



DISASTER NEWS



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY -- FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HELPFUL TIPS FOR DISASTER APPLICANTS

JACKSON, Miss. December 14, 2001—State and federal disaster recovery officials issued these recovery assistance tips today for residents of Mississippi who suffered uninsured or underinsured losses resulting from the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding which began November 24.

The essential first step is to call **1-800-621-3362** to register toll-free with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This is the only way to obtain the assistance you are eligible to receive. For the speech or hearing impaired, the number to call is **1-800-462-7585**. Other suggestions for getting help as quickly as possible:

- Be sure FEMA has a current telephone number that will reach you and that your street address is prominently displayed. Your damage will be inspected. Arrange to be at home and allow sufficient time for the inspection. Missing the inspection appointment will delay getting help.
- If you change locations after applying for federal/state assistance, call the FEMA registration number to update your new phone number and/or address. We cannot help you if we cannot reach you.
- You should register even if you have some insurance. This establishes your eligibility for federal assistance in case hidden damage is discovered after you have settled with the insurance company. Even those insured may be qualified for some federal/state assistance programs. Damage must be disaster-related, however.
- You don't have to be a property owner to receive federal assistance. If you are a renter and lost essential personal property and are not insured for the loss, help in getting replacement is available.
- Renters and homeowners forced from their homes by disaster damage may apply for housing assistance in order to temporarily relocate while repairs are made.
- Photographs and receipts for essential replacement purchases are valuable in documenting your losses for both insurance and federal/state disaster assistance.
- If you receive an SBA loan packet you must complete and return it even if you don't want a loan in order to determine your eligibility for a grant.
- To check the status of your application, or if you need to amend your application, for example, to report newly discovered damage, contact FEMA's information Helpline using the toll-free number, **1-800-621-3362** (**1-800-462-7585** for the speech or hearing impaired).

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