

FEMA Urges Floridians to Heed Officials' Directions in the Aftermath of Hurricane Milton

Release Date: October 10, 2024

FEMA Administrator Criswell Remains in Florida to Survey Storm Damage with Local Officials

WASHINGTON – The joint federal and state emergency response and damage assessments are underway today as Hurricane Milton moves out of Florida. FEMA encourages everyone in the affected areas to continue following the directions of state and local officials, only returning home when told to do so. While the immediate danger from the storm has passed, conditions on the ground require Floridians to take extreme caution as they begin their recovery.

FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell is on the ground in Florida with state and local officials assessing the impacts of the storm.

“Because of President Biden’s swift approval of the pre-landfall emergency declaration, we were able to deploy some of our search and rescue teams to help in those counties that were impacted by the tornados,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “We have over 1,000 federal responders that have been in the state supporting the response and recovery efforts, and not just from Helene, but also the recovery efforts from Ian, Idalia and Debby. Once we know more about the impacts of Milton, we can move in more resources to support them at the state’s request.”

Commodities, volunteer agencies, response assets and federal personnel are being coordinated through the FEMA Region 4 Regional Response Coordination Center in Atlanta and the National Response Coordination Center in Washington, D.C. Both facilities are activated on 24-hour operations to support the state.

- Several FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams have been deployed to various parts of the state to assist with requests for assistance immediately



after the storm.

- Ten federal search and rescue teams are in the state to assist survivors.
- FEMA Urban Search and Rescue teams are conducting operations near Orlando and Tampa. Assets including planes, helicopters and boats from the Department of Defense and the U.S. Coast Guard are positioned to support the state's efforts.
- Millions of bottles of water and meals are at air bases and logistics sites in Alabama, Georgia, Florida and North Carolina for rapid deployment should the state request additional supplies, in addition to tarps and sheeting for interim home repairs. FEMA and the state have been in close coordination to pre-position federal resources to best support their needs.
- Healthcare System Assessment Teams are onsite in Florida to work with state officials to assess the storm's impacts to hospitals, nursing homes, dialysis centers, and other healthcare facilities.
- As of Thursday morning, more than 280 shelters were open overnight throughout the state with more than 83,000 people.

Stay Safe After the Storm

- DO NOT enter your damaged home if you smell gas, floodwaters remain around the building or if authorities have not declared it safe to return. If your home has received significant flood damage, ensure that the electricity is off and that you are wearing appropriate safety gear before entering.
- NEVER use generators indoors. Carbon monoxide has no smell or color and can be deadly. Keep generators at least 20 feet away from your home.
- **Stay out of floodwater.** Walking or driving through flood waters is extremely dangerous. Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines or contain hazards such as wild or stray animals, human and livestock waste, and chemicals that can lead to illness.
- If you do not feel safe in your home, a list of emergency shelters, including those that can accommodate people who need assistance and those who have pets, can be found at [Shelter Status | Florida Disaster](#).
- **If you need help with damages caused by Hurricane Milton, call Florida's Crisis Cleanup hotline at 844-965-1386.**
- You can also call 833-GET-HOPE for free assistance and resources such as food, household goods, or debris removal. Hope Navigators stand ready to listen and help.

