

# FEMA Responds to Severe Winter Weather in the Southeast

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WASHINGTON -- Within less than 24 hours of receiving Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's request for a major disaster declaration, President Joseph R. Biden Jr. [approved the declaration](#), allowing assistance for winter storm survivors in 77 counties.

FEMA continues responding to meet the needs of survivors in large sections of the United States who are impacted by extreme cold, snow, ice and high winds. The agency is actively coordinating with state, local and tribal governments to address unmet needs.

Anyone who is still without power should seek a warming center in their area, while taking COVID-19 precautions. Older adults, young children and the disabled can be especially vulnerable in extreme temperatures, so please check on your neighbors and encourage anyone who needs assistance to go to these shelters for warmth.

## Texas Disaster Declaration

- President Biden's [major disaster declaration](#) provides assistance for disaster survivors in 77 counties. This assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of this storm.
  - Survivors in those counties may apply online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or by calling 1-800-621-3362 (TTY: 800-462-7585).
  - If it is safe to do so, start cleaning up now. Remember to take photos of any damage for your personal and insurance records. If the pipes in your home freeze or have burst due to the weather, call a plumber and your insurance company.
  - If you were impacted by the Texas severe winter storms and have insurance, contact your insurance company to file a claim. When you apply for FEMA



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disaster assistance, you will also need to provide your insurance claim information.

## Winter Storm Impact on COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts

Severe weather continues to impact COVID-19 vaccination efforts across the United States. Cold weather, lingering power outages and water service interruptions continue in areas impacted by the winter storm. More than 3,000 vaccine centers were located in areas that experienced power outages.

FEMA continues working with our state partners to ensure they have everything necessary to safely reopen any closed facility.

[Twitter is supporting our efforts](#) to share critical information about the winter storm response and the ongoing nationwide effort to get the COVID-19 vaccine to more people by amplifying FEMA messages today to more people.

## FEMA Response Actions

On Friday, Acting FEMA Administrator Bob Fenton appeared on [CBS This Morning](#) and [ABC News Livestream](#) to discuss FEMA's ongoing response activities for winter weather across the southeast. He noted the difficulties for states dealing with cascading effects of the winter storms, including power outages, water system failures and keeping people warm and safe.

- Fenton noted the best and fastest way for individuals to start recovery is by contacting their insurance company.
- He also explained that the agency's response to the winter storms was not hindered in any way by FEMA's ongoing COVID-19 vaccination efforts.
- FEMA has provided personnel, equipment and resources to the state of Texas to alleviate impacts from these storms:
  - FEMA provided 60 generators, 10,000 gallons of winterized diesel and 10,000 gallons of gasoline for the last seven days to the state of Texas to support critical infrastructure.
  - FEMA has provided 729,234 liters of water, more than 15,900 wool blankets, 50,000 cotton blankets and 226,448 meals from the distribution center in Fort Worth, Texas.



- On Feb. 19, air shipments of 45,000 liters of water were flown to Galveston and Corpus Christi. Today, flights will deliver an additional 150,000 liters of water to Texas.
- A FEMA staging management team and an incident support base team are in Seguin, Texas to support the state's winter storm response.
- Additionally, an Incident Management Assistance Team is in Denton and another team is at the Fort Worth distribution center staging area to support response and recovery efforts.
- FEMA activated the National EMS contract to support the state with 50 ambulances.

## **Stay Safe in Winter Weather**

While a gradual rise in temperatures is forecast over the coming days, residents in impacted areas should remain vigilant to continued risks. Listen to state and local officials about warming centers and road conditions in your area.

Follow these tips to stay safe and warm when winter weather hits.

### **Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:**

If you lose heat, due to severe winter weather, 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.
- Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home.
- Do not run a car in a closed garage.

### **Stay Safe and Warm:**

Severe winter weather may cause you to lose heat. Have adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm. Include extra blankets for pets and service animals.



Do not avoid going to a warming center or shelter due to COVID-19. If you go to a warming center or public shelter, be sure to take supplies to protect yourself and your family. These supplies can include hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and two face masks per person.

Check on neighbors who may need assistance such as infants, children, older adults and people with disabilities.

- Residents in Texas can [find the closest warming shelter online](#).
- Oklahoma residents can visit the [Department of Emergency Management](#) site for updated locations.
- To find out if 2-1-1 services are available in your area or to search for resources, visit [211.org](#).

To assist people in the impacted area in coping with the stress of the winter storms, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration activated the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#).

- [This toll-free, multilingual and confidential crisis support provides immediate 24/7, 365-days-a-year crisis counseling and support. Residents in affected areas may call or text 1-800-985-5990 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. Spanish speakers should press 2.](#)

FEMA has additional information on how to prepare for winter weather at [Ready.gov](#).

Many areas remain under boil water notices. For more information on water safety and treatment, visit [Ready.gov/water](#).

If you have damage from these storms, or have been severely impacted, check your insurance policies or call your local agent for assistance you may be eligible to receive.

### **Avoid Scams:**

Do not trust anyone who offers financial help and then asks for money or personal information. The Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention staff never charge for disaster assistance.



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- The best information on legitimate sources of help in your area will come from local officials or the [Texas Division of Emergency Management](#).
- Do not disclose information to any unsolicited telephone calls and e-mails.
- Federal and local disaster workers do not solicit or accept money.
- Beware of visits, calls or emails from people claiming to be from FEMA asking for your Social Security number, bank account or other sensitive information. Giving out this type of information can lead to identify theft.

Last week, President Biden Jr. approved emergency declarations for [Louisiana](#), [Oklahoma](#) and [Texas](#). These declarations authorize FEMA to provide emergency protective measures for mass care and sheltering and direct federal assistance.

