

DISASTER ADVICE FOR VETERAN HOMEOWNERS

This bulletin is distributed by the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide information during major disasters. The information given below is primarily for homeowners whose loans are guaranteed by VA.

Contact Your Mortgage Company

Contact your lender as soon as possible regarding your loss. ***You are not excused from making your regular monthly loan payments even if your home is not habitable.*** You should discuss forbearance or possible extension or modification of your loan if you are unable to make your payments on time. You should also have your lender explain procedures regarding insurance loss checks and repairs to your property, payment to contractors, etc.

Contact Your Insurance Company or Agent

File insurance loss claims as soon as possible. However, ***do not make a hasty settlement on insurance.*** When the property is damaged but repairable, attempt to get the engineer's office of your local government to make an inspection for ***structural damage***. If possible, get at least two estimates from licensed contractors for cost of repairs or rebuilding. Insurance checks for personal property and living expenses should be made payable to you only. Checks for damage to your home should be made payable to you and your mortgage company.

Contact FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)

You begin the disaster application process by calling FEMA's toll free number 1-800-621-FEMA (3362), or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. In order to receive the maximum assistance, you must register with FEMA before their deadline expires. You cannot obtain assistance for uninsured losses or damages to your home from the Small Business Administration (SBA) or any other disaster recovery agency if you have not registered with FEMA. More information can be found at the FEMA website, www.fema.gov. Be sure to check every source for maximum assistance including the SBA. ***Do not pay your loan in full*** before checking with SBA on a loan for the uninsured portion of your loss. Low interest loans, cash grants, and housing assistance may be available from agencies associated with the disaster recovery effort.

Check Other Sources of Help

Veterans should contact local offices of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), or other veterans organizations to see if special assistance may be available, even to non-members of the organization.

Change your Address

If you are receiving a monthly benefit check from VA or another source, and you will not be able to receive mail at your regular address, notify your local post office and VA Regional Office of your change of address. For information on VA benefits other than home loans, call 1-877-827-3702.