SOUTH CAROLINA SEVERE STORMS AND FLOODING

After days of unprecedented rainfall totaling more than 25 inches in some areas, numerous weather-related deaths have been reported and dozens of roads and miles of interstate highways have been closed, prompting authorities to encourage people to stay home and away from danger. More than half the state of South Carolina has been affected by flooding as of Monday morning (October 5th). The hardest-hit swath of South Carolina stretches from the capital of Columbia, in the middle of the state, all the way to the coast, from Georgetown down to Charleston.¹

A Disaster Declaration has been announced by FEMA on October 3, 2015 (EM-3373), stating that federal emergency aid has been made available to the state of South Carolina to supplement state, local, and tribal response efforts in the areas affected by severe storms and flooding beginning on October 1, 2015.

This supplement provides general information for those affected by the storms and flooding about immediate relief efforts. For post crisis assistance in rebuilding housing and communities affected by the flooding, see the Housing Assistance Council’s report *Picking Up the Pieces: Restoring Rural Housing and Communities After a Disaster*.

**Relief Efforts**

**Disaster Assistance Available from FEMA:**

**Housing Needs**

- **Temporary Housing** (a place to live for a limited period of time): Financial assistance may be available to homeowners or renters to rent a different place to live, or assistance can be a government provided housing unit when rental properties are not available. Search for information about housing rental resources.
- **Lodging Expenses Reimbursement**: Reimbursement of hotel expenses for homeowners or renters may be available for short periods of time due to inaccessibility or utility outage if not covered by insurance or any other program.
- **Repair**: Financial assistance may be available to homeowners to repair damage from the disaster to their primary residence that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to make the damaged home safe, sanitary, and functional.
- **Replacement**: Financial assistance may be available to homeowners to replace their home destroyed in the disaster that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to help the homeowner with the cost of replacing their destroyed home.
- **Permanent or Semi-Permanent Housing Construction**: Direct assistance or money for the construction of a home. This type of help occurs only in insular areas or other locations specified by FEMA, where no other type of housing assistance is possible.

**What specific items are covered by "Housing Needs" assistance?**

**Do I qualify for "Housing Needs" Assistance?**

**Other Needs**

Financial Assistance may be available for necessary expenses and serious needs caused by the disaster. This includes:

- Disaster-related child care expenses.
- Disaster-related medical and dental expenses.

- Disaster-related funeral and burial expenses.
- Disaster-related damages to essential household items (room furnishings, appliances); clothing; tools (specialized or protective clothing and equipment) required for your job; necessary educational materials (computers, school books, supplies).
- Fuels for primary heat source (heating oil, gas).
- Clean-up items (wet/dry vacuum, dehumidifier).
- Disaster-related damage to an essential vehicle.
- Moving and storage expenses related to the disaster (moving and storing property to avoid additional disaster damage while disaster-related repairs are being made to the home).
- Other necessary expenses or serious needs as determined by FEMA.
- Other expenses that are authorized by law.

**Do I qualify for "Other than Housing Needs" Assistance?**

**Additional FEMA Services**

- Crisis Counseling
- Disaster Unemployment Assistance
- Legal Services
- Special Tax Considerations

FEMA has **Disaster Recovery Centers** across the country, which are readily accessible facilities or mobile offices where applicants may go for information about FEMA or other disaster assistance programs, or for questions related to your case. Search online for a Disaster Recovery Center [http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm](http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm) or by smart phone or tablet at [http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/mobile.htm](http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/mobile.htm)

**Apply for FEMA Assistance** online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or by smart phone or tablet at [m.fema.gov](http://m.fema.gov)

Apply/Check your status by phone 1-800-621-3362. Operators are multilingual and calls are answered seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. CDT.

**American Red Cross Relief Efforts:**

The American Red Cross has opened **30 shelters across South Carolina**. The most up to date information on new shelters can be found on the organizations tracking page: [http://www.redcross.org/find-help](http://www.redcross.org/find-help) or by calling the Public Inquiry Center at 1-800-214-0441.

The Red Cross helps disaster victims by providing safe shelter, hot meals, essential relief supplies, emotional support and health services like first aid. Trained Red Cross workers often meet one-on-one with families to develop individual plans and identify available resources to help aid recovery.

**Additional Resources**

**US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, South Carolina State Office**
1835 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC 29201
**Phone:** (803) 765-5163

**US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), South Carolina Field Office**
1835 Assembly Street, 13th Floor
Columbia, SC 29201
**Phone:** (803) 765-5592
**Larry Knightner**, Field Office Director
**Office Hours:** 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday through Friday