



FEMA

TEXAS

Hurricane Rita

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Management



Apply by Phone
1-800-621-FEMA (3362)
TTY 1-800-462-7585

6 a.m. to midnight
seven days a week
until further notice

Recovery Times



FEMA Community Relations Strike Team workers explain the FEMA registration process, along with programs, benefits and options. FEMA Photo by Ed Edahl

In This Issue

This issue of *Recovery Times* answers questions and explains the kind of assistance available and how to apply for it -- from finding a job to rebuilding your home or business. FEMA is working closely with the State of Texas, federal and local agencies and volunteer organizations to help you through this difficult period.

Registration Deadline Is March 11

If you suffered losses or were displaced due to Hurricane Rita, register to determine eligibility for assistance.

BY TELEPHONE: Dial 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). The call is free with help available in more than 150 languages. When you call, you will have three choices: English, Spanish or Other Callers if you need language assistance or call from a rotary phone. If you are speech- or hearing-impaired, call TTY 1-800-462-7585.

OVER THE INTERNET: If you have access to the Internet, you can register online at www.fema.gov. You will have 30 minutes to complete your application, so have all your paperwork ready before logging on. If you do not have all the information, you can start the process with what you have available.

WHAT YOU NEED TO APPLY: If you don't have all the information, you still can register. FEMA staff will work around missing information so you don't miss out on help.

¥ Social Security number

¥ Losses to damaged property

¥ Telephone number where you can be reached

¥ Insurance information

¥ Address of damaged property

¥ Bank account number and routing number

Special Needs Assistance

Special needs assistance is available, especially if you are a senior citizen or have a disability and need help filling out the forms or managing the finances. FEMA staff can help you register and tell you about services and programs. For information, from home repairs and loans to medical needs and transportation, call FEMA at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585 if you are speech- or hearing-impaired.

The State of Texas and FEMA Working Together To Help You

Texans are no strangers to coping with disasters. The State of Texas and FEMA have worked together many times after disasters to help those in need. Responding to Hurricane Rita has been one more joint effort to help the strong and proud people of Texas get through a difficult time and move forward. The Governor's Division of Emergency Management and FEMA are working with local officials and community volunteers to help victims recover. We extend our commitment to your recovery by inviting you to access the resources and services offered by the federal government and the State of Texas to help speed your recovery. Our thanks to the federal family, first responders, volunteers, emergency management professionals, local officials, cities, lodging providers, state agencies, media and all Texans for the dedication and compassion shown during this unprecedented effort.



Frank Cantu
State Coordinating Officer



FEMA
Sandy Coachman
Federal Coordinating Officer

A Place to Call Home

FEMA provides individual assistance that helps with rent and other needs to eligible victims. **But you must register first.** Eligibility depends on your losses as well as your circumstance. Every case is different, but trained operators can help you complete the application and give information about available options.

Call us toll-free **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**. If you are speech- or hearing-impaired, call **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. In the most-damaged communities, finding functional housing is challenging. Once you register, you can search for a place that meets your needs by calling the FEMA Housing Locator Service at **1-800-762-8740**.

Has Your Address Changed?

If We Can't Find You, We Can't Help You

Whenever you relocate, please notify the U.S. Postal Service and FEMA. Without the newest change of address, mail may not be forwarded, and this could cause important information or checks to be returned as undeliverable. To update your address with FEMA, call **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**. If you are speech- or hearing-impaired, call **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. To submit a change of address, visit any U.S. Post Office or call your local post office at **1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777)**. You also can file a change of address online at www.usps.com. If you have no telephone service or Internet access, go to the nearest post office, complete a change of address form, and submit it to the postal employee at the counter or mail it. It is postage free.

The FEMA Housing Locator Service

1-800-762-8740

HUD HELP

If you are a hurricane evacuee who is not eligible for FEMA housing assistance because you were not a homeowner or renter before Hurricane Rita, you may be eligible for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Disaster Voucher Program. To receive a referral, call FEMA at **1-800-621-FEMA** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585**.

Free Crisis Counseling

Dealing with disasters can be stressful. Crisis counseling is a free, confidential service for survivors. It's not unusual for you and your family to feel like you're on an emotional roller coaster. Some days you are hopeful. Other days you're depressed and anxious about the future. Maybe you're having nightmares or difficulty sleeping. People of all ages can exhibit these symptoms, especially children, so these services are available for you and your family. The services also are available to families hosting evacuees, teachers in schools with evacuees and caregivers of evacuee children. Counselors can arrange to meet you at a local Disaster Recovery Center or other location. It's a chance to talk one-on-one with a trained professional counselor about how you are doing. Call the Crisis Counseling Hotline toll-free at **1-866-773-4243**.

Make sure disaster aid goes to those who deserve it.

If you know of someone making false claims for disaster assistance or attempting to gain money illegally from disaster victims, please call the Hurricane Fraud Hotline: 1-866-720-5721



Representatives from local, state and federal agencies and voluntary organizations are located at Disaster Recovery Centers to help you. FEMA photo by Liz Roll

Disaster Recovery Centers

One-Stop Shops for Assistance

To help meet ongoing needs, FEMA and The Texas Governor's Division of Emergency Management operate Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) in areas most affected by Hurricane Rita. After registering by phone or online for FEMA assistance, you can meet face-to-face with DRC representatives from local, state and federal agencies, as well as voluntary organizations all located under one roof to help you. Refer to the following list for the location nearest you.

HOUSTON (HARRIS COUNTY)

6059 South Loop East
Houston, Texas 77087
Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Closed Sunday

SAN ANTONIO (BEXAR COUNTY)

Kelly AFB
280 Robert Dover St. Bldg. 1537
San Antonio, Texas 78226
Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Closed Sunday

DALLAS (DALLAS COUNTY)

8787 Stemmons Freeway
Dallas, Texas 75247
Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Closed Sunday

ORANGE (ORANGE COUNTY)

4836 Bancroft
Orange, Texas 77632
Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Closed Sunday

BEAUMONT (JEFFERSON COUNTY)

5545 B Eastex Loop
Beaumont, Texas 77706
Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Closed Sunday

DRC SERVICES

- ☞ Ask about the status of your application
- ☞ Discuss grants for home repairs and rental assistance
- ☞ Talk with an SBA representative
- ☞ Get referrals for free legal assistance
- ☞ Get help finding a job, transportation or food assistance
- ☞ Learn about medical, dental and funeral benefits
- ☞ Learn about different types of state and federal assistance
- ☞ Receive referrals to voluntary organizations to help with your unmet needs
- ☞ Talk with a crisis counselor about stress or depression
- ☞ Learn cost-effective ways to reduce the impact of future flooding or disaster losses
- ☞ Get advice about your long-term housing plan

Need a Loan Against Your Insurance Claim?

If you are insured and haven't received a settlement, you may qualify for an advance from FEMA. If a decision on your insurance settlement has been delayed longer than 30 days from the time you filed the claim, you will need to write a letter to FEMA explaining the circumstances. You should include documentation from your insurance company proving your claim. If you filed your claim over the telephone, you should include the claim number, date you applied, and the estimated time of how long it will take to receive your settlement. Any help awarded to you by FEMA is considered an advance and must be repaid to FEMA once your insurance settlement is received.

THANK YOU

Sincere appreciation to the following Texas newspapers for sharing this information as a public service:

The Austin American-Statesman
The Beaumont Enterprise
Houston Chronicle
The Orange Leader
The Port Arthur News
The San Antonio Express-News

Recovery Times

Recovery Times is published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and the

State of Texas Governor's Division of Emergency Management with help from other federal, state and voluntary agencies. Comments and inquiries may be directed to **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**
www.fema.gov

DR1606

Federal Coordinating Officer
Sandy Coachman

State Coordinating Officer
Frank Cantu

Hurricane Evacuees May Qualify for Free Tax Return Assistance

The federal tax filing season for 2005 individual income tax returns opened Jan. 1, 2006. Income tax returns and any tax payments owed for 2005 are due to the IRS no later than April 17, 2006. This deadline applies to hurricane victims. The IRS offers a number of programs that provide free assistance in completing tax returns to qualifying individuals. To determine if you qualify for these assistance programs and to locate the sites where the services are located, call the IRS at **1-800-829-1040**. The IRS telephone number for hearing impaired individuals is **1-800-829-4059** for those with TTY equipment.

Save Your Receipts

If you are seeking or recertifying for rental assistance, save your receipts. Providing receipts is one of the key steps you can take to qualify for available grant funds. Even if you spent your initial rental assistance on items other than rent, such as food, transportation, medical needs or lodging, you may be able to recertify for another three months rent if those receipts were used for other emergency purposes.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability or economic status.

If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, contact FEMA at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. For housing or employment discrimination, call **1-888-452-4778** or **TTY 1-512-371-7473**.



REGISTER BY MARCH 11

Low-Interest Loans Are Not Just for Businesses

Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) are the primary form of federal assistance for long-term recovery for homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes.

Disaster loans up to \$200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for loans up to \$40,000 to repair or replace personal property.

Businesses of any size and private, non-profit organizations may apply to SBA for low-interest disaster loans up to \$1.5 million to repair or replace hurricane damaged real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory or

other business assets. These loans cover uninsured losses or situations where the insurance coverage falls short of the replacement costs.

For small businesses only, the SBA also offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) to help meet working-capital needs created by the hurricane, even if the business did not have any property damage.

Individuals and business owners may get help at any disaster recovery center or by calling SBA at **1-800-659-2955** or **TTY 1-800-877-8339** between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m., Monday to Saturday. March 11 is the deadline to submit SBA loan applications.

CLIP AND SAVE

FEDERAL AGENCIES

FEMA Registration	1-800-621-3362
FEMA TTY for hearing/speech impaired	1-800-462-7585
FEMA Fraud Detection	1-866-720-5721
National Flood Insurance Program	1-888-275-6347
U.S. Small Business Administration	1-800-659-2955
Social Security Administration	1-800-772-1213
SSA TTY for hearing/speech impaired	1-800-325-0778
Internal Revenue Service.....	1-800-829-1040
IRS TTY for hearing/speech impaired	1-800-829-4059
U.S. Government Agencies/General Information	1-800-333-4636
Department of Veterans Affairs	1-800-827-1000
U.S. Postal Service	1-800-275-8777

STATE AGENCIES

Crisis Counseling (toll-free)	1-866-773-4243
Insurance Department	1-800-578-4677
Attorney General's Consumer Protection Hotline	1-800-382-5516
Consumer Services	1-800-337-3928
Department of Licensing and Regulation	1-800-803-9202
Texas Bar Association FEMA Legal Hotline	1-800-504-7030
Department of Agriculture/Gulf Coast Region	1-713-921-8200
Texas WorkSource/Employment	1-800-939-6631

VOLUNTEER AGENCIES

American Red Cross	1-866-438-4636
Salvation Army	1-210-352-2020
United Way/Agency Referrals and Assistance	211