

FEMA Urges Residents to Stay Alert as Ida Poses Continuing Threats

Release Date: September 1, 2021

WASHINGTON -- FEMA urges residents to stay alert, as Ida continues to bring dangerous weather conditions along the Gulf Coast. As parts of the south begin their clean up, the storm continues moving inland, bringing considerable heavy rain and flooding threats from the Tennessee and Ohio valleys into the central and southern Appalachians and mid-Atlantic throughout the day.

Recovery from Ida will take many months or more. Individuals who experienced damage and power loss should use extreme caution during the recovery phase. If you have insurance, start documenting your damage and reporting your losses to your agent immediately.

“Please be safe and listen to local emergency management officials,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “Anyone in the forecast path should take caution as Ida continues to cause flooding throughout areas of the northeast.

“FEMA’s priorities are to support lifesaving and life-sustaining actions, as we continue working with federal, state, local, tribal and non-governmental partners to support the needs of residents affected by Ida.”

Federal Actions to Support Areas Affected by Hurricane Ida

More than 1,400 FEMA employees are deployed to support Ida response and recovery efforts. Seven FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams are deployed to support states affected by Hurricane Ida. Five are in Louisiana, and two are in Mississippi. Four FEMA Corps teams have deployed to Region 6.

The National Emergency Management Association is helping facilitate additional resources to the area through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. Resources from 13 states have been sent to assist with ongoing response and recovery effort.



Commodities, equipment and personnel are pre-positioned to assist, as needed. This includes:

- ■ Twelve Urban Search and Rescue teams are operational in Louisiana. The teams have completed more than 8,900 structural evaluations.
- Ambulance crews are deployed to Louisiana and Mississippi. This includes 53 ambulances and four air ambulances staged in Baton Rouge, La., with one additional air ambulance in transit. Today, an additional 158 ambulances are expected to arrive in Louisiana and 140 in Mississippi to support impacted areas.
- FEMA has staged more than 4.5 million meals, 3.6 million liters of water, more than 134,000 tarps and 191 generators. Fifty-six additional generators are staged at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama.
- Mobile Emergency Response Support assets, including emergency operations vehicles, are deployed to support Louisiana and Mississippi.
- The Defense Logistics Agency has been activated for fuel support and leasing of additional generators. High output generators are scheduled for delivery today to Sherwood Forest, La.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) debris management and roofing experts are conducting assessments in Louisiana. USACE Temporary Emergency Power Planning and Response Teams, contractor support and the 249th Engineer Battalion's power generation team are mobilized in Mississippi and Louisiana to conduct power assessments and installations.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture approved Louisiana's request to allow Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program households to use their benefits to purchase hot food and are assisting with program flexibilities needed for mass feeding operations.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) deployed a 250-bed federal medical shelter to Alexandria, La. The shelter is scheduled to be operational by Sept. 3.
- The U.S. Coast Guard has 34 aviation, 26 rotary and 8 fixed-wing search and rescue assets prepositioned. The National Guard Bureau has 195 high-water vehicles and 23 rotary wing assets prepositioned to assist with search and rescue in Louisiana, and 680 high water vehicles and five rotary wing assets in Mississippi.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration announced an [Emergency Declaration](#) that provides truck



FEMA

Page 2 of 7

drivers flexibility to move critical freight to areas damaged by Ida. Additionally, USDOT activated an [Emergency Relief Docket](#) for railroads so they can get temporary safety regulations waivers to help them speed up service to move goods necessary for emergency relief efforts.

- [The Salvation Army mobilized feeding kitchens and emergency response vehicles in Gonzales, La., and New Orleans. These operations can feed up to 30,000 people per day.](#)
- Forty-one shelters are open in affected areas throughout the Gulf Coast.

Additional Resources for Disaster Survivors

- If you have flood insurance, report your loss immediately to your insurance agent or carrier. Be sure to ask them about advance payments. If you need help finding your insurance agent or carrier, call the National Flood Insurance Program at 877-336-2627.
- If you are able to safely return to your home, before you discard anything, take as many photos and videos as possible of your flood damaged home and personal property as possible, including flood water lines on the outside of the structure. For appliances and electronics, take a photograph of the make, model and serial number.
- Learn more about [starting your recovery](#) with the National Flood Insurance Program at [FEMA.gov](#).
- Residents in Mississippi who have immediate post-disaster needs are encouraged to contact their [county EMA director](#). If they have questions, they can call Mississippi Emergency Management Agency hotline at 1-888-574-3583. Additional resources are available at [MEMA \(msema.org\)](#).
- Louisiana residents can visit [NOLA Ready](#) for assistance information. Anyone in the affected area who needs a safe place to stay should call 211, visit [redcross.org](#), call 1-800-red cross (800-733-2767) or download the Red Cross emergency app for shelter locations. You can also text “LASHELTER” to 898-211, text “NOLAREADY” to 77295 or text “IDA” to 67283.
- FEMA Civil Rights Advisors are deployed to Louisiana and Mississippi to assist regional staff. FEMA is reviewing data to ensure that underserved communities are prioritized in response and recovery efforts.
- The HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration activated its Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH). This toll-free, multilingual crisis support service is available 24/7 via telephone or text at 1-800-985-5990 for



FEMA

Page 3 of 7

disaster survivors in Mississippi and Louisiana experiencing emotional distress.

- Spanish-speakers can call or text the hotline and press “2” for bilingual support. Callers can also connect with counselors in over 100 other languages via 3rd-party interpretation services by indicating their preferred language to the responding counselor, who will connect to a live interpreter.
- Deaf or hard of hearing American Sign Language users can contact the DDH through a direct videophone option via any videophone-enabled device and dialing 1-800-985-5990, or by selecting the “ASL Now” option on the DDH website at disasterdistress.samhsa.gov.
- FEMA previously issued [Ensuring Civil Rights in Multiple Disasters During COVID-19](#) to offer best practices for partners and communities facing a disproportionate rate of COVID-19 illness and death during response and recovery efforts during multiple disasters.

How to Help Survivors and Communities Impacted by Hurricane Ida

- **Be patient.** Recovery will take many months or more. People can help by donating to or volunteering with the voluntary or charitable organization of their choice, many of which are already in areas impacted by Ida supporting survivors. Learn how to best [help those in need](#).
- **Do not self-deploy.** Seeing images of Ida’s damages may compel you to head to the impacted area. Until a need has been identified and the community affected by Hurricane Ida has requested support, volunteers should not enter the area.
- **Cash is the best donation.** When people support voluntary organizations with financial contributions, it helps ensure a steady flow of important services to the people in need after a disaster. To find a reputable organization, visit the National Voluntary Organizations Active in a Disaster [Hurricane Ida](#) page.
- **Do not send or bring unsolicited donations.** In the early stages of the response phase, unsolicited donations create storage and sorting challenges when focus is needed on response and recovery.

Stay Safe from Post-Storm Hazards



FEMA

Page 4 of 7

- **Put your health and safety first:** Be careful in areas with storm damage or flooding. If you evacuated, return only when officials say it is safe to do so. Areas without power may experience heat advisories, which can lead to illness or a threat to life.
- **Be aware of heat-related illnesses.** Areas without power may experience heat advisories, which can lead to illness or a threat to life. Learn to recognize the [signs of heat illness](#).
 - Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages such as water or juice. Keep your pets hydrated by providing plenty of fresh water for your pets and provide a shady area.
 - Check on family, friends, and neighbors. Visit adults at risk at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- **If your home has flood water inside or around it,** don't walk or wade in it. The water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline or raw sewage. Never attempt to turn off power or operate circuit breakers while standing in water.
- **Be careful when cleaning up.** Wear protective clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, work gloves and sturdy thick-soled shoes. Do not try to remove heavy debris by yourself. Use an appropriate mask if cleaning mold or other debris. People with asthma and other lung conditions and/or immune suppression should not enter buildings with indoor water leaks or mold growth that can be seen or smelled. Children should not take part in disaster cleanup work.
- **Avoid downed power or utility lines.** They may be live with deadly voltage. Stay far away and report them immediately to your power company.
- **Stay put.** Stay off the roads. Emergency workers may be assisting people in flooded areas or cleaning up debris. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way. If you evacuated, do not return home until local officials say it is safe.
- **Don't drive through flood waters.** Almost half of all flash flood deaths happen in vehicles. When in your car, look out for flooding in low-lying areas at bridges and at highway dips. As little as 6 inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- **Check on friends and family.** If you are able, please check on your neighbors, friends and family because some may need more help than others.
- **Stay out of floodwater.** Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines or contain hazards such as human and animal waste, dangerous debris, contaminants that can lead to illness, or wild



FEMA

Page 5 of 7

or stray animals.

Stay Safe During Power Outages

- **Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.** A grill, camp stove 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.
- **Use a generator safely.** Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage even if doors and windows are open.
- **Keep generators outside and far away from your home.** Windows, doors and vents could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Read both the label on your generator and the owner's manual and follow the instructions.
- **Use only flashlights or battery-powered lanterns for emergency lighting.** NEVER use candles during a blackout or power outage due to extreme risk of fire.
- **Power outages can impact the safety of food** in your refrigerator and freezer.
 - Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep your food as fresh as possible. The refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours. Use coolers with ice if necessary.
 - Throw away any food that has been exposed to a temperature of 40°Fahrenheit (4° Celsius) or higher for two hours or more or that has an unusual odor, color or texture. When in doubt, throw it out!
 - Never taste food or rely on appearance or odor to determine its safety. Some foods may look and smell fine, but if they have been at room temperature too long, heat-resistant bacteria that cause food-borne illnesses can start growing quickly.

Disaster Declarations

- President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s Aug. 29 approval of a [Major Disaster Declaration for the state of Louisiana](#) is in addition to Louisiana's Aug. 27 emergency declaration.
- Louisiana residents who were impacted by Ida and have insurance, contact your insurance company first and then FEMA. You will need to provide your insurance claim information to FEMA to determine eligibility for federal



FEMA

Page 6 of 7

assistance.

- FEMA cannot provide assistance for losses that are covered by insurance.
- If you are in one of the parishes approved for individual assistance and do not have insurance, you can apply for disaster assistance and get referrals to local, state and federal agencies and voluntary organizations. The fastest way to apply is through [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.disasterassistance.gov). You can also apply by calling 1-800-621-3362 or through the [FEMA mobile app](#).
- If you use a relay service, such as your videophone, Innocaption or CapTel, please provide your specific number assigned to that service. It is important that FEMA is able to contact you, and you should be aware phone calls from FEMA may come from an unidentified number.
- President Biden approved [Mississippi's emergency declaration on Aug. 28](#). The declaration was amended to include all 84 counties and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Additional damage assessments are ongoing.

Visit [Hurricane Ida | FEMA.gov](#) for information and resources available for residents in areas that may be affected by Ida. The page is available in French, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese.



FEMA

Page 7 of 7