



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: (866) 920-MEMA

Media Contact
866-920-MEMA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 3, 2011

State agencies responding to storm recovery and river flooding

PEARL – The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is coordinating with other state agencies as well as the Salvation Army and Red Cross to assist those recovering from severe storms and preparing for the Mississippi River flooding.

The following are reports of ongoing operations:

MEMA: The State Emergency Operations Center is operating at Level 1, the highest level.

- Coordinating disaster assistance and registrations in the 11 declared counties and continuing damage assessments in several additional counties along with FEMA.
- Mobile Operations Command Center is in Monroe Co., MEMA Communications Unit is in Webster Co.
- Providing staff, conducting briefings and processing requests to Mississippi River and Yazoo Basin counties for ongoing flooding threat.

Mississippi Department of Transportation: MDOT reports that Highway 25 and Highway 23 through Smithville in Monroe County will remain closed to traffic due to disaster recovery operations which resulted from last week's severe weather. A detour route around Smithville is now in place. If motorists are traveling north on Highway 25, they will be routed West on Highway 6, North on Highway 371, and East on US 78. If traveling South on Highway 25, or Highway 23, motorists will be routed West on US 78, South on 371, and East on Highway 6. The detour will remain in effect indefinitely.

Highway 465 is NOT closed at this time in Warren and Issaquena counties. MDOT crews are continuing to monitor the highway due to possible flooding. MDOT crews are on standby and will keep the roadway open until the closure is necessary. Updates of road closures and conditions can be found at www.gomdot.com.

Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Services: Volunteer Response Centers report a total of 3,400 volunteers have registered. There are several Volunteer Response Centers open in Monroe, Chickasaw and Lafayette counties. For volunteer and donation information please call 888-353-1793 or visit www.mcvs.org.

Mississippi Department of Employment Security: Currently accepting applications for Disaster Unemployment Assistance from those living or working in counties that received a federal disaster declaration. Affected workers have until June 1, 2011 to apply. Self-employed workers may also be eligible. Workers can apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the Mississippi Department of Employment Security website at www.mdes.ms.gov. Workers also may call the agency's call centers at 601-855-3133 or 888-844-3577 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Mississippi Military Department: The Mississippi National Guard continues its support of tornado recovery operations in Monroe County with security checkpoints and patrols in Smithville.

Mississippi Department of Public Safety: Mississippi Department of Public Safety currently has 20 troopers and 20 Regional Response Team Security Force protection officers deployed assisting National Guard forces in Monroe County with security and traffic.

-more-

“Disaster Preparedness Saves Lives and Property”
Visit us online at www.msema.org



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: (866) 920-MEMA

Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks: Currently has six officers deployed to Tunica County for safety and security patrols of flooded areas around casinos.

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality: As a result of flooding forecasts and rising water levels for the Mississippi River, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality advises Mississippians to think about possible environmental issues that can result if flooding reaches their homes, farms, and businesses. The release of oil, gasoline, or chemicals into flood waters can be an environmental hazard. MDEQ requests that if residents observe any releases of oil, gasoline or chemicals or any stray barrels, waste containers, cylinders and pressure vessels that they promptly report the discovery to the state's 24-hour spill line: 800-222-6362 or 601-961-5171.

Mississippi Department of Mental Health: Power outages, lack of drinking water and ice, and loss of telecommunications are not the only problems Mississippians affected by the recent tornadoes will face. Natural disasters like tornadoes can cause serious stress and depression. Victims of the tornadoes are encouraged to talk about their feelings, even though it may be difficult and to rely on support groups like family, friends, local churches, and local community mental health centers. For more information about behavioral health resources in your area, contact the Mississippi Department of Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-210-8513.

American Red Cross: Volunteer efforts continue in affected areas and two shelters are open:

- Tunica: GW Henderson Community Center, 1165 Abbay Dr., Tunica.
- Quitman: M.S. Palmer High School, Hwy. 3 South, Marks.

Salvation Army: Reports a portable shower unit has relocated to Smithville and will remain at location until further notice. Feeding operations continue in areas that have no electricity. Staff continues to provide prepared meals, comfort kits, snacks, food boxes, drinks, emergency financial aid, spiritual care and other services in affected areas.

Mississippi Department of Human Services: The Mississippi Department of Human Services has been authorized to implement the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to assist victims of the severe weather in Greene, Hinds and Kemper Counties. Affected residents must have incurred disaster related expenses as a direct result of the severe weather to be eligible for the one-time only benefit. Current SNAP recipients are not eligible for DSNAP benefits. Applications will be accepted May 4-6 from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. For more information please call 1-800-345-6347.

Mississippi Attorney General: The Mississippi Attorney General's Office is sending investigators to affected areas with consumer education materials to help prevent cases of home repair fraud. If you are suspicious, do not hire the worker and report your concerns to your local law enforcement agency or our Consumer Protection division at 800-281-4418. A list of consumer tips can be found at www.agjimhood.com.

Mississippi Insurance Department: The Mississippi Insurance Department is assisting storm victims in north MS, our Mobile Assistance Center is set up at the FEMA Disaster Recovery Center in Smithville. State Fire Marshals are also still assisting local authorities in the area. Commissioner Mike Chaney has issued a 60-day moratorium on cancellation or non-renewal of certain policies for storm victims. Certain criteria have to be met. For more information visit www.mid.state.ms.us.

###

"Disaster Preparedness Saves Lives and Property"
Visit us online at www.msema.org