

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Fact Sheet

Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program

Federal Assistance Without a Presidential Declaration

In many instances, disaster assistance may be obtained from the Federal Government and voluntary agencies without a Presidential declaration of a major disaster or an emergency. Federal establishments, particularly military installations, which are located in or near the disaster area, may provide immediate lifesaving assistance, and other Federal agencies may be able to provide assistance under their own statutory authorities. The following assistance is available from various Federal and voluntary agencies.

Search and Rescue

The United States Coast Guard or United States Armed Forces units may assist in search and rescue operations, evacuate disaster victims, and transport supplies and equipment.

Flood Protection

The United States Army Corps of Engineers has the authority to assist in flood-fighting and rescue operations and to protect, repair, and restore certain flood-control works that are threatened, damaged, or destroyed by a flood. They also have authority to assist States for a 10-day period subject to specific criteria.

Fire Suppression Assistance

The Stafford Act authorizes the President to provide assistance, including grants, equipment, supplies, and personnel, to a State for the suppression of a forest or grassland fire on public or private lands that threatens to become a major disaster. This authority has been delegated to the FEMA's Associate Director for Response and Recovery. The Governor of a State, or the Governor's Authorized Representative, must request such assistance through the FEMA Regional Director and should support the request with detailed information on the nature of the threat and the Federal assistance needed.

Health and Welfare

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services may provide assistance to State and local welfare agencies and to State vocational rehabilitation agencies. The Public Health Service can aid States and local communities in emergency health and sanitation measure. The Food and Drug Administration may work with State and local governments in establishing public health controls through the decontamination or condemnation of contaminated food and drugs.

Emergency Loans for Agriculture

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) may make emergency loans to farmers, ranchers, and aquaculturists in areas designated as eligible by the Secretary of Agriculture or the Administrator of FSA.

Disaster Loans for Homeowners and Business

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) can provide both direct and bank-participation disaster loans to qualified homeowners and businesses to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real and personal property when the Administrator declares a disaster loan area under SBA's statutory authority. Economic injury loans can help small firms suffering economic losses as a result of a disaster.

Repairs to Federal Aid System Roads

The Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation can provide assistance to restore roads and bridges on the Federal Aid System.

Tax Refunds

The Internal Revenue Service can assist individuals in applying for casualty losses resulting from natural disasters.

Voluntary Agency Assistance

An essential element of almost any disaster relief effort is the assistance provided by private relief organizations in the distribution of food, medicine, and supplies; the provision of emergency shelter; and the restoration of community services. The American Red Cross, which operates under a Federal Charter (as provided by Public Law 58-4, approved January 5, 1905, 33 Stat. 599), provides grants and other types of assistance to individuals and families affected by disasters to meet their emergency needs. The Salvation Army, the Mennonite Disaster Service, other charitable organizations, and church groups provide significant assistance to those in need of help.

Department of Defense Predeclaration Emergency Assistance

The Stafford Act authorizes the President to use personnel and equipment of the Department of Defense to remove debris or provide temporary restoration of essential public facilities and services in the aftermath of an incident, which may ultimately qualify for a major disaster or emergency. This authority has been delegated to FEMA's Associate Director for Response and Recovery. The Governor of a State must request such assistance through the FEMA Regional Director and should support the request with a finding that such work is essential for the preservation of life and property. When authorized, the work may only be carried out for a period not to exceed 10 days.

Source: FEMA Publication 262, June 1997
FEMA Website www.fema.gov
Fact Sheet Updated 2/7/02