

Hurricanes Irma and Maria

Private Sector eBrief



December 13, 2017



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FEMA Grants Are for Disaster Related Expenses Only; Spend Wisely and Well

Federal grant money must be used for disaster related expenses. FEMA advises all applicants to read their determination letter carefully. It explains ways in which the grant money should be used. Recipients are encouraged to keep receipts from all purchases to show how funds were spent.

Approved uses for disaster grants include:

- Home repairs (e.g., structure, water, septic and sewage systems);
- Rental assistance for a different place to live temporarily;
- Medical care for an injury caused by the disaster;
- Repair, cleaning or replacement of clothing, specialized tools;
- Necessary educational materials (e.g., computers, school books, supplies);
- Moving and storage expenses related to the disaster.

Additional assistance grants may be available for Hurricane Maria survivor's personal property loss, vehicle repair or replacement, moving and storage expenses, child care, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses.

Survivors may need to apply for a low-interest disaster assistance loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration. You are under no obligation to accept a loan if one is offered, but you must complete an application to be eligible for additional assistance from FEMA. For more information about SBA disaster recovery assistance, visit www.sba.gov/disaster.



Services of Attorneys Do Not Affect FEMA Assistance Applications

FEMA provides several ways for a homeowner to prove "owner-occupancy" of a damaged dwelling when documents such as a Deed of Trust or a Will do not exist or are missing.

Regardless of potential obstacles, survivors whose homes were damaged or destroyed by Hurricanes Irma or Maria should register with FEMA for Individual Assistance. There is no charge to register and applications will be evaluated on an individual basis.

FEMA works directly with applicants to document ownership and evaluate qualification for FEMA and Small Business Administration assistance programs.

The disaster assistance application process or appeals of FEMA decisions do not require the assistance of a paid attorney. **Hiring an attorney does not affect FEMA decisions and does not speed the process for survivors.**

All Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) have Disaster Legal Services staff who offer free legal advice for issues related to the application process or FEMA decisions. This same legal assistance is available in English or Spanish at 1-800-310-7029, Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. All DRCs are staffed with FEMA representatives able to answer questions about the application process. Applicants can also call the **FEMA Helpline: 1-800-621-3362**.

[Read more.](#)



DANGER

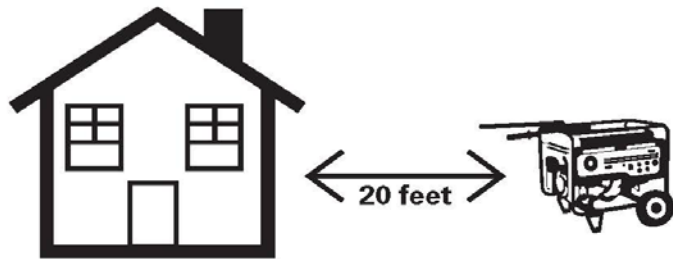
POISON GAS - POISON GAS - POISON GAS CARBON MONOXIDE HAZARD

**Using a generator indoors
WILL KILL YOU IN MINUTES.
Exhaust contains a poison gas
you cannot see or smell.**



Never use a generator indoors, in garages, or carports.

ALWAYS use a generator outdoors, and at least **20 feet** from windows or doors.



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention



PUERTO RICO

HOW FEMA HOUSING INSPECTORS WILL CONTACT YOU

If you're living away from your home due to Hurricane Maria, you can choose a local contact to act on your behalf during the inspection. Call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-FEMA (3362) to provide us with the contact info of the person you choose.



PHONE CALL

The inspector assigned to you will give you a call to set up a time for your home inspection.



TEXT MESSAGE

If you cannot be reached by phone call, you may receive a text message.

! *If you receive a text message from someone claiming to be a FEMA housing inspector, ask the sender to provide your unique FEMA registration number. If the person texts your correct registration number back to you, then move forward with setting up a housing inspection.*



HOME VISIT

If the inspector is in your neighborhood, they may stop by your home.

REMEMBER: *You should only give out your registration number to your designated local point of contact.*

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FEMA



As Historic 2017 Hurricane Season Comes to an End, Federal Support to Recovery Continues

While Nov. 30 marked the end of a historic hurricane season, FEMA and its partners continue to work diligently in support of disaster survivors recovering from the devastating season. Four hurricanes made landfall: Harvey, Irma, Maria and Nate (the first three were classified as major hurricanes, **which affected roughly 25.8 million people**). Also during this season, nearly two dozen large wildfires burned more than 200,000 acres of land in northern California.

Hurricane Maria devastated the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico soon after Hurricane Irma struck their shores. Hurricane Maria was the **first Category 4 hurricane** to make landfall on the main island of Puerto Rico in 85 years, and the resulting response became **the longest sustained air mission of food and water in FEMA history**.

“This historic hurricane season should serve as a gut check and an opportunity for citizens, businesses, state, local, tribal and federal officials to re-evaluate how we prepare for and respond to any disaster,” said FEMA Administrator Brock Long. “Response and recovery is dependent upon the whole community to be successful. While we continue to support the recovery from these storms, we must also take the opportunity to become better prepared for future disasters.”

Non-profit organizations provide crucial services to sustain lives in partnership with the rest of the response and recovery infrastructure. The private sector also plays a significant role in disasters, as businesses work to restore critical services and donate their time and resources – in close coordination with emergency management personnel – to help communities rebound in the wake of disasters.

While the 2017 Hurricane Season has ended, recovering from these devastating hurricanes will take years, and FEMA and our federal partners will continue to support affected governments and survivors as they build back stronger.

[Read more.](#)



U.S. Customs & Border Protection & FEMA personnel deliver food and water to isolated Puerto Rico residents after their bridge was destroyed by Hurricane Maria in the mountains around Utuado, Puerto Rico.

U.S. Air Force photo by MSgt. Joshua L. DeMott

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Disaster Recovery Center Locator: <https://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm>

Weather the Storm: Download the FEMA App today



www.fema.gov/mobile-app



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NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY: Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-3362 (voice), 711/VRS – (Video Relay Service), (TTY: 800-462-7585). Multilingual operators are available (press 2 for Spanish).

