

FEMA Continues Response to Tornado-Damaged Areas

Release Date: 12? 12, 2021

WASHINGTON -- FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell and Department of Homeland Security Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas are traveling to Kentucky this morning to meet Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear and local officials to discuss the commonwealth's needs while touring the damaged areas. While there, they will also brief media on the ongoing response and recovery activities.

On Saturday, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. approved Gov. Beshear's [emergency declaration](#) request, authorizing FEMA to provide measures to save lives and protect public health and safety for 16 counties in the commonwealth. Damage assessment teams are being deployed to Kentucky.

"On behalf of everyone at FEMA, our hearts and prayers are with all the families and lives who have been impacted by these devastating storms," said Administrator Criswell. "This operation remains a lifesaving and life sustaining mission. Our support to Kentucky will align with their resource requests to make sure we are giving first responders anything they need at this time."

FEMA, Federal and Voluntary Agency Partner Response Actions

FEMA is working with its federal, state and local partners as well as non-governmental agencies to support needs of areas affected by the tornado outbreak. In addition to a Kentucky FEMA Integration Team member, two FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams are in Kentucky to assist with federal coordination efforts.

- An Incident Support Base is being established at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to rapidly deploy personnel and supplies as needed. This includes:
 - Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) team Indiana Task Force-1 to assist local response.



FEMA

Page 1 of 4

- An additional 10-person team US&R team deployed to the Kentucky Emergency Operations Center in Frankfort.
- Fifty-two generators, 30,000 meals, 45,000 liters of water, cots, blankets, infant toddler kits and medical equipment and supplies.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers temporary power and planning and response teams are on alert.
- A Mobile Emergency Response Support has deployed to Kentucky, which includes two Mobile Emergency Operations Vehicles with emergency communications capabilities for federal resources, if needed.
- Additional staging teams and damage assessment staff are being mobilized and prepared to deploy if needed to any of the affected areas.
- Eleven shelters are open in Kentucky. Three are open in Tennessee.
- FEMA is in contact with state emergency management officials as tornado damage reports come in from Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee.

Staying Safe During Clean Up

Following any emergency, always follow the instructions given by state, local or tribal emergency management officials. Follow these tips to stay safe after a tornado:

- Stay out of the area if possible. Emergency workers may be assisting people or cleaning up debris. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way.
- Enter areas that have sustained damaged **only** after your local officials have said it is safe to do so. Always follow the direction of your local officials.
- If you suspect any damage to your home, shut off the electrical power, natural gas and propane tanks to avoid fire, electrocution or explosions, if you know how to do so safely.
- Do not touch downed power lines or any objects that are in contact with downed lines. If you see a downed power line or other electrical hazard, report it to the police and the utility company.
 - If you see frayed wiring or sparks, or if there is an odor of something burning, you should immediately shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker if you have not done so already.



- If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open all windows and leave the house immediately. Notify the gas company, the police or fire departments, or State Fire Marshal's office. Do not turn on the lights, light matches, smoke or do anything that could cause a spark. Do not return to your house until your local officials say it is safe to do so.
- Be careful when cleaning up. Wear protective clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, work gloves and sturdy thick-soled shoes. Do not try to remove heavy debris by yourself. Use an appropriate mask if cleaning mold or other debris. People with asthma and other lung conditions and/or immune suppression should not enter buildings with indoor water leaks or mold growth that can be seen or smelled.

Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

If you lost power, avoid carbon monoxide poisoning and fires.

- Use a generator safely! Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage even if doors and windows are open. Keep generators far away [from windows, doors and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.](#)
- Grills, camp stoves or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal burning devices should never be used inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. These should only be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows.
- Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home.
- For additional safety tips before, during or after a tornado visit Ready.gov/tornadoes.

How to Help

After a disaster, people want to help. To make the most of your contributions, it's important to follow guidelines for donating and volunteering responsibly.

- To help survivors in Kentucky, you can donate to the Team Western Kentucky Tornado Relief Fund at <http://TeamWKYReliefFund.ky.gov>.
- Financial contributions to [recognized disaster relief organizations](#) are the fastest, most flexible and most effective method of donating. Organizations on the ground know what items and quantities are needed, often buy in bulk with



discounts and, if possible, purchase through businesses local to the disaster, which supports economic recovery.

- To find a list of trusted organizations that can put your generous contributions to the best possible use, [visit National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#).
- Before collecting donated items, confirm the items are needed, and how it will get to affected areas.
- Don't self-deploy to disaster areas. [Trusted organizations](#) operating in the affected areas know where volunteers are needed. Work with an established non-profit organization to make sure you have the appropriate safety, training and skills needed to respond.
 - Recovery lasts a lot longer than media attention. There will be volunteer needs for many months, often many years, after the disaster. Your help is often needed long after a disaster.



FEMA