



# MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April 25, 2010  
8:30 a.m.

### **Volunteer information for Mississippi Tornado Relief**

**Pearl** – The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is helping coordinate volunteer relief efforts in Yazoo City following the devastating tornado that struck the area Saturday.

The Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (MCVS) is establishing an emergency Volunteer Reception Center in Yazoo City to coordinate the activities of volunteers and national service members coming into the community to assist in the removal of fallen trees and destroyed homes, as well as the clearing of other debris. Sign up to volunteer at [www.volunteermississippi.org](http://www.volunteermississippi.org) or by calling 888-353-1793. Registered volunteers will be contacted as additional assistance is needed.

The Mississippi State Department of Health is also offering the following tips for safety following the storms:

#### **Power Outages**

In case of power outage, special considerations need to be taken with all food and water:

- If your area is placed under a boil water notice, vigorously boil water for at least a full minute before using. If you cannot boil water, disinfect by adding unscented chlorine bleach in these amounts: two drops of bleach for each quart of clear water or four drops of bleach for each quart of muddy or dirty water. Let the water stand at least 30 minutes before using.
- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with contaminated water.
- Commercially prepared cans of food can be eaten unless there is a dent or bulge in the can.
- Only frozen food that is still frozen or remains "refrigerator cold" is safe to eat.

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- Only use grills or generators outside to avoid the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Do not use grills or generators inside a house, garage or any enclosed space. Symptoms of CO poisoning may include fatigue, weakness, chest pains for those with heart disease, shortness of breath upon exertion, nausea, vomiting, headaches, confusion, lack of coordination, impaired vision, loss of consciousness, and in severe cases, death. If you suspect CO poisoning, call 911 emergency services or the Mississippi Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

### **Debris Cleanup**

- When cleaning up storm-damaged areas, be sure to wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes to prevent cuts and scratches from debris. Do not let children play in floodwater, and discard any items that came into contact with floodwater.

### **Rabies**

- Avoid wild animals, which may become disoriented or aggressive after severe weather. Although rabies has not been found in any land animal in Mississippi for more than 30 years, rabies has been identified in bats in Mississippi.
- Secure all food sources to prevent attracting wild animals and strays.
- Snakes also pose a risk. They may hide in places around your home after flooding.
- In case of animal bites or any type of contact with bats, you should wash the bite or any noticeable wound with soap and clean water, and seek medical attention.

### **Tetanus**

- Anyone who is planning to assist in storm cleanup activities and has not had a tetanus booster within the last 10 years should receive one. Call your local health department for vaccine availability. Individuals who sustain lacerations, puncture wounds or any other serious wound are advised to seek medical attention.

Media with questions can contact the State Joint Information Center at 601-933-6652. Additional information on storm damages will be released as soon as it becomes available.

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