

The Road to Recovery: The federal family's coordinated efforts to support survivors in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey

Release Date: September 2, 2017

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its federal partners' personnel and resources are supporting state, local, and tribal efforts throughout Texas and Louisiana. More than **30,000** federal staff are deployed in support of the response to Hurricane Harvey.

Hurricane Harvey made landfall at Rockport, Texas on Friday, August 25, at 10 p.m. CDT, the first major hurricane to make landfall on the Gulf Coast since 2005. Harvey's extremely slow movement for the next five days resulted in catastrophic flooding in southeast Texas and Louisiana.

Rescue efforts continue in some areas while recovery efforts are beginning for many communities.

As of September 1, 2017:

- **42,399** people sought refuge in **248** Red Cross and partner shelters in Texas. Six shelters are also open in Louisiana serving another **1,487** people.
- Federal search and rescue teams continue to search for potential survivors. To date, federal responders have rescued more than **16,800** individuals and **1,500** pets. Federal search and rescue involves a partnership among responders from the Department of Homeland Security, including FEMA, the United States Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, and the Department of Defense.

The following commodities have been provided by FEMA to the states at their request:



- Texas
 - More than **3,190,000** meals;
 - More than **3,190,000** liters of water;
 - More than **9,900** blankets;
 - More than **8,840** cots; and
 - More than **10,300** hygiene kits
- Louisiana:
 - More than **416,000** meals; and
 - More than **414,000** liters of water

Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC) Mike Byrne has been named to help with recovery. He will oversee an assessment of impacted communities and help develop a recovery support strategy. This strategy will help hard-hit communities gain easier access to federal funding, bridge gaps in assistance, and establish goals for recovery that are measurable, achievable, and affordable.

Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams (DSATs) are in the field registering survivors and addressing immediate and emerging needs of disaster survivors including: on-site registration, applicant status checks, on-the-spot needs assessments, requests for accommodations for those with disabilities or access or functional needs, and access to partners offering survivor services.

The first Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) opened yesterday, September 1, 2017, at Edna High School Football Stadium in Edna, Texas. DRCs will continue to open in locations identified by the state of Texas to provide information to survivors. Visit [the DRC Locator](#) to find additional DRC locations as they open.

FEMA has received more than **457,000** registrations for assistance, including a record number of single-day registrations on two consecutive days (August 29 and 30) this week. More than **121,000** survivors have already been approved for more than **\$83.4 million** in assistance from FEMA.

The **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)** has received **2,118** disaster loan applications, primarily for homes. The SBA has fielded **5,221** calls and completed **451** property damage inspections.

[Short-term housing assistance and other immediate funding](#) is available to survivors who register. Survivors whose homes are uninhabitable or inaccessible



FEMA

Page 2 of 11

may have access to short-term lodging at eligible hotels. FEMA can also provide up to two months of expedited rental assistance to those eligible. When survivors register, they will also receive information on other resources in their area, including available services from other federal agencies.

For survivors who have suffered damage and have federal flood insurance, FEMA's **National Flood Insurance Program** is issuing advance payments of up to \$5,000 for building and contents damages prior to an adjuster's inspection to help get funds into the hands of survivors as soon as possible. If a policyholder has photos and receipts of out-of-pocket expenses, they may receive an advance payment of up to \$10,000. As of 2 p.m. EDT on Friday, September 1, more than **63,000** claims have been submitted in Texas.

To help people affected by this disaster, FEMA has created a webpage with [resources](#) and additional information for People with Disabilities and Others with Access & Functional Needs. Information is available in the following languages: [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Spanish](#), [Tagalog](#), [Urdu](#), and [Vietnamese](#).

More than 3,800 FEMA employees are working in support of Hurricane Harvey response.

Other Ongoing Federal Efforts:

The American Red Cross (Red Cross) remains focused on sheltering operations. As of September 1, there were **258** shelters open with a population of at least **42,399** in Texas. In Louisiana there were **3** ARC shelters open with a population of **20**, and **3** independent shelters with a population of **1,487**. To support shelters we have shelter supplies for more than **75,000** on hand with an additional **10,000** en route. **9** kitchens are deployed in Texas, **4** operational now with all being operational by tomorrow. Capacity of each kitchen is **10,000** meals per day. An additional **6** kitchen support trailers are en route. To date, the ARC has served **168,390** meals and **224,200** snacks.

The **Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)** is issuing safety alerts and has [issued a statement](#) from CPSC Acting Chairman Ann Marie Buerkle regarding Hurricane Harvey.



The [Corporation for National and Community Service \(CNCS\)](#) has deployed nearly **450** AmeriCorps members, including FEMA Corps, from across the nation to Texas as well as local Senior Corps members with additional members of the AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team on standby. AmeriCorps members are working with the American Red Cross, supporting shelter and mass care operations, as well as providing assistance to FEMA's logistics and disaster survivor assistance teams. AmeriCorps Disaster Response Teams, in coordination with FEMA and the Texas Division of Emergency Management, are organizing the volunteer and donations management process and operations. In addition, CNCS is leveraging its vast network of nonprofits and community organizations to communicate [the correct channels for donations and volunteering](#) as well as [calling upon the more than one million AmeriCorps alumni](#) – many of whom have previously responded to disasters -- to fill the urgent need for trained shelter managers.

The **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** is providing assistance through their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and waiving some regulations to make food more accessible, especially to school children and seniors. In addition, the USDA approved the state of Texas to designate schools not directly impacted by the Hurricane to serve as disaster organizations and shelters so that USDA foods can be used for congregate feeding, providing critical food assistance to those in need. USDA foods include a variety of canned, fresh, frozen, and dry products which include fruits, vegetables, meats, and whole grains.

The **Department of Defense (DoD)** has stood up three additional Incident Support Bases (ISB) at Fort Hood, Joint Base San Antonio, and Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort-Worth to support forward distribution of supplies and equipment to the affected area.

- **Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)** is providing more than **645,000** gallons of fuel in several locations.
- **USNORTHCOM** deployed **73** helicopters, **three** C-130s, and **eight** para-rescue teams for search and rescue and evacuation. Approximately **6,300** active-duty military personnel are deployed to the affected area. DoD active-duty military personnel have rescued/assisted more than **1,200** people to date.
- The **National Guard Bureau (NGB)** mission will transition to provide critical life support, power generation, water pumping, road and debris clearing, security,



FEMA

Page 4 of 11

and setting up distribution points for food and water. The NGB has facilitated the flow more than **11,000** Guard personnel from **41** states to help Texas. They are readying additional forces to help recovery efforts, if they are needed.

- **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** currently has more than **150** personnel engaged and operating in coordination with county, state, and FEMA partners. USACE has received and is supporting FEMA Mission Assignments for temporary power, regional activation, subject matter experts, debris removal and technical assistance, and temporary housing technical monitoring. In addition, they are also focused on [flood mitigation and reservoir operations](#).

The **U.S. Department of Education (ED)** has activated its emergency response contact center in response to the devastating impacts of Hurricane Harvey. The Department's K-12 and Higher Education stakeholders who are seeking informational resources should contact the Department toll free at 1-844-348-4082 or by email at HarveyRelief@ed.gov.

The **Department of Energy's (DOE)** Secretary of Energy has authorized the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to negotiate and execute two emergency exchange agreements with the Phillips 66 Lake Charles Refinery. This decision will authorize a total of **400,000** barrels of sweet crude oil and **600,000** barrels of sour crude oil to be drawn down from SPR's West Hackberry site and delivered via pipeline to the Phillips 66 refinery. DOE continues to provide [situation reports](#) on its website, and has added a page to [report gas price gouging](#).

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

- **The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)** has fully activated their EOC, including the Joint Information Center. They have developed a Hurricane Harvey [webpage](#) that went live on September 1, 2017. Currently they are printing **15,000** booklets on mold for returning home owners.
- **National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)** personnel and U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers have provided medical care to more than **1,000** people affected by Hurricane Harvey. More than **1,100** personnel from HHS currently are on the ground helping those affected by the storm. HHS Secretary Tom Price, M.D., [declared a public health emergency](#) for the state to assist Texans in receiving unimpeded care from local providers and healthcare facilities. Additionally, the Disaster Distress Helpline, a toll-free call center, continues to be available at 1-800-985-5990 to aid people in coping with the



FEMA

Page 5 of 11

behavioral health effects of the storm and help people in impacted areas connect with local behavioral health professionals.

- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** is advising people that food, medicine, and medical devices should be thrown out if they have come in contact with flood water or were stored improperly during a power outage. The FDA is also identifying regulated facilities affected by the storm to assess any risk.
- The **U.S. Social Security Administration** is coordinating with the **U.S. Postal Service (USPS)** for **46** alternative pick up points in the impacted areas around Houston where individuals can pick up benefit checks. A [press release](#) identifies the pick-up points by zip code of where individuals can go. For beneficiaries with Direct Express cards, Comerica will be waiving fees for all cardholders impacted by Harvey, even if they have been evacuated to another area out of danger.

The **U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** [activated the Surge Capacity Force](#) (SCF) on August 28, to supplement federal personnel supporting states as they respond to the catastrophic impacts from Hurricane Harvey.

- The DHS **National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD)** is helping facilitate access to communications and other critical infrastructure as recovery efforts begin. Of note, NPPD is supporting critical emergency communications through multiple avenues: Emergency responders placed **1,599** Government Emergency Telecommunication Service (GETS) calls on Tuesday, August 29, 2017. NPPD has posted a [US-CERT alert](#) on Potential Hurricane Harvey Phishing Scams attempting to take advantage of efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to hurricane survivors. Deployed NPPD workers are helping to maintain or establish coordination with owners and operators of priority facilities to determine their facility status.
- The DHS **Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL)** and FEMA have [developed guidance for impacted states](#), localities, and other federal recipients on how to effectively communicate with the whole community and carry out their disaster-related activities in a non-discriminatory manner.
- The **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** has posted a web alert to those affected by Hurricane Harvey to Available Immigration Services in English and Spanish. This information has been amplified via social media and is posted online: [Hurricane Harvey Special Situations Web Alert- English](#), [Hurricane Harvey Special Situations Web Alert- Spanish](#). USCIS has posted



FEMA

Page 6 of 11

on uscis.gov and amplified via social media, information concerning natural events and how they can affect USCIS applications, petitions or immigration status in English and Spanish. This information is available here: [Special Situations Web Page – English](#), [Special Situations Web Page- Spanish](#). Check uscis.gov for the operational status of USCIS offices in the Houston area. The USCIS website address and National Customer Service Center number - 1-800-375-5283 - continues to be amplified via social media and posted on uscis.gov and usa.gov for those needing further information or assistance with rescheduling appointments.

- The **U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)** is working with federal, state, and local responders on [active search and rescue in flood-impacted areas](#) of Texas and Louisiana. To date, the Coast Guard has saved **10,618** lives and **1,429** pets. Working with port partners to facilitate recovery efforts, the Coast Guard has reopened the Port of Brownsville to full operations, and an additional **17** ports with operational restrictions. The service has deployed an additional **1,050** active duty, reserve and civilian personnel along with **22** cutters, **37** helicopters, **6** airplanes, and **102** shallow water vessels to assist in response efforts, and to augment the **4,300** Coast Guard personnel stationed within the impacted area.
- **U.S. Customs and Border Protection** deployed more than **600** agents and officers with over **25** aircraft and more than **50** boats and rescued more than **1360** people and over **30** pets.
- **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** [has deployed approximately 200 law enforcement personnel](#) from Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) and Special Response Teams (SRTs) around the country to provide security for search and rescue teams and to assist with search and rescue operations.

The **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** has deployed housing specialists to Texas and is deploying up to **100** additional personnel. HUD teams are currently evaluating damaged subsidized housing in the affected areas and they are developing comprehensive vacancy lists that will assist with relocating some shelter residents. HUD has also released a list of its [programs that help](#) following a disaster and we are beginning a [social media Q&A](#) push specifically targeting homeowners affected by the flood.

The **U.S. Department of the Interior** released [a message to employees](#) and a [video](#) showing Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke commending the more than **100** Interior employees supporting the state of Texas through eight FEMA mission



FEMA

Page 7 of 11

assignments as well hundreds of additional Interior personnel who are providing assistance.

- [U.S. Geological Survey \(USGS\) employees](#) have been deployed in **17** crews to measure and repair damaged gages and take high- water measurements, often under dangerous conditions.
- DOI's **Office of Law Enforcement and Security** has assembled or deployed **7** Quick Response Teams.
- The **National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, and **USGS** are supporting FEMA Task Forces by locating and providing dozens of shallow water boats for search and rescue.
- Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) pilots are guiding Interior drones to locate people in need of help.
- The [Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement](#) continues to monitor Gulf of Mexico oil and gas activities and inspect platforms.
- **Bureau of Indian Affairs** is guiding responses in support of the Tribes impacted by Harvey.

The **Department of Justice (DOJ)** has over **2,000** federal law enforcement personnel deployed to support public safety and security efforts in SE Texas consisting of **59** Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs) and **18** Mobile Command Vehicles (MCVs). **700** Federal Law Enforcement Officers (FLEOs) have been approved to support Houston Police Department. In addition, ATF has **225** SRT agents supporting the Houston FD and Houston PD.

Department of Transportation (DOT)

- **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)** handled emergency and relief operations at a number of airports in the Hurricane Harvey area, including Houston Hobby and George Bush Intercontinental. The FAA has issued over **40** unmanned aircraft system authorizations to drone operators supporting the response. The authorizations cover a broad range of activities by local, state and federal officials who are conducting damage assessments of critical infrastructure, homes and businesses to prioritize and expedite recovery activities.

The **Department of the Treasury** has suspended [certain tax filing and payment deadlines](#), as well as certain fuel excise taxes, for those affected. [Loans and](#)



FEMA

Page 8 of 11

[hardship distributions](#) from employer-sponsored retirement plans have also been authorized, and facilities and personnel have been provided to assist with FEMA's response efforts. They are [encouraging national banks and federal savings associations to work with their customers affected](#) by the storm by reassessing various fees and debt obligations, and we are working to ensure that all federal benefit payments reach those in the affected areas.

- The **Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee (FBIIIC)**, has been coordinating federal and state banking agencies' responses to the storm's impact on the financial sector in Texas. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing stands ready to process all requests for redemption of mutilated currency.
- **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)** is providing help to the victims of Hurricane Harvey. Special tax relief and assistance is available to taxpayers in the Presidential Disaster Areas. They are monitoring the situation closely to resolve potential tax administration issues as they are identified. The IRS frequently updates its [information on disaster relief efforts](#) related to Hurricane Harvey.

The **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** continues to deploy response personnel to Austin, Beaumont-Port Arthur, Houston, and Corpus Christi where Unified Command teams are identifying and evaluating impacts of the hurricane and floods. Drinking water and waste water assessments continue to be a priority in these same areas. EPA drinking and waste water assessment teams are working in coordination with TCEQ to assist drinking water and waste water facilities maintain and/or resume their operational status. Additional teams will deploy to Corpus Christi and Houston to conduct these priority assessments. EPA is standing by as the [Arkema plant](#) is expected to experience more explosions/fires over the next few days. ASPECT surveillance aircraft [continues to monitor the site](#) and is be available for additional assessments.

The **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)** continues to monitor the status of communications networks, and is coordinating with providers and government partners on communications status and restoration in the affected areas. Visit www.fcc.gov/harvey for a daily communications status report for areas impacted by this storm as well as additional resources, including tips for communicating during an emergency.



FEMA

Page 9 of 11

The **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** has information for people who want to help Hurricane Harvey survivors, and for those who are dealing with, and recovering from, the storm's long-term effects. The FTC warns consumers to be cautious of charity scams, and to do research to ensure that your donation will go to a reputable organization that will use the donation as promised. For [survivors](#), the FTC provides a few points to consider in a personal disaster recovery plan.

The **General Services Administration's (GSA)** top priority is protecting the life and safety of those in impacted areas. Several federal facilities are temporarily closed but GSA remains fully operational. Information on the status of federal buildings can be [found here](#).

Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) plants in Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana continue to be unaffected by the storm. The NRC has two inspectors onsite at South Texas Project nuclear plant in Bay City, and is closely monitoring the status of radiological materials licensed by the agency located in the three affected states. The agency is using [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to communicate status updates.

The **Office of Personnel Management (OPM)** is supporting federal agencies with guidance and tools regarding human resources issues for federal employees adversely affected by the storm. This includes [guidance on Human Resources Flexibilities](#) for Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath, the authorization of a special solicitation to allow federal employees and military personnel to [assist with cash or check donations](#) outside the normal Combined Federal Campaign, and the establishment of [an Emergency Leave Transfer Program \(ELTP\)](#) for federal employees adversely affected by the storm.

The **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)** announced that as of Aug. 31, the SBA will offer an automatic 12-month deferment of principal and interest payments for SBA-serviced business loan and disaster loans that are in "regular servicing" status for residents and businesses in the declared counties.

The **U.S. Postal Service (USPS)** is continuing to restore service in the affected areas. Press releases issued in the Postal Service's [Houston](#) and [Rio Grande](#) districts provided additional information to customers displaced on how they can retrieve Treasury checks they receive, via U.S. Mail. This includes checks from the Social Security Administration, Veterans Administration (VA), the Office of



Personnel Management (OPM), and the Railroad Retirement Board. In addition, they will distribute any identifiable medications sent through the mail.

USA.gov and **GobiernoUSA.gov** continues to support federal agency messaging efforts on their home pages and they're compiling federal agency updates and messaging on rapidly growing Hurricane Harvey pages found at <https://www.usa.gov/hurricane-harvey> and <https://gobierno.usa.gov/huracan-harvey>. They continue to use social media to promote life safety messages, and are beginning to push recovery information, information on how to help survivors, and applying for FEMA disaster relief jobs.

###

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards.

Follow FEMA online at www.fema.gov/blog, <http://www.twitter.com/fema>, www.twitter.com/femaspo, <http://www.facebook.com/fema> and <http://www.youtube.com/fema>. Also, follow Administrator Brock Long's activities at www.twitter.com/fema_brock.

The social media links provided are for reference only. FEMA does not endorse any non-government websites, companies or applications.

