

# Update on FEMA Preparations for Hurricane Zeta

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WASHINGTON -- As Hurricane Zeta continues to progress toward the Gulf Coast states, FEMA is prepositioned throughout the region to provide support as needed to potential impacted states and survivors. According to the National Hurricane Center, hurricane conditions are expected this afternoon in portions of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. FEMA and its federal partners are actively coordinating the federal response to Hurricane Zeta, while preparing for the storm to make landfall this week.

## **Federal Support Mobilized for Response to Hurricane Zeta**

President Trump approved an Emergency Declaration for Louisiana on Wednesday night. The declaration authorizes FEMA to provide emergency protective measures, including direct federal assistance for 25 parishes in Louisiana. Additionally, FEMA is authorized to provide emergency protective measures limited to direct federal assistance to 28 parishes in Louisiana.

Major Disaster Declarations were previously approved for hurricanes Laura, Sally and Delta.

FEMA is leaning forward with our federal, state, local and tribal partners to mobilize teams and supplies to support a state managed, locally executed response to impacts from Hurricane Zeta and continues supporting survivors throughout the Gulf Coast with more than 1,300 staff working virtually or in person throughout southwest Louisiana and Alabama.

- In Louisiana, FEMA has awarded more than \$184 million in grants and \$28 million in flood insurance claims to survivors from Hurricanes Laura and Delta. The U.S. Small Business Administration also approved more than \$365 million in low-interest loans to Louisiana survivors.
- FEMA has awarded more than \$53 million in assistance to individuals in Alabama and has paid more than \$26 million for flood insurance claims in



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Alabama for Hurricane Sally. The U.S. Small Business Administration also approved more than \$61 million in low-interest loans to Alabama survivors.

## Commodities

- FEMA has pre-staged over 5 million meals, more than 4 million liters of bottled water and 45 generators near the expected areas of Hurricane Zeta impacts.
  - Blankets, tarps, blue roof sheeting and cots are staged and available to support affected states based on need and requests to FEMA.
  - Shuttle drivers and empty trailers are onsite where these commodities are staged and ready to transport these assets to fulfill state requests.

## Personal Deployed

- Two Region 4 Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs) are onsite at state Emergency Operations Centers in Clanton, Alabama, and Pearl, Mississippi, to support response activities and ensure there are no unmet needs. Additionally, a FEMA liaison officer is on site at the Alabama EOC.
- One Region 6 Incident Management Assistance Team (IMATs) is onsite at state Emergency Operations Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to support response activities and ensure there are no unmet needs.
- IMATs are available to deploy in response to Hurricane Zeta, as needed.
- Mobile Emergency Operations Vehicles are standing by to support regions 4 and 6 to provide emergency communication capabilities for federal resources, if needed.
- Two Urban Search and Rescue teams are on alert and will respond, if needed. Additionally, FEMA's US&R Incident Support team is on call.
- Two Disaster Medical Assistance Teams are on alert and will respond, if needed.
- Additional federal personnel from the Department of Transportation, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Energy, DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency and Defense Coordinating Element have been tasked if needed to support FEMA and the affected states and tribes.

## Key Messages



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- Anyone in the forecast path of the storm should complete final preparations as tropical storm force winds are expected to reach the hurricane warning area today. Storm tracks can change quickly; pay attention to local forecasts for the latest information.
- Hurricane Zeta will affect areas already impacted by other hurricanes, further increasing the threat of dangerous flooding. Flooding from a previous storm could be worsened with additional rainfall from this storm system.
- Do not focus on the exact path of the storm. Be aware of other risks such as storm surge, rain, wind and tornadoes more than the exact track of the storm.
- Every storm is different. Even if you have experienced a hurricane or been under a hurricane warning this year, it's important monitor your local news for updates and directions provided by local officials and heed local evacuation orders.
- FEMA adapted its plans to the realities of responding during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure we can serve Americans while protecting their safety and that of FEMA employees.

### **Gulf Coast Residents: Final Preparedness Actions Should be Completed Today; Heed Local Officials' Instructions**

- The storm is forecast to bring hurricane conditions and life-threatening storm surge along portions of the northern Gulf Coast today.
- Damaging winds will spread well inland across portions of southeast Mississippi and southern and central Alabama tonight.
- Through Thursday, heavy rainfall is expected from portions of the central Gulf Coast into the Tennessee Valley, Ohio Valley, southern to central Appalachians and Mid-Atlantic states. This rainfall will lead to flash, urban, small stream and minor river flooding in those areas.
- Residents in the path of Hurricane Zeta should rush to complete preparedness efforts and follow guidance from local officials.
  - State and local officials will have the most up-to-date information on evacuation orders and shelter locations.
  - Residents in Louisiana should call 2-1-1 for evacuation, sheltering and resources for immediate needs.
- In Louisiana, one congregate shelter is open. Congregate shelters are on standby in Florida and Mississippi.



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- The American Red Cross is prepared to shelter and support families. For assistance, call 3-1-1 or visit their [website](#).
- FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program will cover and reimburse policy holders up to \$1,000 for certain actions taken to minimize damage to your home and belongings before a flood. Make sure to save your receipts for any of these expenses. Flood loss avoidance eligible expenses include:
  - Sandbags.
  - Water pumps.
  - Building a temporary levee.
  - Moving and storage expenses for personal belongings.
  - Lumber and plastic sheeting.
  - Labor costs for loss avoidance work.
- For more information and to learn about what's covered, view the fact sheet [Understanding Flood Loss Avoidance](#) or reference the [NFIP Claims Manual](#).
- Due to Hurricane Zeta, drive-thru Disaster Recovery Centers in Bay, Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties in Florida are closed. The centers will reopen when weather conditions permit. Disaster Recovery Centers in Acadia, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Sabine, St. Landry, Vermilion and Vernon parishes in Louisiana are closed today. The centers are scheduled to reopen on Thursday depending on weather and road conditions.
- Hurricane Laura and Sally survivors can still register for federal assistance by visiting [disasterassistance.gov](https://disasterassistance.gov), by calling 800-621-3362 (TTY 800-462-7585) or through the FEMA mobile app.

## Responding During COVID-19

- FEMA will continue to work with our state, tribal and local partners as they plan for execution of evacuation and sheltering operations in a COVID-19 environment. Finding shelter is critical in times of disaster. Shelter outside of the hazard area could include staying with family or friends, seeking a hotel room or staying in a mass shelter.
- FEMA, other federal agencies and the American Red Cross have modified policies and planning and have taken actions to ensure the federal government can respond to any disaster during our continued coronavirus response efforts.
- In alignment with FEMA's [Pandemic Operational Guidance](#), FEMA is leveraging technology to deliver the agency's programs at the highest level possible, while preserving our workforce and survivors. These methods include virtual damage assessments and inspections for FEMA Individual Assistance and Public



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Assistance programs, as well as National Flood Insurance Program claims.

- While some aspects of program delivery may look different this year, our commitment to helping people before, during and after disaster remains our full focus and we are ready to deliver on our mission.
- In advance of hurricane and wildfire season, FEMA expanded the capacity of its National Response Coordination Center, response centers around the country and trained additional staff to be postured to respond to multiple on-going incidents.



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