Direct Temporary Housing: Commercial Sites in Southwest Louisiana

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Hurricanes Laura and Delta impacted areas of Louisiana where available housing was minimal or non-existent, thereby further exacerbating an already problematic lack of affordable rental housing units. This severely limited the availability of alternative housing options for households whose homes were destroyed or made unlivable due to major damage. To help meet the housing needs, as part of the Direct Temporary Housing Program, FEMA has identified many commercial parks throughout the affected areas to temporarily house displaced residents.

Commercial sites are existing manufactured-home or recreational-vehicle parks with available pads that FEMA may lease for the purpose of providing Direct Temporary Housing Assistance**.**

- FEMA prioritizes locations within a reasonable commuting distance of impacted areas and those near critical community and wrap-around services (e.g., schools, community-based service providers and public transportation).
- FEMA prioritizes commercial sites with existing usable pads before considering those that require improvement or expansion.
- FEMA will not pay additional costs for utilities, grounds maintenance, trash removal, propane, or other costs unless they are included in the leases and the utilities in question are not metered separately by the utility provider.
- FEMA may expand or improve commercial sites as a cost-effective alternative to building group sites, which are generally unimproved parcels of land.

Commercial Sites in Southwest Louisiana

- As of Jan. 25, in Southwest Louisiana, FEMA has leased 661 total pads in 27 parks. Of those, 277 are manufactured homes and 384 are non-motorized RV pads. FEMA is still searching for vacant pads, conducting site inspections and reviewing locations to determine feasibility.
- FEMA is working with parks to upgrade their electrical connections in order to accommodate more pads (and unit installations) for applicants.

Challenges/Obstacles in Commercial Park Housing

- The majority of households currently on the waiting list for a FEMA direct temporary housing option in a commercial park have access and functional needs and/or a household size that requires a manufactured housing unit (MHU), and there are very few available pads for MHUs in Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes.
- Availability for parks is scarce since there is also a demand for housing with oil/gas workers, contractors, hunters, etc.
- Many commercial parks in Cameron Parish are in flood zones or other areas where FEMA is prohibited from installing housing units.
- Much of the electrical infrastructure in Cameron Parish was destroyed and the restoration is not complete.
- Park owners have not completed the removal of debris and damaged units from sites and/or completed necessary repairs to the infrastructure within the parks.
- When attempting to house applicants, most parks require background checks for all adult household members. Some applicants are reluctant to undergo such scrutiny, or they completed the process and were not approved by the park management.

FEMA has expanded its services to accommodate questions about Direct Temporary Housing. Applicants who were not provided a point of contact for their housing needs or misplaced the information, may call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 and operators will take the information and forward it to the Direct Housing Department. Those who use TTY may call 800-462-7585; those who use a relay service, such as a videophone, InnoCaption or CapTel, should give FEMA the number assigned to that service. The toll-free telephone lines operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week.

For the latest information on Hurricane Laura, visit fema.gov/disaster/4559. For the latest information on Hurricane Delta, visit fema.gov/disaster/4570. Follow the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at twitter.com/FEMARegion6