



PRESS RELEASE

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Transitional Housing Assistance Available For Texas Evacuees With Inaccessible Or Unlivable Homes

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AUSTIN, Texas -- The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), at the request of the State of Texas, will activate its transitional sheltering initiative to allow eligible Ike evacuees from Texas, who cannot return to their homes, to stay in hotels or motels until it is safe for them to go home.

FEMA will pay for the lodging directly to hotels and motels. A listing of participating hotels is available online at www.FEMAEvacHotels.com.

This assistance is intended to provide a more appropriate extended sheltering environment to evacuees who cannot return home because their neighborhoods are inaccessible or because their homes are unlivable due to damage or lack of power. The initial period of assistance is from September 14, 2008 to October 14, 2008. This program will not reimburse applicants for previously incurred hotel expenses. Applicants are responsible for their own meals and for any lodging costs above the authorized allowance.

"Many hotels in eastern Texas are already booked, therefore we recommend that everyone already in a hotel remain until local officials advise it is safe to go home." said Sandy Coachman, Federal Coordinating Officer for the Texas Joint Field Office. "If your hotel does not participate in this program, hold your receipts and FEMA will assist you."

To ensure reimbursement evacuees first need to apply for federal assistance through FEMA either online at www.fema.gov or by calling the FEMA toll-free call centers at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362), ----- TTY 1-800-462-7585. Eligible evacuees must fit the following criteria:

1. FEMA must be able to verify the identity of the evacuee;
2. The primary residence of the evacuee must be in one of the counties that has been designated a disaster area; and
3. The primary residence is inaccessible or unlivable due to damage or lack of power.

Because of the high number of calls FEMA is receiving, applicants should expect long wait times and consider calling during non-peak hours. The hotline is open 24 hours. Applicants are strongly encouraged to register online if at all possible. Home inspections do not need to be completed before applying. Persons who do not meet these criteria may still be eligible for other types of FEMA assistance or may be referred to local agencies for possible assistance.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

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