



FEMA

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FEMA Helpline: 800-621-FEMA (3362)
FEMA News Desk: 571-449-1621
SBA Contact: 800-659-2955

News Release

Take Precautions in Your Home After Hurricane Sandy

NEW YORK – As New Yorkers remain in their homes or begin to consider returning home following Hurricane Sandy, the State of New York and the Federal Emergency Management Agency urge them to be careful, remain safe and plan properly for their future well-being.

Some suggestions:

Look for external damage

Examine the foundation, roof and chimney for cracks or other damage. If obvious damage is found or serious safety doubts exist, contact a building inspector.

Keep generators outside

Those who remain without power should only use generators or other fuel-powered machines outdoors. Such machines emit deadly carbon monoxide fumes, which are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.

Clean safely and beware of mold

Flooding causes dampness where mold, mildew and various organisms thrive. Mold may induce respiratory problems, so it is important to use proper procedures when cleaning. Use a combination of household bleach and soap or detergent (but never mix bleach with ammonia) to wash down walls and other mold-contaminated areas. You can also open windows and doors and turn on fans to help dry out interiors. For more information about mold, go to:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/7287/>

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Avoid Scam Artists

As you plan long-term repair and rebuilding projects, be aware that natural disasters can bring out criminals looking to prey on victims by offering fraudulent services. Among other precautions, get three estimates for repair work, check the credentials of contractors and consult your local Better Business Bureau or Chamber of Commerce to learn about any complaints against the contractors.

Ways to get help:

Register with FEMA for federal disaster assistance

Survivors who haven't yet registered should call FEMA's toll-free helpline at **800-621-3362**. Lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week until further notice, and assistance is offered in most languages. Individuals may register for help online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or by smartphone or tablet at m.fema.gov. If you have a speech disability or hearing impairment and use a TTY, call **800-462-7585** directly; call **800-621-3362** if you use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS).

“Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power (STEP)” Program is in effect

The STEP Program helps restore temporary electricity, heat and hot water by funding emergency residential repairs through local governments for those whose homes can be used to shelter in place while permanent repair work continues.

- If you live in the five boroughs of New York City, call **311** for information about STEP.
- If you live in Suffolk County, call **211**.
- If you live in Nassau County, call **888-684-4267**.

Expedited partial flood-insurance payments may be available

To allow National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policyholders to remain safely in damaged residences, FEMA in some circumstances is allowing claim payments to be made even before inspections and repair estimates are obtained for equipment that provides heat and hot water. The inspection and report still have to be completed later. For complete details on the accelerated NFIP payment program, policyholders must contact their insurance company or agent.

Low-interest disaster loans from SBA

U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans are a major source of federal rebuilding funds for homeowners, renters and businesses. Completing a disaster loan application is part of the FEMA grant process. Homeowners and renters may qualify for loans of up to \$200,000 for repair or replacement of damaged real estate. Up to \$40,000 may be available to repair or replace personal property. Applications can be completed online via SBA's secure website at <https://DisasterLoan.SBA.gov/ELA>. More information is available by calling **800-659-2955** (TTY 800-877-8339). Assistance also is available by sending an email to DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov or by visiting www.sba.gov.

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For more information on New York's disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4085, <http://twitter.com/FEMASandy>, www.facebook.com/FEMASandy and www.fema.gov/blog.

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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.

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-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.