

ICYMI – FEMA Administrator Responds to Ida’s Initial Impacts

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WASHINGTON -- FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell briefed the media this morning on initial Hurricane Ida impacts and federal response.

On ABC’s Good Morning America, Administrator Criswell addressed dangerous conditions for those in the path of the storm.



“Some of the initial reports that we're hearing are some building collapses across the area, significant structural damage to many buildings. We're seeing some barges and some vessels that may have been broken loose and we're also experiencing over a million power outages right at the moment,” said the Administrator. “The state has search and rescue teams either in place right now rescuing or ready to go out at first light. This is significant. There is major damage. We've got a lot of resources in place to support the state, and they'll be going out as soon as it's safe to do so.”

At this point in FEMA’s response, life-safety is critical. Administrator Criswell underlined this focus during her interview with CBS News.





“I’ve been in touch with the regional administrator in Baton Rouge, both last night and this morning,” she said. “We’re getting reports of significant structural damage across the area. Potentially, some buildings have collapsed. As you heard, several people are calling for assistance to help them get out. We’re going to have a long road over the next few days, as we try to identify where people may be, and people to need to be prepared to stay put for about 72 hours. We’re going to get to you. The state and local first responders will get to you as quickly as they can.”



Disaster response works best when it is locally managed, state led and federally supported. When asked about FEMA’s coordination with local officials on CNN, Administrator Criswell emphasized our important partnerships.

“We have never had a better relationship with the state and local emergency management officials. The first responders -- they are ready. They’re going to be doing an amazing job. A lot of hard work over the next several days. It’s important to remember that they are probably impacted as well. They are some of the best that Louisiana has, and it’s just going to be a tough couple of days as we go through the initial response efforts. The recovery is just going to take a long time.”





Hurricane Ida has displaced many people along the Gulf Coast. Administrator Criswell discussed sheltering during her interview with MSNBC.

“The state has shelters set up across the state right now. We're also prepared to move people into hotels, until they can get back into their homes safely or identify other long-term solutions. The power company has brought in crews to help restore the power. There's several other crews from other states that are going to be brought in to support. We also have the Army Corps of Engineers that is ready to support power restoration through the generators for any critical facilities that might need that.”



Louisiana received a [major disaster declaration](#) from the President for Hurricane Ida. Administrator Criswell described during a Weather Channel interview what this means in terms of federal support for those impacted by the storm.

“President Biden declared a major disaster declaration for Louisiana late last night. That is going to give us the ability to bring in whatever resources the federal government has to support the state and local efforts. Another big piece of that is that individuals that have been impacted by this, they can now receive



some assistance from FEMA. They can go to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.disasterassistance.gov), or they can call 1-800-621-FEMA to start that process. We have 22 federal partners here in the in NRCC [National Response Coordination Center], the [U.S.] Coast Guard, the American Red Cross, the Department of Defense, all bringing search and rescue assets, high-water vehicles, generators, just a large number of resources here from across the federal government to do whatever we need to do to help this community begin its recovery.”

It is important for survivors to follow the instructions of state and local officials during all phases of a disaster, including recovery. The administrator went on to remind those impacted by Hurricane Ida to remain cautious.

“When people want to go back to their homes, it is going to be dangerous. They need to exercise extreme caution, as they are going back into the area. Downed power lines, trees, instable buildings. They need to be able to watch out for themselves, not put themselves in harm’s way.” For more information on federal Hurricane Ida preparedness and response visit [Hurricane Ida | FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/hurricane-ida).

