SOUTHERN TORNADOES DISASTER

A series of tornadoes tore through parts of the Deep South from January 21-22, 2017. At least 19 deaths are being blamed on 41 reported tornadoes in five southern states from Louisiana to South Carolina. On January 25, seven counties in Georgia and four counties in Mississippi were classified as Major Disaster areas by FEMA.

Per NBC News, the Governor declared a state of emergency for multiple counties in south central Georgia after storms left 12 dead and 23 injured.1 CNN reported that the Governor of Mississippi also declared a state of emergency following a Tornado that left four dead in Hattiesberg.2

This supplement provides general information for those affected by the fires about current fire containment and immediate relief efforts. For post crisis assistance in rebuilding housing and communities affected by the tornadoes, 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.

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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) or Apply/Check your status by phone 1-800-621-3362.

**Red Cross Relief Efforts:** The American Red Cross has launched an interactive online map that consolidates multiple sources of disaster data into a real-time, interactive tool to get information and updates about the Western Wildfires.

The map provides the following information:

- Location and size of wildfires
- Evacuation zones
- Road Closures
- Location, address and population of shelters
- Where to take evacuated pets and animals (large and small)
- Standard map elements such as counties, cities, roads, rivers and mountain ranges
- Demographic information.

The link to the resource is: [http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/wildfire](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/wildfire)

**For more information contact:**

**State Disaster Recovery Resources**

- Georgia: [http://www.gema.ga.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.gema.ga.gov/Pages/default.aspx)

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

Toll-free helpline: 1-800-3362
For hearing impaired callers only: 1-800-462-7585 (TTY), 1-800-621-3362 (Video Relay Service)

Operators are multilingual and calls are answered seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. CDT.

**American Red Cross Disaster Service**

For referrals and updates on Red Cross shelter services in your area, locate a local Red Cross office through: [http://www.redcross.org/find-help](http://www.redcross.org/find-help) or by calling the Public Inquiry Center at 1-800-214-0441.

**Additional Resources**

**US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, State Offices**

**Georgia**

Jack Stanek, Acting State Director  
Stephens Federal Building  
355 E. Hancock Avenue, Stop 300  
Athens, GA 30601-2768  
Voice: (706) 546-2162  
Fax: (855) 452-0956

[www.rd.usda.gov/ga](http://www.rd.usda.gov/ga)

**Mississippi**

George Gary Jones, Acting State Director  
Federal Building, Suite 831  
100 West Capitol Street  
Jackson, MS 39269  
Voice: (601) 965-4316  
Fax: (601) 965-4088

[www.rd.usda.gov/ms](http://www.rd.usda.gov/ms)

**US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

**Georgia**

Atlanta Regional Office  
Christopher D. Taylor, Deputy Regional Administrator  
Five Points Plaza Building  
40 Marietta Street  
Atlanta, GA 30303-2806  
Phone: (404) 331-5136  
Fax: (404) 730-2392

[GA_Webmanager@hud.gov](mailto:GA_Webmanager@hud.gov)

**Mississippi**

Jackson Field Office  
Jerrie G. Magruder, Field Office Director  
Dr. A. H. McCoy Federal Building  
100 West Capitol Street, Room 910  
Jackson, MS 39269-1096  
Phone: (601) 965-4757  
Fax: (601) 965-4773

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