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# Disaster News



Mississippi Emergency Management Agency – Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FEMA-DR-1443-MS-NR42**

Date: December 4, 2002

**MEDIA CONTACTS:** MEMA - 601-960-9039 or 601-953-3622  
FEMA - 662-329-7570

## **FEMA Helpline Available for Those with Questions**

**COLUMBUS, MS**—Many residents of disaster-declared counties here in Mississippi have questions on whether the money they have already spent for tornado damage repairs is reimbursable as disaster assistance.

The surest way to find the answer to that and other disaster-related questions is to call the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Information Helpline's toll-free number at 800-621-3362. Those with a speech or hearing impairment can call TTY 800-462-7585. Both lines are open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

"In the confusion that often follows a disaster, half-truths and rumors about how someone can find help might be misleading," said Federal Coordinating Officer Michael Bolch. "Information involving income or types of assistance available can be confusing."

"When you have suffered a loss, the last thing you need is misinformation," said State Coordinating Officer Leon Shaifer. "The best way to avoid that problem is to call the FEMA toll-free helpline number to learn for yourself just what kind of assistance may be available to you and how to get it."

Individuals or businesses who have already registered with FEMA for tornado-related losses and damages can call those same numbers for more information on disaster recovery as well as to learn about the status of their applications. They also can visit the Disaster Recovery Center at the former Lowe's Home Supply, 2320 Highway 45 North, in Columbus, to meet with experts who will answer their questions and help them with filling out forms. Hours are from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday until further notice.