



FEMA

# EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BULLETIN

Week of November 17, 2014

Important Dates and Deadlines:

[Unified Federal Review  
Applicant Guidance](#)  
(November 28, 2014)

[Assistance to Firefighters Grants](#)  
(December 5, 2014)

[Proposed Public Assistance  
Policy on Insurance](#)  
(December 8, 2014)

## FEMA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sign Memorandum of Understanding

FEMA continues to take important steps to implement changes to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) required by recent legislation. On November 13, 2014, FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize their commitment on a coordinated approach to execute the recommendations on program alignment and process improvements as well as exchanging, distributing and storing levee-related data as outlined in the [Flood Protection Structure Accreditation Task Force Final Report](#).

[Section 226 of the Biggert Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 \(Biggert-Waters\)](#) established the Flood Protection Structure Accreditation Task Force. FEMA and the USACE were tasked with identifying processes that clarify areas of direct alignment, ensuring that levee information can be used interchangeably between both agencies, and ensuring that information collected by or for the USACE is sufficient to satisfy NFIP flood protection system (levee) accreditation requirements. The MOU further defines the agreement between the two agencies on how the recommendations described in the final report to Congress will be carried out. Additionally, it determines when and for what purposes data will be exchanged among the agencies, local levee sponsors and communities. In signing the MOU, FEMA fully implemented Section 226 of Biggert-Waters.

FEMA and the USACE have long coordinated and worked together to identify efficiencies and synergies between the USACE Levee Safety Program and FEMA programs, including the NFIP. FEMA and the USACE look forward to continued coordination and executing the recommendations as laid out in the legislation.

## Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) Series Training Classes Available at EMI

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) will be conducting several [Virtual Tabletop Exercise \(VTTX\) Series](#) training classes focusing on earthquakes taking place in local communities, using historical events and recovery actions. The classes will be held on January 6, 7, 8, 27, 28 and 29 in 2015, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET. The VTTX involves key personnel in multiple locations discussing scenarios in an informal setting and can be used to assess plans, policies, training and procedures.

The VTTX will be conducted using video teleconferencing (VTC) to provide an opportunity for responders to simultaneously participate in a hazard-specific facilitated discussion. The exercise will prepare participants for an earthquake incident affecting their community; enabling them to better coordinate response operations with counterparts from local governments, tribal governments, state governments, federal agencies, private sector organizations and non-governmental agencies, while leveraging VTC technology to reach remote sites.

These VTTX programs are designed for a "community based" group of at least 12 or more personnel from local, tribal or state emergency management organizations with representatives from other disciplines. Participants must have an appropriate site equipped with VTC capability that can access FEMA.

To apply for the VTTX earthquake series, email a request to participate in the exercise to Doug Kahn at [douglas.kahn@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:douglas.kahn@fema.dhs.gov) or call (301) 447-7645. The deadline for applying to participate in the exercise is **December 22, 2014**.

FEMA's Office of External Affairs provides this bulletin to highlight recent and upcoming program and policy activities and announcements.

Feedback is welcome at [fema-ea-bulletin@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:fema-ea-bulletin@fema.dhs.gov). Previous editions are available at the [FEMA library](#).

## Open Joint Field Offices

AS, AZ, CA, HI, IA, KY, MI, MN,  
MO, NE, NV, NY, TN, WA

[Learn more.](#)

## National Education Week

National Education Week is **November 16-24** and is an opportunity to celebrate public education and honor individuals who are making a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education. The Ready Campaign has a variety of disaster preparedness resources available for educators, parents and kids. To learn more, visit [www.ready.gov/kids](http://www.ready.gov/kids).

## Put a Freeze on Winter Fires

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are once again teaming up to promote winter fire safety through their joint campaign, "Put a Freeze on Winter Fires." The goal of the campaign is to educate the public on increased fire risks during the winter months.

December, January and February are the leading months for home fires. Many of these fires are caused by cooking, heating and holiday decorations such as lights, Christmas trees and candles.

"Put a Freeze on Winter Fires" is a four month campaign beginning **Monday, November 17**. USFA and NFPA will post fire safety information each week on topics such as cooking safety, holiday decorations safety, heating safety, and generator safety to name a few.

For tip sheets, videos and other information on how to prevent cooking, heating and other types of fires, visit [www.usfa.fema.gov/winter](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/winter).

This bulletin is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of policies that are open for public comment, nor does it describe all of the instructions or requirements necessary to submit a comment. For a complete list of instructions and deadlines please click the hyperlinks included. FEMA does not endorse any non-government organizations, entities or services.

## November is Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Month

November is [Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Month](#). Safeguarding both the physical and cyber aspects of critical infrastructure is a national priority that requires private-partnership at all levels of government and industry. Managing risks to critical infrastructure involves preparing for all hazards—including natural and manmade incidents and events—reinforcing the resilience of our assets and networks, and staying ever-vigilant and informed.

Whether it's an individual or family thinking about how they need to prepare for a disruption of critical infrastructure, or business and industry that need to take steps to ensure the services they provide are resilient to disruptions, November is a time to ensure we are robust as possible. We all need to play a role in keeping infrastructure strong, secure and resilient. We can do our part at home, at work and in our community by being familiar with emergency plans, preparing for disruptions, incorporating basic cyber safety practices and making sure that if we see something, we say something by reporting suspicious activities to local law enforcement.

### REMINDER: Unified Federal Review Applicant Guidance Open for Comment

FEMA, in conjunction with its interagency Steering Group, announced the public review period for the Draft Environmental and Historic Preservation Guidance for Federal Disaster Recovery Assistance Applicants. The Draft Applicant Guidance is an important step in the implementation of the [Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review Process \(Unified Federal Review\)](#).

To access the Draft Applicant Guidance and for further instructions on submitting comments, please visit the [Unified Federal Review webpage](#). **Comments can be submitted through November 28, 2014.**

### REMINDER: Application Period for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) Open until December 5

FEMA announced the opening of the FY 2014 Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) application period, which will close on **Friday, December 5, at 5 p.m. EST**. All eligible applicants for AFG must be registered and active in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) before submitting an application.

For questions about the AFG Program, please contact a fire program specialist in one of the [ten federal regional centers](#) or the AFG Program Help Desk at 1-866-274-0960 or [firegrants@dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@dhs.gov).

## Prepare for Winter Weather

While the danger from winter weather varies across the country, nearly all Americans are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point. Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.

One of the primary concerns is winter weather's ability to knock out heat, power and communications services to homes and offices, sometimes for days at a time. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region. ["When the Sky Turns Gray"](#) highlights the importance of preparing for winter weather before it strikes.



### REMINDER: Proposed Public Assistance Policy on Insurance Open for Comment

FEMA seeks public comments from state, tribal, territorial and local governments, private non-profit organizations and interested members of the public regarding its proposed Public Assistance policy on insurance. Comments must be submitted through the process outlined in the [Federal Register Notice](#) and are due on **December 8, 2014**.

This proposed policy makes several changes including clarifying key terms, the scope of insurance needed, and the difference between flood and non-flood events. The policy also proposes options to self-insure, modify the insurance requirement and sets standards for State Insurance Commissioner certification.

The mission of the Office of External Affairs (OEA) is to engage, inform, and educate all of FEMA's stakeholders in support of the Agency's programs and initiatives to achieve its mission. OEA accomplishes its mission by coordinating and maintaining visibility of public and internal communications; advising FEMA program and support offices on decision-making regarding policies, plans, and actions that affect stakeholder, media, and Congressional audiences; and organizing outreach efforts targeted at principal stakeholders to include local, state, territorial, and tribal governments, the private sector, national organizations and associations, and the American public.

