

NFL and FEMA Launch National Strategy to Build Resilience in Communities, Designate Venues as Mission Ready Locations During Disasters

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WASHINGTON -- Stadiums and venues provide a central and accessible location to help communities respond to extreme weather crises, providing safe storage and shelter in times of need. With these events becoming more frequent, severe and expensive, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell and NFL Chief Security Officer Cathy Lanier today announced that FEMA and the NFL are launching a new strategy to build resilience in communities through a program that will designate NFL stadiums and fields as mission capable venues that can be used during response and recovery missions. Through *Mission Ready Venues*, a public-private partnership, NFL stadiums are recognized for their capabilities to better sustain public safety and be a source of support for the communities they serve. The designation identifies the ways the stadium or venue could be used for response and recovery activities during declared emergencies or disasters.

“During large-scale emergencies, like the COVID-19 pandemic, hurricanes, or tornados, we’ve seen how large music, sports and entertainment venues can serve as a safe space for communities,” said **FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell**. “This new strategy we’re launching with the NFL is a groundbreaking opportunity to help our partners use these venues for emergency response and recovery needs, while keeping communities safe and making them more resilient. While we are starting with the NFL, all venues across sports organizations and leagues can become assets to their communities, and I encourage them to join in this collaborative effort as we grapple with the impacts of the climate crisis.”

“Stadiums are valuable community assets that are often used in times of disasters,” said **NFL Chief Security Officer Cathy Lanier**. “This designation reflects the role that many stadiums play, not only on Sundays, but especially in



times of need. We are proud to work with FEMA and first responders at the local and state level to ensure disaster response agencies have the information and tools they need to help a community recover when disaster strikes.”

According to the NYU School of Professional Studies and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, stadiums and arenas can improve the public health and well-being of their communities—including pandemic response during COVID-19. The initial stadiums to receive designations include MetLife, home of the Jets and the Giants in East Rutherford, New Jersey, Lumen Field, home of the Seahawks in Seattle, Washington, Acrisure Stadium, home of the Steelers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Raymond James Stadium, home of the Buccaneers in Tampa, Florida. SoFi Stadium, home of the Rams and the Chargers in Los Angeles, California is under review.

Given the size, capabilities and locations of large sports venues, these existing community assets can serve the public in a variety of ways including emergency shelters, staging areas, commodity distribution sites, evacuation pick up points, disaster recovery centers, mass vaccination and testing, temporary hospitals and more. FEMA and the NFL recognized this unique opportunity for collaboration and are enlisting the support of venue owners, operators and the tenants of these facilities to work with government officials in the planning and preparation for emergency or disaster response and recovery efforts. To receive an official *Mission Ready Venue* designation, venues must undergo a comprehensive assessment to determine what capabilities the venue may be able to support in emergency and disaster response and recovery efforts. The designation highlights the following attributes of selected venues:

- **Provide Safety and Security:** Stadiums are usually centrally located, close to major roadways and transportation hubs and critical services like hospitals. If used to respond to a disaster, the designation will save valuable time and resources and will further enhance coordination between the public and private sectors during disaster response and recovery.
- **Provide Accessibility:** Stadiums are also compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act and can support persons with disabilities and others with access or functional needs. Additionally, 73% of NFL venues are accessible by mass transportation. This provides an avenue to promote equitable service to underserved populations to access potentially critical lifesaving/life-sustaining services after an event.



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- **Strengthen Community Resilience:** Stadiums and arenas are a focal point of communities and help strengthen social networks by enhancing connections between residents with home team pride. These *Mission Ready Venues* can boost morale amidst disaster. By providing a more robust and resilient environment, these venues can enhance social networks amongst survivors while providing ample opportunities to establish connections with the venue's main tenants.
- **Ensure Unity of Effort:** Coordination of stadium resources and services can support survivors and responders and help stabilize an incident quickly. Since stadiums are fixed locations, resources and services can be deployed quickly. This promotes the community's physical and economic recovery.

Mission Ready Venue designations are for five-year increments with a yearly check-in to ensure continued readiness of the venue. Redesignation will be necessary every five years and designation does not supersede any agreements with state, local or private sector entities.

