

# FEMA Continues Hurricane Fiona Response Efforts

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**Release Date: September 21, 2022**

WASHINGTON -- FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell traveled to Puerto Rico yesterday and met with Gov. Pedro Pierluisi to assess any unmet needs and tour some areas affected by Hurricane Fiona. The Administrator remains in Puerto Rico today, meeting with FEMA staff and touring additional damaged areas.

Gov. Pierluisi requested an expedited major disaster declaration late Tuesday, and that request is under review. President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. approved an emergency declaration for Puerto Rico on Sunday, authorizing FEMA to coordinate all disaster relief efforts to alleviate hardship and suffering and provide appropriate assistance, to save lives and protect property, public health and safety.

Although the storm has passed, residents are encouraged to stay alert to continuing hazards, including extreme heat.

FEMA surged hundreds of employees to Puerto Rico to support the response, with the primary mission to support lifesaving and life-sustaining actions. This is in addition to 700 staff members who live and work on the island. In the coming days, our agency will begin preliminary damage assessments to determine additional needs.

FEMA continues working closely with our federal, territorial, private sector and faith-based partners to support the island with this response and recovery. FEMA and interagency response teams are supporting the commonwealth by working to stabilize impacted community lifelines -- with a focus on power restoration, communications and water.

Due to continuous days of rainfall from Hurricane Fiona, risks of mud, rock and landslides persist across Puerto Rico. Additionally, an excessive heat advisory is in effect for the island for the next couple of days. Residents are encouraged to stay alert to continuing hazards.



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## Federal Actions to Support Areas Affected by Hurricane Fiona

- FEMA deployed five Incident Management Assistance Teams and four Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) teams to bolster response efforts. Additionally, Mobile Emergency Response Support, Incident Support Base and Staging Management Teams are on the island.
- FEMA prepositioned supplies on the island including four strategically located warehouses throughout the island, more than 7 million liters of water, more than 4 million ready-to-eat meals, more than 215 generators, more than 100,000 tarps, more than 28,000 plastic covers and more than 10,300 cots and other emergency supplies.
- FEMA is sending mental and counseling health resources to our FEMA personnel, many of whom are survivors themselves and from the island. Additionally, we are identifying additional mental health resources to the broader Puerto Rico community, many who are being retraumatized given that Maria was just five years ago.
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Routine non-criminal immigration enforcement operations will not be conducted at evacuation sites, or assistance centers such as shelters or food banks. The laws will not be suspended, and we will be vigilant against any effort by criminals to exploit disruptions caused by the storm.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers team management and temporary emergency power teams are in Puerto Rico.
- The U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Response Organization is in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- More than 450 members of the Puerto Rico National Guard are assisting the Puerto Rico government response by conducting search and rescue, commodity distribution, security operations and more. Additionally, U.S. Customs and Border Protection is supporting the island's search and rescue response.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a Public Health Emergency for the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico due to the flooding impact of Hurricane Fiona. The declaration gives the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services beneficiaries and their health care providers and suppliers greater flexibility in meeting emergency health needs. The department is also sending medical assessment teams to the island.



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- The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service approved a waiver for the Puerto Rico Department of the Family to allow hot foods to be purchased with Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for one-week.

## Stay Alert to Continuing Risks

- **Avoid downed power lines:** Do not touch or drive over downed power lines. Always assume a downed power line is unsafe, and contact the power company and emergency personnel.
- **Don't drive or wade through flood waters:** Almost half of all flash flood deaths happen in vehicles. As little as 6 inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- **Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded:** Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- **Use a generator safely:** Keep generators far from your home. Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage even if doors and windows are open as these could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.
- **Stay safe during extreme heat:** Avoid strenuous work or exercise during the warmest part of the day. Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat and take frequent breaks.
- Download the free [FEMA App](#) (available in English and Spanish) to receive emergency alerts and real-time safety notifications, emergency preparedness tips and disaster resources.

Visit [Ready.gov](#) or [Listo.gov](#) to learn how you can keep yourself, your family and your pets safe.



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