



# DISASTER NEWS



---

MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY--FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FEMA-DR-1398-MS 02**

**Dec. 10, 2001**

**Contacts:** Amy Bissell, MEMA 601-960-9039  
Jay Eaker, FEMA 601-960-9039

## **TEMPORARY DISASTER HOUSING AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS WHOSE HOMES ARE UNLIVABLE BECAUSE OF THE FLOODING AND TORNADOES; APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE AT 1-800-621-3362**

**ATLANTA** – Residents of 10 Mississippi counties whose homes were damaged or destroyed as a result of the recent tornadoes and flooding may be eligible for temporary housing assistance, according to state and federal officials coordinating the disaster recovery effort.

“Our top priority is to make sure that everyone is in safe, secure and livable housing,” Federal Coordinating Officer Gracia Szczech said. The disaster housing program is designed to provide immediate assistance to those whose homes were made unlivable because of the flooding, tornadoes and other extreme weather that hit the state beginning Nov. 24. Applications for assistance can be made on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s new toll-free line, **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**. Persons with speech or hearing impairments may call **1-800-462-7585**.

Administered by FEMA, the disaster housing program provides two types of assistance. Rental assistance is available to owners or tenants whose homes were destroyed or substantially damaged so they can have a place to live while repairs are being made. Grants for limited home repairs are available to homeowners for emergency repairs needed to make a residence habitable until more extensive repairs can be made. Examples of emergency work could include essential repairs to electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems, as well as general carpentry to make a home safe and habitable.

“These grants are not intended to restore a home to its pre-disaster condition and cannot be used for cosmetic repairs or repairs covered by insurance,” State Coordinating Officer Leon Shaifer of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) said. “To qualify for a limited home repair grant, the applicant must be an owner-occupant and the home must be the primary residence.” Officials reminded storm victims to save all receipts for any temporary housing costs they may have incurred because of the storms.

Housing assistance is one of the programs available to Mississippi residents in Bolivar, DeSoto, Hinds, Humphreys, Madison, Panola, Quitman, Sunflower, Tate and Washington counties as a result of the disaster declaration issued Dec. 7 by President Bush following a request for help from Mississippi Gov. Ronnie Musgrove.

-30-

More information is available on FEMA’s *For the Media* site, at [www.fema.gov/media](http://www.fema.gov/media), and Fax-on-Demand at **(202) 646-FEMA**. Radio actualities from the FEMA Radio Network **(1-800-323-5248)**.