business owners who sustained disaster-related losses can apply for assistance by registering online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov), or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). If you use 711 relay or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362 directly. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (Central Time) seven days a week until further notice. Additionally, Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) are scheduled to open in the next several days to provide information to survivors. Disaster survivors do not need to go to a DRC in order to receive disaster assistance.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA) has activated its Disaster Distress helpline. This toll-free, multilingual, crisis support service is available 24/7 via telephone (1-800-985-5990) and SMS (text 'TalkWithUs' to 66746) to residents in the U.S. and its territories who are experiencing emotional distress. We encourage those in affected areas to monitor local radio, TV stations or official social media accounts for updated emergency information, and to follow the instructions of state, local, and tribal officials.

Flood Insurance is one of the best ways to protect homeowners and allow them to recover.

- If you have significant damage, you may get a preliminary

payment of up to 50% of the estimated covered loss, with a copy of the contractor's estimate and inspection by the flood insurance adjuster.

- If you have flood insurance, you can get up to \$5,000 for building and contents damages prior to the adjuster's inspection with a signed advance payment form from your adjuster. Documenting the flood damage and validating out of pocket expenses, may get the insured up to a total of \$10,000.

### ***Federal Disaster Declarations***

- President Obama has declared 20 parishes for a major disaster for severe storms and flooding beginning August 11, 2016 and continuing. This declaration makes federal funding available to affected individuals in **Acadia, Ascension, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermilion, Washington and West Feliciana.**
- Federal funding is also available to state, tribal and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency protective measures and debris removal in **Acadia, Ascension, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermilion, Washington and West Feliciana.**
- At the request of state, FEMA is conducting joint federal/state Preliminary Damage Assessments in two additional parishes over the next several days in Assumption and St. Charles Parishes. A preliminary damage assessment is conducted in

counties affected by the incident as part of the declaration process and to assist a governor in determining, whether to request federal assistance.

### ***Federal Coordination and Assistance***

- In support of Louisiana, FEMA has transferred 1,235,186 liters of water, over 787,863 meals, 12,500 cots and 12,500 blankets to state officials for distribution. FEMA currently has over 603,000 liters of water and over 535,000 meals available for distribution to the state if requested, with additional water and meals scheduled to arrive to FEMA's Incident Support Base in Pineville, Louisiana over the next week.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration has opened a Business Recovery Center in Louisiana with more scheduled to open to provide a wide range of services to businesses impacted by the severe storms and flooding that began last week.
- More than 818 housing inspectors are on the ground in Louisiana verifying damages reported by survivors who have registered for assistance. The number of inspectors is expected to increase over the next several days.
- FEMA Texas Task Force 1 [Urban Search & Rescue](#) Team are deployed in Louisiana to assist ongoing search and rescue efforts. An Incident Support Team and Hazmat Equipment Push Package is also deployed in support of secondary search operations.
- FEMA Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) personnel and equipment are deployed to support the state with secure and non-secure voice, video and information services to support emergency response communications needs. This

includes 46 MERS personnel, 17 Mobile Communications Office Vehicles (MCOV), and 21 additional vehicles.

- Six FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams are deployed to Louisiana, to support response activities and ensure there are no unmet needs.
- FEMA liaisons are deployed to Louisiana as a part of over 1,100 FEMA staff supporting flood response activities.

### ***Safety and Preparedness Tips***

- In any emergency, always follow the instructions given by state, local, or tribal emergency management officials.
- Driving through a flooded area can be extremely hazardous. Almost half of all flash flood deaths happen in vehicles. When in your car, look out for flooding in low lying areas, at bridges, and at highway dips. As little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- If you encounter flood waters on a roadway, [Turn Around, Don't Drown](#).
- Do not drive around or move road barriers.

### ***Cleaning Up***

- Assume everything touched by flood water is contaminated and will have to be disinfected.
- Residents who are able to start cleaning up should do so with care. Take photos of any water in the house and any property damaged in your home. Make a detailed list of all damaged or lost items and keep your receipts. Remove damaged items from the home to prevent mold, but don't have damaged items hauled away until local officials see or give the okay.

- If your home has water damage due to flooding, mildew and mold will develop within 24-48 hours of water exposure.
- Get cleanup tips at [emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods](https://www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods)
- Use caution when entering your home. Animals, including snakes or alligators, that were forced from their natural habitat may be inside vacant homes and buildings.
- Play it safe. Additional flooding or flash floods can occur. Listen for local warnings and information. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, get out immediately and climb to higher ground.
- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Stay tuned to your local news for updated information on road conditions.
- If you must walk or drive in areas that have been flooded:
  - Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet.
  - Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
  - Flood debris may hide animals and broken bottles, and it's also slippery.
  - Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Stay out of any building surrounded by floodwaters.
- Use extreme caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.

- Ensure water is safe to drink, cook or clean with after a flood. Oftentimes a boil water order is put in place following a flood.
- Check with utility companies to find out when electricity or gas services may be restored.
- Residents and visitors in affected or potentially affected areas should be familiar with evacuation routes, have a family emergency communications plan, keep a battery-powered radio handy and have plans for their family members and pets. People with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, older adults and their families may need to take additional steps for themselves and their service animals.

[Download the FEMA App](#) to locate and get directions to open shelters across the state, and receive weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States.

If you have any questions, please contact FEMA's Intergovernmental Affairs Division at (202) 646-3444 or at [FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov).

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