

Returning Home after Wildfires? Private Wells, Septic Systems May be Eligible for FEMA Assistance

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Salem, Ore. -- Nearly six months after the event, many survivors are just now returning to their wildfire-decimated properties to begin the process of rebuilding. While homeowner's insurance is the primary source of funds to pay for home repairs after a major disaster, some home repairs such as private wells and/or septic systems are not typically covered.

???????The good news is that FEMA financial assistance may be available to residents in Clackamas, Douglas, Jackson, Klamath, Lane, Lincoln, Linn and Marion counties whose private wells and septic systems were damaged by the wildfires. Households that don't have insurance — or those whose insurance settlement didn't cover the cost to repair their wells and/or septic systems should contact FEMA to see if they may be eligible. Here's what to do:

- Contact FEMA: online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov); through the [FEMA App](#); or by phone at **800-621-3362** (TTY: 800-462-7585) from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. PST daily. Applicants should be sure to report any damages to their private well and/or septic system as a result of the disaster. Those who use a relay service such as a videophone, InnoCaption or CapTel should update FEMA with their assigned number for that service. They should be aware that phone calls from FEMA may come from an unidentified number.
- Those who applied with FEMA and have not yet had a home inspection should let the FEMA inspector know they have a private well and/or septic system. Oregon residents who applied with FEMA and are insured should contact the FEMA helpline and let them know that they have well/septic damage so that an inspection can be issued. If an inspection has already been conducted and a well or septic system wasn't reported, applicants may send FEMA a dated and



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signed letter, along with a contractor's estimate, indicating they are appealing for the well and/or septic system.

???????What if an applicant has already received FEMA assistance for their private well/septic system, but additional help for these costs is needed?

- Applicants should provide FEMA with a verifiable estimate/receipt showing the well and/or septic system was physically damaged, collapsed and/or is no longer functioning as a direct result of the disaster. They should be sure to include a dated and signed letter, along with the contractor's estimate, indicating they are appealing for additional help with the well and/or septic system.
- If the submitted estimates/receipts do not specifically include this information, FEMA will call the contractor to confirm the information.

Disaster survivors who have questions about a pending application for disaster assistance can contact the FEMA Helpline at **800-621-3362** (TTY: 800-462-7585).

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-3362 (TTY 800-462-7585). Those who use a relay service such as a videophone, InnoCaption or CapTel should update FEMA with their assigned number for that service. They should be aware phone calls from FEMA may come from an unidentified number. Multilingual operators are available. (Press 2 for Spanish.)

Disaster survivors affected by the Oregon wildfires and straight-line winds can also get personalized mitigation advice to repair and rebuild safer and stronger from a FEMA Mitigation Specialist. For information on how to rebuild safer and stronger, or to inquire as to your new flood risk following a fire near you, email FEMA-R10-MIT@fema.dhs.gov; a FEMA Hazard Mitigation specialist will respond to survivor inquiries. When rebuilding, check with your local building official and floodplain administrator for guidance.



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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.



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