

Biden-Harris Administration Responds to Tropical Storm Debby, Urges Vigilance to Continuing Hazards

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WASHINGTON -- In response to Hurricane Debby, President Biden approved emergency declarations for Georgia and South Carolina yesterday, in addition to an emergency declaration for the state of Florida on Sunday. These declarations authorize FEMA to provide federal assistance to save lives, protect property and public health and safety. Although Hurricane Debby weakened to a tropical storm, it is still bringing life-threatening hazards to areas along northern Florida and portions of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. The Biden-Harris Administration urges visitors and residents of these areas to prepare for a long duration severe weather event.

FEMA's National Response Coordination Center and Region 4 Regional Response Coordination Center are activated and managing the staging and movement of commodities and response assets. Additional federal agencies are available if needed to deploy to disaster areas. FEMA liaisons are jointly located with state officials in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina to assist with any requests for federal assistance. FEMA Urban Search and Rescue teams, including water rescue teams, are positioned to assist affected states. Additionally, FEMA pre-staged ambulance assets in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

People Experiencing Flooding from Debby Should Take Action to Stay Safe

Stay safe and be aware of flood risks. Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters as it may be contaminated and contain dangerous debris. Additionally, underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water. Turn Around, Don't Drown! Remember, just 6 inches of moving water can knock you down and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away. Stay off bridges over fast-moving water and never drive around barricades. Local responders use them to safely direct traffic out of flooded areas.



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Use generators safely. Always use them outdoors and at least 20 feet from windows, doors and attached garages. Make sure to keep the generator dry and protected from rain or flooding.

Flooding can affect power systems, as utility companies may shut down portion of the electrical grid. If the power goes out, use only flashlights or battery-powered lanterns for emergency lighting. Never use candles during a blackout or power outage due to extreme risk of fire.

Stay away from power and communications lines. Communication lines carry vital messages including 911 and emergency services and provide access to the internet. Call your utility providers directly to report down or cut lines and stay clear of the area.

Stay off the roads. This will help first responders and utility companies get help to those who need it most. If you evacuated, do not return home until local officials say it is safe to do so.

Be aware of other risks. Tropical storms have the potential to form tornados. If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately in the center of a small interior room, such as a closet or interior hallway, on the lowest level of a sturdy building. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.

Use caution 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. Children should not take part in disaster cleanup work.

Document any property damage. If you're able to safely do so, take photos and contact your insurance company right away for assistance and next steps.

You can find more information on how to prepare for the incoming storm and how to stay safe at [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) or [Listo.gov](https://www.listo.gov) Spanish language. You can also [download the free FEMA App](#) in both English and Spanish languages to locate open shelters and receive alerts for up to five areas.

