

Florida Keys: Plan Ahead Before Returning Home to Be Safe

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– As the reentry process for the Lower Keys begins, FEMA stresses the importance of following guidance from your local officials. Currently only residents, business owners, disaster workers, and supply vehicles with appropriate identification, or re-entry stickers, will be permitted to enter.

For those returning to homes or businesses on the Keys, Monroe County offers important public safety information on their website www.keysrecovery.org/.

- Have identification with their current address ready to get through any checkpoints.
- Be alert to emergency rescue crews, power crews, or other personnel who may block roads.
- Expect to see numerous law enforcement officials throughout the area.
- Be wary of displaced local wildlife such as snakes, insects, or alligators.

For those eligible to return, local officials stress the need to be prepared. The area still is without electricity, and there are challenging conditions for life safety, communications, and sewer access. Those who return should bring plenty of supplies. Consider all your potential needs for food, water, medication, mosquito repellent, and other important items.

From the outside of your home, examine the building. If you see obvious damage, the building is off

the foundation, or you have doubts about its structural safety, do not enter. If the outside looks safe, enter the building slowly and carefully.



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In some cases, you may not be able to stay in your home because of the amount of damage. If so, consider staying with friends or family while you repair your home. Transitional sheltering may be available to you once you register for federal assistance with FEMA.

Apply for FEMA assistance online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by telephone at 800-621-3362 (voice, 711 or VRS) or 800-462-7585 (TTY). Due to high demand, lines may be busy. Try calling in the morning or evening when call volume may be low, and be patient.

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

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