

# FEMA, Federal Family Helene Response Update

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**Release Date: September 28, 2024**

WASHINGTON -- Together with state, tribal and federal partners, FEMA is actively supporting Hurricane Helene response efforts. Although the immediate threat of the storm is passing, there are still post-storm hazards that can be life-threatening. Everyone in affected areas should continue to follow instructions from local officials to stay safe.

FEMA is not waiting to begin its work assessing impacts. Working with our state partners, we have requested that multiple teams begin flying aerial imaging missions.

At the direction of President Biden, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell is on the ground in Florida today surveying damage and assessing the need for federal resources.

FEMA has more than 800 deployed staff supporting states affected by the hurricane. Our distribution centers are fully stocked and ready to provide commodities and equipment to any impacted state as required.

FEMA is coordinating a federal force of more than 3,200 personnel each contributing their expertise and manpower to this mission.

- **Department of Homeland Security** Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas activated the Surge Capacity Force (SCF). The SCF makes rostered federal employees available to support FEMA's response and recovery missions.
- **Urban Search and Rescue (US&R)** Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) deployed a total of 24 teams (over 1,270 personnel) to affected states. In Florida, eight US&R teams are actively responding. All teams are equipped with Swift Water Rescue Capabilities. In Georgia, two teams are deployed to support rescue operations. In North Carolina there are four teams. Additional teams and four Swift Water Mission Ready Packages are in route to the impacted areas.



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Page 1 of 3

- **U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)** crews continue to respond with vessels and aircraft to assist search and rescue and damage assessment activities. Coast Guard personnel are working response activities, including assessing damage to USCG infrastructure and providing opportunity for USCG personnel to assess impacted personal and family property. The Coast Guard continues to respond to urgent distress to save lives, assist those impacted by the storm and support the rapid reopening of impacted ports.
- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)** has teams positioned to provide temporary emergency power, with others prepared to deploy if needed. In addition to temporary emergency power, personnel assist the states with assessments of critical infrastructure including water/wastewater treatment facilities, debris management and road and bridge inspections as needed. They have activated six emergency operation centers in the region to coordinate operations.
- **Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS)** has Public Health Emergencies in effect for Florida and Georgia to address the health impacts of Hurricane Helene. The declarations give the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) health care providers and suppliers greater flexibility in meeting emergency health needs of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. Their staff on the ground have begun initial assessments of the public health and health care infrastructure. The Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) has positioned medical responders who can move to impacted communities in the region. These personnel include Health Care Situational Assessment teams and National Disaster Medical System' (NDMS) Disaster Medical Assistance Teams along with several tons of medical equipment and supplies to provide medical surge support.
- **Department of Energy (DOE)** activated the Energy Response Organization (ERO) and is closely monitoring impacts and restoration efforts related to Helene, including power, fuel and supply chain interruptions. The ERO and field responders are in contact with industry partners and local officials. DOE responders deployed to the Florida Emergency Operations Center, Georgia Emergency Operations Center and the North Carolina Emergency Operations Center.
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** is working closely with federal, state, local and Tribal partners to help water systems, prepare for debris management and ensure facilities, including Superfund sites, maintain critical public health and environmental protections. The agency has personnel on the ground in regional and national operations centers who are offering technical



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Page 2 of 3

assistance and guidance to those affected by Helene.

- **American Red Cross (ARC)** has more than 540 Red Cross responders deployed to affected areas with another 350 responders are in route. As of Saturday morning, reporting indicates that at least 1900 people are still in just over 80 shelters as evacuation orders are lifted. We anticipate this number may change in the coming days and are transitioning from evacuation centers to emergency shelters where needed. There are more than 30 Emergency Response Vehicles currently supporting this event and 2 dozen additional are en route. ARC is prepared to support mass fatality and reunification efforts as well as emergency feeding. Anyone who needs a safe place to go can find information on [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) or download the free Red Cross Emergency app by texting GETEMERGENCY to 90999.
- **Salvation Army** is in Georgia providing meals at six emergency shelters. In Florida, they have a total of 17 mobile feeding units that will serve Tallahassee (5 units) and Perry (12 units). They have teams in Perry, FL, serving the impacted areas with hot meals. Local service delivery is underway to affected communities, including shelter feeding and two feeding locations. The Salvation Army is also responding to requests for cleanup kits and blankets. In North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky, the Salvation Army is responding to requests for meal service to communities affected by the storm. More information is on [helpsalvationarmy.org](https://helpsalvationarmy.org).
- **USA.gov** published a [one-stop-shop](#) for hurricane information.



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Page 3 of 3