FEMA Responds to Severe Winter Weather in the Southeast

WASHINGTON -- FEMA is on the ground in Texas helping winter storm survivors by moving water, fuel, blankets and other needed commodities. We're emptying warehouses and purchasing new supplies to help alleviate impacts from these storms.

If you received damages from the Texas winter storms and have insurance - file a claim. When you apply for FEMA disaster assistance, you will also need to provide your claim information. The quickest way to apply for disaster assistance is online at DisasterAssistance.gov. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients in Texas may apply for replacement benefits for food lost or destroyed by dialing 2-1-1.

After a disaster, people come together to help. Cash donations to the non-profit of your choice is the best way to help. Visit National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster to find a list of trusted organizations that can put your generous contributions to the best possible use.

Texas Disaster Declaration

- President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s major disaster declaration provides assistance for disaster survivors in 77 counties. This assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of this storm.
  - Local resources and volunteers may be able to assist with needs not covered by insurance. Visit Texas 211 for a list of resources searchable by zip code or call 2-1-1.
  - Survivors who still have unmet needs in the 77 counties approved for assistance may apply online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-3362 (TTY: 800-462-7585).

- If you have damage from the Texas severe winter storms and have insurance, contact your insurance company to file a claim. When you apply for FEMA disaster assistance, you will also need to provide your insurance claim information.

Winter Storm Impact on COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts

Lingering power outages continue in areas impacted by the winter storm. More than 3,000 vaccine centers are located in areas that experienced power outages.

FEMA continues working with our state partners to ensure they have everything necessary to safely reopen any closed facility.

On Feb. 20, Twitter supported our efforts by amplifying FEMA messages, sharing critical information about the winter storm response and the ongoing nationwide effort to ensure everyone who wants a vaccine can get one.

FEMA Response Actions

This morning, Acting FEMA Administrator Bob Fenton appeared on CBS Good Morning America to discuss FEMA's ongoing response activities for winter weather in Texas. He said that FEMA staff have been in Texas for more than a week moving critical supplies, including water, fuel and blankets. Fenton stressed the best and fastest way for individuals with damaged property to start recovery is by contacting their insurance company and taking photos of any damage. If individuals are uninsured or underinsured, Fenton said they should then seek individual assistance by visiting www.DisasterAssistance.gov.

Federal Assistance to Texas

- FEMA has provided personnel, equipment and resources to the state to alleviate impacts from these storms. As of Feb. 21:
  - FEMA provided 69 generators, 10,000 gallons of winterized diesel and 10,000 gallons of gasoline for the last seven days to the state of Texas to support critical infrastructure.
  - FEMA has provided 3.2 million liters of water, more than 126,900 wool blankets, 50,000 cotton blankets and more than 226,000 meals.
  - Air shipments of 195,000 liters of water were flown to impacted areas in Texas. More flights are scheduled in the coming days.

    - A FEMA staging management team and an incident support base team are in Seguin, Texas to support the state's winter storm response.
    - Additionally, an Incident Management Assistance Team is in Denton and a second team is at the Fort Worth distribution center staging area to support response and recovery efforts.
    - FEMA activated the National EMS contract to support the state with 50 ambulances.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture approved Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to apply for replacement benefits for food lost or destroyed due to the severe winter weather by dialing 2-1-1.
    - SNAP recipients need to apply for replacement food benefits for regular SNAP allotments and SNAP emergency allotments that were provided in response to COVID-19.
- To assist people in the impacted area in coping with the stress of the winter storms, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration activated the Disaster Distress Helpline.
    - This toll-free, multilingual and confidential crisis support line provides immediate crisis counseling and support. Residents in affected areas may call or text 1-800-985-5990 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

Stay Safe in Winter Weather

While a gradual rise in temperatures is forecast over the coming days, residents in impacted areas should remain vigilant to continued risks. Listen to state and local officials about warming centers and road conditions in your area.

Follow these tips to stay safe and warm when winter weather hits.

Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

If you do not have power, avoid carbon monoxide poisoning and fires.

- Use a Generator Safely! Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage, even if doors and windows are open. Keep generators far away from windows, doors and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.
- Grills, camp stoves or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal burning devices should never be used inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. These should only be used outdoors and at least

20 feet away from windows.
- Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home.
- Do not run a car in a closed garage.

Stay Safe and Warm:

Severe winter weather may cause you to lose heat. Have adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm. Include extra blankets for pets and service animals.

Check on neighbors who may need assistance such as infants, children, older adults and people with disabilities.

- Residents in Texas can find the closest warming shelter online.
- Oklahoma residents can visit the Department of Emergency Management site for updated locations.
- To find out if 2-1-1 services are available in your area or to search for resources, visit 211.org.

?Many areas remain under boil water notices. For more information on water safety and treatment, visit Ready.gov/water.

Donate Blood:

The severe cold, snow and ice canceled blood drives across the nation. As weather improves, it's vital that eligible individuals give blood to ensure patients have continued access to the treatments they need. Appointments can be made by contacting:

- American Association of Blood Banks: www.aabb.org; +1.301.907.6977.
- America's Blood Centers: americasblood.org; +1.202.393.5725.
- American Red Cross: www.redcrossblood.org; +1.800.RED CROSS (+1.800.733.2767).

Avoid Scams:

Do not trust anyone who offers financial help and then asks for money or personal information. The Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention staff never charge for disaster assistance.

- The best information on legitimate sources of help in your area will come from local officials.
- Do not disclose information to any unsolicited telephone calls and e-mails.
- Federal and local disaster workers do not solicit or accept money.
- Beware of visits, calls or emails from people claiming to be from FEMA asking for your Social Security number, bank account or other sensitive information. Giving out this type of information can lead to identify theft.
- The Texas Department of Insurance is warning people to be aware of potential contracting scams as they begin making repairs. They are operating a help line to prevent contractor scams: 800-252-3439.

Background:

Last week, President Biden approved emergency declarations for Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. These declarations authorize FEMA to provide emergency protective measures for mass care and sheltering and direct federal assistance