

FEMA Continues Response to Tornado-Damaged Areas, Kentucky Receives Major Declaration Approval

Release Date: December 13, 2021

WASHINGTON -- President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. approved Kentucky's request for an expedited major disaster declaration Sunday night. The declaration authorizes federal assistance for disaster survivors in Caldwell, Fulton, Graves, Hopkins, Marshall, Muhlenberg, Taylor and Warren counties.

The declaration was granted after FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell and DHS Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas visited affected areas of Kentucky Sunday to see tornado destruction firsthand and meet with [first responders and emergency management officials](#) conducting operations throughout the state.

"To all of the people of Kentucky, my heart goes out to each and every one of you who have experienced the tragic events from these tornadoes. I want you to know that the nation, your country, is praying with you," said Administrator Criswell following the visit. Criswell said it was important for her and the secretary to see the damaged areas firsthand "so we can make sure that we're providing the right level of assistance to help with your response and your ongoing recovery."

- Survivors in counties approved for individual assistance can apply for disaster assistance. The fastest way to apply is through DisasterAssistance.gov. They can also apply by calling 1-800-621-3362 (TTY 1-800-462-7585) or through the [FEMA mobile app](#). If you use a relay service, such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA the number for that service.
- If you have storm damage, take photographs or video to document it, and contact your insurance agent to start a claim.

FEMA, Federal and Voluntary Agency Partner Response Actions



FEMA

Page 1 of 4

FEMA's priorities are to support lifesaving and life-sustaining actions. The agency continues working with federal, state, local, tribal and non-governmental partners to support the needs of areas affected by the tornado outbreak.

- FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams are in Kentucky working in declared counties to help survivors register for assistance. These teams will be working in declared counties and helping to address immediate and emerging needs.
- Two FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams have been working in Kentucky since Saturday to assist with federal coordination efforts. FEMA will also send disaster housing experts to work with these teams and commonwealth officials.
- Four Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) teams, including Canine Detection Search teams, are in Mayfield, Kentucky to assist local response. An additional 10-person team is relocating from Frankfort to Mayfield.
- An Incident Support Base was established at Fort Campbell, Kentucky to rapidly deploy personnel and supplies as needed. This includes:
 - Sixty-one generators, 74,000 meals, 135,000 liters of water, thousands of cots and blankets, infant toddler kits and pandemic shelter kits are staged to distribute at the commonwealth's request.
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers temporary power and critical public facilities staff are providing support.
 - Mobile Emergency Response Support personnel is in Kentucky. Support includes two Mobile Emergency Operations Vehicles with emergency communications capabilities for federal resources, if needed. Three Mobile Communications Vehicles are expected to arrive today.
 - Staging teams, housing inspectors, damage assessment and voluntary agency liaison staff are staged and prepared to deploy.
- Eight shelters remain open in Kentucky, and the Salvation Army is serving meals and providing emotional support to survivors.

How to Help

After a disaster, people want to help. To make the most of your contributions, it's important to follow guidelines for donating and volunteering responsibly.

- To help survivors in Kentucky, you can donate to the Team Western Kentucky Tornado Relief Fund at <http://TeamWKYReliefFund.ky.gov>.



FEMA

Page 2 of 4

- Financial contributions to [recognized disaster relief organizations](#) are the fastest, most flexible and most effective method of donating. Organizations on the ground know what items and quantities are needed, often buy in bulk with discounts and, if possible, purchase through businesses local to the disaster, which supports economic recovery.
- To find a list of trusted organizations that can put your generous contributions to the best possible use, [visit National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#).
- Before collecting donated items, confirm the items are needed, and how it will get to affected areas.
- Don't self-deploy to disaster areas. [Trusted organizations](#) operating in the affected areas know where volunteers are needed. Work with an established non-profit organization to make sure you have the appropriate safety, training and skills needed to respond.
 - Recovery lasts much longer than media attention. There will be volunteer needs for many months, often many years, after the disaster. Your help is often needed long after a disaster.

Staying Safe During Clean Up

Following any emergency, always follow the instructions given by state, local or tribal emergency management officials. And before you begin cleaning up, take photos and make a list of your damaged property.

Survivors who cannot stay in their homes can locate emergency shelters options by zip code by visiting the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, or by texting **SHELTER** and your zip code (**for example, "SHELTER 01234"**) to **4FEMA (43362)**. For **Spanish text REFUGIO** and your zip code. (Standard text message rates apply.) You can also download the [FEMA mobile app](#) to find open shelters.

Additional safety tips include:

- Stay out of the area if possible. Emergency workers may be assisting people or cleaning up debris. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way.
- If you suspect any damage to your home, shut off the electrical power, natural gas and propane tanks to avoid fire, electrocution or explosions, if you know



how to do so safely.

- Do not touch downed power lines or any objects that are in contact with downed lines. If you see a downed power line or other electrical hazard, report it to the police and the utility company.
 - If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open all windows and leave the house immediately. Notify the gas company, the police or fire departments or State Fire Marshal's office. Do not turn on the lights, light matches, smoke or do anything that could cause a spark. Do not return to your house until your local officials say it is safe to do so.
- Be careful when cleaning up. Wear protective clothing, including work gloves and sturdy thick-soled shoes. Do not try to remove heavy debris by yourself.

Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

If you lost 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.



FEMA