

FEMA Administrator to Travel to Florida to Direct FEMA Response and Federal Staging Efforts, Meet with State and Local Officials Ahead of Milton Landfall

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Evacuation Orders Have Been Issued and Others Are Underway, If Locals Issue Evacuations, Please Listen and Evacuate Now

FEMA Senior Leadership Remain in States Impacted by Helene and Being Sent to Florida to Support Operations

WASHINGTON -- Administrator Deanne Criswell continues to lead the federal Helene response and recovery efforts and joined North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, Department of Defense Assistant Secretary Rebecca Zimmerman, Dual Status Commander Wes Morrison, and NORTHCOM Commanding General Gregory Guillot for a press conference to provide updates on the storm damage assessments and response efforts in North Carolina. Following the event, Administrator Criswell will travel to Florida where she will meet with state and local officials today and direct federal response efforts, before traveling back to North Carolina. FEMA senior leader and Regional Administrator Willie Nunn, who led Hurricane Sandy response efforts will also travel Florida and remain there throughout the duration of Hurricane Milton. John Brogan, the Federal Coordinating Officer for Milton, and Helene, will remain in Florida.

Today, President Joseph R. Biden approved an Emergency Declaration for Florida, authorizing FEMA to save lives, protect the health and safety of those in the storm's path. FEMA and its federal partners are leaning forward, pre-positioning resources to support local and state response efforts ahead of Hurricane Milton. This includes pre-staging in Florida and the region including six FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams, five FEMA Urban Search & Rescue teams, three U.S. Coast Guard Swift Water Rescue teams, four HealthCare System Assessment Teams, two U.S Army Corps of Engineers



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(USACE) temporary power teams, USACE debris experts, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and wastewater experts, 300 ambulances and 30 High Water Vehicles with ladders from the Department of Defense. Additionally, FEMA has two incident staging bases with commodities including food and water. Right now, FEMA currently has 20 million meals and 40 million liters of water in the pipeline to deploy as needed used to address ongoing Helene and Milton response efforts with capacity to expand as needed.

Currently, a total of nearly 900 staff are already supporting recovery efforts based out of the Joint Field Office in Tallahassee and operating across the designated counties for hurricanes Helene, Debby and Idalia. This includes over 440 supporting Hurricane Helene recovery, over 300 supporting Hurricane Debby recovery, and over 100 supporting Hurricane Idalia recovery.

FEMA officials are still actively supporting North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, Florida and Virginia as they respond to and recover from Hurricane Helene and will not divert personnel or resources from these ongoing responses.

The [National Hurricane Center](#) warns there is a risk of life-threatening storm surge and damaging winds for portions of the west coast of the Florida Peninsula beginning early Wednesday. Areas of heavy rainfall will affect portions of Florida through today well ahead of Milton. There is also increasing concern for coastal flooding for the southeast South Carolina and Georgia coasts on Thursday.

FEMA understands that people in the path of this storm may still be recovering from hurricanes Helene and Debby and urges everyone to protect themselves and take care of others because time is running out to prepare for the hurricane's potentially deadly impacts.

Counties issue evacuation orders. If you need to evacuate, please “evacuate out, not up.” People should visit [FloridaDisaster.org/Know](https://www.fema.gov/FloridaDisaster.org/Know) to determine if they live in an evacuation zone.

- Your gas tank and electric vehicle only need to be halfway full or halfway charged to ensure you can evacuate further inland to a safe location and away from storm surge.
- If you are in an evacuation zone and need evacuation assistance, please call 1-800-729-3413. Again, this is for residents that are in evacuation zones.



- The state of Florida has activated the State Assistance Information Line. Residents needing information and resources can call 1-800-342-3557. There are English, Spanish & Creole speakers available to answer questions.
- Additional preparedness resources and state updates on Hurricane Milton can be found by visiting [FloridaDisaster.org/Updates](https://www.floridadisaster.org/updates).
- For live updates, follow on [X](#) and [Instagram](#) at FLSERT and [Facebook at FDEM](#).

Administrator Criswell also directed FEMA's Deputy Director Erik Hooks to travel to North Carolina today to support response and recovery efforts while she travels to Florida. The Deputy Administrator will travel to South Carolina on Wednesday following his North Carolina visit and meet with tribal nations alongside FEMA's Tribal Affairs Advocate. At the direction of Administrator Criswell, Deputy Administrator Hooks will also go to Tennessee to help with recovery operations.

People in Milton's path should take the forecast seriously and finalize preparation and know how they are going to get information and listen to local officials. Download the [free FEMA App](#) available in English and Spanish to receive real-time weather alerts and find local emergency shelters in your area. You can find more hurricane preparedness information on [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) and [Listo.gov](https://www.listo.gov) in Spanish language.

Be in the know about your evacuation route. Act now by learning your evacuation routes and identify where you will stay. If you are told to evacuate, do so immediately because your life may be at risk. Make sure everyone in your household knows what to do in case you need to evacuate and that they are familiar with your family's emergency plan. Learn more about how to evacuate safely on [Ready.gov/evacuation](https://www.ready.gov/evacuation) and [Evacuación | Listo.gov](https://www.evacuacion.listo.gov) in Spanish language.

