

Riverside

Task Force Hope Edition

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Headlines (Click on the headline below to go to the page):

[District hosts forum to aid returning employees](#)

[Water, mold top concerns for returning residents](#)

[RM begins processing Safe Haven claims Wednesday](#)

[Credit union reopens with limited cash, new hours](#)

[Restoration of services continues at District headquarters](#)

[Key phone numbers for utilities, assistance](#)

Photo of the Day



Sylvia Robinson and Donald Williams, from the District's resource management office, assist Thomas Bludsaw with some paperwork. Several information tables, including power, roofing and counselors, are set up in District Assembly Room "C" to help employees. (George Stringham photo)

District hosts forum to aid returning employees

Employees in need of hurricane recovery assistance will be able to address a number of their needs to a personnel support team Wednesday.

Staff from local and federal agencies will be in the District office offering support, advice and information for Corps employees still struggling through the recovery process.

Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Blue Roof Program, Crisis Care Network, District human resources and an electrical utility liaison will be available from 9 to 11 a.m. Wednesday and Thursday in the District Assembly Room C to answer questions, assist with submitting paperwork and offer advice on a variety of recovery topics.

Crisis Care counselors will host a “How to care of you and your family after a disaster: course at 10 a.m. Wednesday in District Assembly Room A.

FEMA representatives will assist employees with housing issues. Blue Roof representatives will assist employees through the process of obtaining temporary roof repairs, and Crisis Care Network counselors will be available to talk to people in need of mental health support. An electrical utility liaison will also be available to assist returning employees, while human resources representatives will offer their expertise on temporary duty voucher processing, Safe Haven Program payments and leave options.

The Office of Counsel will also be in attendance to answer employees’ legal concerns.

Water, mold top concerns for returning residents

A Tulane University doctor told District employees Tuesday that water and mold remain the top three health concerns for residents returning to New Orleans.

Dr. Jim Theis made the statement during a presentation in the District Assembly Room as part of this week’s personnel support team effort aimed at providing returning employees with much-needed information.

“The further you get from the pumping station, the more contaminated the water becomes,” Theis said. “A general rule is that if it looks and smells normal, it is okay to bath in.”

There is still a boil order for Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

“The EPA has yet to find any of the bad e-coli or similar types of strains. That’s why we haven’t seen any diseases like dysentery,” he said.

Despite the lack of findings, Theis said residents should still take precautions to ensure their safety as they return to New Orleans.

“Although it may be safe to use the water to wash your hands, you should use a hand sanitizer afterwards,” he said.

After more than a month of flooding and warm weather in the city, mold remains an issue for residents as well.

“Unless you have a pre-disposed problem relating to mold, like asthma or allergies, most of the molds you will find in your homes won’t cause a problem.”

Residents returning to storm-damaged homes that were inundated with water for several days should wear a mask, preferably one with a charcoal filter.

Other precautions people should take when returning to their homes, Thies said, include wearing proper safety equipment. Steel toe and metal shank boots, sturdy clothes and a charcoal filter mask should be worn during work on storm-damaged homes, he said.

Thies and a team of physicians will reopen the Tulane University Hospital and Clinic Thursday with limited services from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

RM begins processing Safe Haven claims Wednesday

The District Resource Management Office will begin processing Safe Haven Travel at 9 a.m. Wednesday in Room 251.

To process these travel vouchers, employees should sign up on the appointment list outside Room 251 in the District headquarters. The team can process 5 people every 15 to 20 minutes and will run the process until 4 p.m. The process will start at 8 a.m. Thursday and Friday.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION:

- All employees that have Safe Haven Travel must file a travel voucher.
- Employees that are married to, or are a relative to another Federal Government (to include USACE) can not be claimed on their spouse's or relative's travel claim. Employees must file independently of each other. Dependents can only be filed on one travel voucher.
- To file travel claims, employees need to bring any lodging receipts and receipts for other expenses if the amount is greater than \$75.00. This could include receipts for rental car (if authorized - there are very few cases of rental car being authorized on Safe Haven), airline tickets, etc. NO receipts are needed for food/meals.

TDY TRAVEL ORDERS AND VOUCHERS:

- If employees were assigned TDY while away from the District, each needs to ensure TDY orders were prepared. These orders and travel claims should be prepared/filed through your work section.
- If an employee is currently assigned TDY to the New Orleans District because their home is uninhabitable, the employee needs TDY orders for their current assignment. These orders and travel claims should also be prepared/filed through their work section

FORT WORTH DISTRICT, VICKSBURG DISTRICT AND MEMPHIS DISTRICT:

- Contact Gaynelle Chopfield, Terri Lewis or Gloria Reeves (respectively) to input Safe Haven Travel claims in CEFMS. RM will approve the Safe Haven Travel claims prepared at the New Orleans District HQ office, Fort Worth District Office and the Vicksburg District Office. Safe Haven Travel claims input in Memphis will be approved in Memphis, Fort Worth and Vicksburg claims will be approved in New Orleans. These sites will send the original signed voucher and supporting receipts to New Orleans on a weekly basis. Shipment should be accomplished via FedEx or UPS (USPS is not delivering into the MVN District).

ALL OTHER SITES:

- If another site has CEFMS access, the Resource Management Office recommends the employee inputs the travel claim in CEFMS following the instructions on the MVN web page. Approval for these claims will be done in New Orleans. Once the claims have been entered in CEFMS, fax a signed copy of the voucher and supporting receipts to (504) 862-1521.
- If an employee does not have access to CEFMS, the traveler should fill out a DD Form 1351-2 as shown on the MVN web page. Fax the signed copy of the voucher and supporting receipts to (504) 862-1521.
- On a weekly basis, employees should send the original signed voucher and supporting receipts to New Orleans on a weekly basis. Shipments should be made via FedEx or UPS.

Credit union reopens with limited cash, new hours

The credit union reopened Monday for District employee use only. Teller hours for the immediate future will be 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Access to cash still remains limited, which has prompted credit union officials to limit the amount of cash customers may withdraw per day. Limits are:

\$500.00 per day from a savings account or

\$1,000.00 per day from a checking account, with a maximum withdrawal limit per day of \$1,000.00.

The credit union will have these limits in place until the supply of cash is depleted, or until it is able to access cash via alternate methods.

Shared branches located throughout the state are available to respond to customers' needs.

“We appreciate your understanding during this period as we try to re-establish our previous banking relationships,” said Kirk Arnold, chief executive officer of the credit union. “We hope that during the period we were away from our New Orleans office you were able to use our shared branches, home banking, debit cards, and that you were able to contact us in our temporary Baton Rouge or Birmingham offices when needed.

“We were up and operating the Tuesday following the hurricane in those offices and are working hard to become fully functional again in our New Orleans office, and to continue to help all of our members through this very tough period,” he said.

For additional information, customers can contact the credit union at 504-862-2561.

Restoration of services continues at District headquarters

Repairs to the Castle Kids Child Center are underway with priority being placed on restoring the interior of the facility. The target date for the center reopening is Oct. 17; however, the date may be revised because of difficulties in making repairs, staff availability and the availability of potable water issues.

Official mail delivery will resume later this week. Both outgoing and incoming mail service will be available for official mail only. Personal mail should not be mailed from the District office.

Returning employees should bring a lunch or plan on eating off the District reservation since the cafeteria remains closed. Restrooms in the building are operational, but water is not potable. Drinking water is available.

Key phone numbers for utilities, assistance

Human Resources (504) 862-2791

New Orleans District Emergency Operations Center (504) 862-1102

FEMA Assistance (800) 621-FEMA

FEMA Baton Rouge (225) 925-7500

Consumer Help Line and Fraud Complaints (877) FTC-HELP

Credit Unions and Credit Union Members (800) 827-6282 x4049

Gas Gouging (800) 244-3301

Louisiana School Information (877) 453-2721

National Flood Insurance Program (800) 638-6620

Family News Network (American Red Cross) (877) 568-3317

Donation and Volunteer Line (877) 872-2677

SPCA (Dogs) (225) 647-0712; (504) 733-8572

Orleans Utility and other Information

ENTERGY (800) 968-8243; (800) 368-3749

ATMOS Gas (800) 692-4694

New Orleans Police Department (504) 821-2222
New Orleans Fire Department (504) 565-7800
Public Works (504) 585-6844
Sewerage & Water Board (504) 585-2000
Blue Roof 888-ROOF-BLU Asphalt shingles only
American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund (800) 435-7669
Southeast Louisiana Red Cross (504) 587-1500

Information by Parish

Jefferson (504) 349-5360
Orleans (504) 565-7200
Plaquemines (504) 297-5500
St. Bernard (504) 278-4268
St. Charles (985) 783-5050
St. John the Baptist (985) 652-2222
St. Tammany (985) 898-2323