

Riverside

Task Force Hope Edition

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Photo of the Day



Robert Foret and Jeff Richie review the damage in Terrebonne Parish on a map of the area Thursday. The levee system in the parish sustained significant damage during Hurricane Rita. (Lauren Solis photo)

Safe drinking water returns to New Orleans' East Bank

Mayor C. Ray Nagin announced Thursday that safe drinking water has been restored to New Orleans' East Bank, west of the Industrial Canal.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, the official regulatory agency for the State of Louisiana, certified the water quality.

This complements the safe water use on the West Bank following Hurricane Katrina.

“Today's news of safe water use is a strong push for the Mayor's vision to bring New Orleans back,” Nagin said.

To find out if water is consumable in a specific neighborhood, contact the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board at (504) 495-9734.

Katrina crunch: Life in tight quarters

Many employees no longer have to *imagine* what it would be like living with strangers, friends or family, sharing one tube of toothpaste, one toilet, four towels, limited water, and one roof. Many displaced by Katrina are still living in tight quarters with families torn apart and personal space almost non-existent.

Balancing the physical, psychological, emotional and spatial needs of those living in makeshift Katrina communes is a huge challenge. Some common understanding that will help to ease the tension goes a long way:

- (1) Everyone under the same roof is likely experiencing feeling of intense sadness, stress, anxiety and irritability.
- (2) Feelings of competition and jealousy over small things are normal. They indicate a desire for self-sufficiency once again.
- (3) Longing for one's old stability zones and familiar surroundings may become intense and seem insurmountable in crowded circumstances.
- (4) Despite a sad or grumpy expression people are deeply grateful for hospitality and a roof over their head.
- (5) What seem to be the smallest of basics – i.e., clean towels, a clean shirt, a pillow and blanket become the biggest of gifts.
- (6) Everyone needs his or her own territory, however small.
- (7) The jumping off place that is provided may forever be remembered as the most important, and possibly life saving shelter, of a person's life.
- (8) Patience, tolerance and kindness are the most essential tools for surviving life in tight quarters, whether the provider or the guest.
- (9) Sharing honest feelings with each other helps to create common bonds and heightens awareness of feelings.
- (10) Such a communal experience is full of opportunities to learn about ourselves and change lives forever.

Corps asks public to keep eye out for missing gage buoy

The Corps is seeking the public's help in locating a wave monitoring gage buoy that was washed from its mooring on Lake Pontchartrain by Hurricane Katrina.

The device was one of three the Corps had placed on the lake to monitor large waves. The other two have been recovered and will be useful in providing data on what took place on the lake during the storm. If the third one can be found, it will yield additional information for engineers and scientists concerning the south shore.

The gage buoy could be still floating in the lake, or it may have washed ashore. The tubular shaped, bright yellow "Mini Wave Sentry Buoy" weighs less than eight pounds, is about three feet long, and has two antennae -- one to transmit and one to receive GPS signals. It also has a yellow foam flotation collar.

Anyone who locates the gage is asked to call Dr. Harley Winer at the Corps' New Orleans District Office at 504-862-2454.

Corps works with other agencies to minimize water quality impacts from flooding

Federal, state and local authorities are working together to protect people and the environment as floodwaters continue to be pumped from New Orleans and surrounding parishes.

In a coordinated effort, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Coast Guard, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, local sewerage and water boards and contractors are taking steps to minimize impacts as much as possible.

The Environmental Protection Agency is testing and monitoring floodwaters. Sorbent booms with sorbent skirts have been placed at all pump outfalls to capture floating oils and prevent their discharge. Booms are also being installed at discharge points into Lake Pontchartrain to provide additional levels of protection.

"The US Coast Guard assisted the Corps by deploying booms to absorb petroleum products," said Casey Rowe, an environmental resources specialist with the Corps' New Orleans District. The booms also corral floating debris so it can be manually removed from the canals.

Environmental teams have addressed another concern by installing water aerators that help oxygenate floodwater as it is discharged into Lake Pontchartrain. While dissolved oxygen levels of floodwaters being discharged into Lake Pontchartrain generally meet state requirements, 27 aerators are being installed by Shaw Group into pump outlets to provide additional oxygenation.

"The floodwaters contained high levels of organic matter and fecal coli form bacteria, as well as various contaminants, including petroleum products," Rowe said.

High bacteria counts in water can deplete dissolved oxygen, making it unfit for fish and other aquatic life. Aeration increases dissolved oxygen in the storm water and enables beneficial organisms to break down organic matter, reduce nitrogen concentrations, and decrease the amount of fecal coli form bacteria.

EPA and Louisiana DEQ approved a Corps plan to use temporary pumps to evacuate the lowest areas of floodwater from St. Bernard Parish into the Mississippi River. This floodwater will be diluted by the 200,000 cubic foot per second flow of the Mississippi. Louisiana DEQ is setting up a monitoring station to ensure no hazardous materials enter Belle Chasse water intake.

The agencies also are working together to prepare for the first flush of the region from rainfall after unwatering is completed.

“Because of the need for the Corps to address the situation immediately, EPA exercised its enforcement discretion to allow the Corps to discharge as necessary,” Rowe said. “However, EPA asked the Corps, to the extent practicable, to take steps that would minimize potential impacts on water quality.” Thus the cooperative alliance of agencies was formed.

Blue Roof assistance for District employees

In the State of Louisiana, Operation Blue Roof provides a free temporary roof to residential structures, schools, daycares and all publicly owned facilities.

These temporary roofs are plastic sheeting and allow occupants to return and remain in their homes and facilities. The temporary roofs will provide short-term relief until the owner can make permanent repairs. To receive temporary roof repairs a Right-of-Entry (ROE) Form is required.

In order to install a temporary roof, homes and buildings must:

- Have 50% or less of the roof decking damaged (decking is the wood underneath the shingles)
- Have 50% or less of the supporting structure damaged
- Be Structurally Sound & Safely Accessed
- Have Trees Removed From Structure

This program does not install temporary roofs on metal, tile, slate, asbestos slate or flat roofs.

For more information about the Blue Roof Program, contact employee representative Debbie Blood at 504-862-1984.

Corps establishes fund to assist employees

Corps employees who would like to help coworkers and their families affected by Hurricane Katrina can contribute to the Corps Fund.

Department of the Army and New Orleans District employees and families should contact 1-888-766-3258 (Follow the prompts) for information and assistance.

Additional Information for Federal Employees is available on the following websites:

- [Army Civilian Personnel Office](#)
- [DoD Civilian Personnel Management Service](#)
- [Office of Personnel Management](#)
- [OPM Katrina Handbook for Fed. Employees & Families](#)
- [FEMA](#)
- [Department of Homeland Security](#)

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

Satellite office locations

Fort Worth District
817-886-1138
819 Taylor Street, Ft. Worth, TX

Galveston District
409-762-6300
2000 Ft. Point Rd, Galveston, TX

Mobile District
251-690-2400
109 Saint Joseph St., Mobile, AL

Vicksburg District
601-631-5322
4155 Clay St, Vicksburg, MS

Memphis District
901-544-0802
617 N. Main, Memphis, TN

St. Louis District
Falcolm Hull, 314-331-8567
1222 Spruce St., St. Louis, MO

Baton Rouge RFO
225-925-7337
1900 N Lobdell Blvd,
Baton Rouge, LA

Lafayette Area Office
337-291-3012
646 Cajundome Blvd, Lafayette, LA

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Riverside-Task Force Hope Edition is the unofficial electronic publication of the New Orleans District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The electronic newsletter is published 15 times every month by the Corps' Public Affairs Team deployed to the District in support of Task Force Hope post-hurricane operations. Story ideas, information, questions or comments can be forwarded to the team leader at Mitch.Frazier@us.army.mil or by calling 504-862-1645.