

FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell is On the Ground in North Carolina, Biden-Harris Administration Actively Responding and Providing Life-Saving Support

Release Date: September 30, 2024

President Biden has Directed the FEMA Administrator to Remain in Asheville, North Carolina, Until the Situation has Stabilized

WASHINGTON – FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell is on the ground today in North Carolina and will survey damage alongside Governor Roy Cooper. Criswell will remain on the ground in North Carolina until the situation has stabilized, as directed by President Biden.

Today, there are **10 federal search and rescue teams on the ground right now and another nine teams are on the way, for a total of more than 900 personnel actively** supporting rescue efforts in affected areas.

Health and Medical Task Forces and Disaster Medical Assistance Teams from the National Disaster Medical System continue their assessments in North Carolina for rapid deployment of support as needed. One team has started emergency department decompression at Mission Hospital in Asheville and is treating patients. Another team is moving to Blue Ridge Regional Hospital in Spruce Pine to support emergency department decompression mission. **200 federal ambulances have been provided to the state.**

To aide with communications, rescue crews are continuing to work in affected areas and utility crews are working to restore cell service and critical infrastructure to restore communications to the impacted areas. Administrator Criswell has directed her team to move fast on standing up communications. FEMA has provided **40 Starlink satellite systems** to help with responder communications



and additional satellites are being shipped to assist with communications infrastructure restoration. **One Starlink will be deployed per county Emergency Operations Center** to assist with communications and continuity of government.

For families and people trying to get in touch with loved ones, they are encouraged to **call 2-1-1** or **visit [UnitedWayNC.org](https://www.unitedwaync.org)** to fill out a request form to add them to search and rescue efforts.

Everyone should heed the warning of local officials and people should not travel to western North Carolina to keep the roadways clear.

FEMA has two Incident Management Assessment Teams in North Carolina with additional personnel arriving. These teams coordinate directly with the state to facilitate requests for assistance.

To ensure communities get urgent assistance including meals and water, FEMA has deployed **25 trailer-loads of meals**, and **60 trailers-loads of water** to the state to support response efforts. **A C-17 cargo plane full of food, water and other commodities has arrived** at the forward operating base in Asheville with a daily flow of commodities established via air bridge. An additional **18 helicopters** are on standby to help deliver additional commodities to affected areas.

There are **29 shelters open with over 1,000 occupants**. FEMA Disaster Survivor Teams will be out in the field, focusing on shelters, where they will assist survivors in applying for assistance.

A generator support package is moving from Charlotte-Mecklenburg to Asheville, with another **30 generators enroute to the staging base in Mecklenburg**.

