



News for Immediate Release

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PEMA Urges Residents to Document and Report Flood-Related Damages to Local Officials

Harrisburg –Pennsylvania residents who sustained damages to their homes or businesses as a result of flooding from the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee should report those damages to local municipal officials as soon as possible.

"It's very important for residents to file preliminary damage reports as soon as possible with their local governments," said Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Director Glenn Cannon. "Teams of local, county, state and federal staffers will conduct preliminary damage assessments as soon as it's safe to do so, but it's not possible for them to inspect every damaged property so we need the public's help."

Cannon said there are three basic steps citizens should take. Affected people should:

- photograph and document losses;
- report damages to the municipal emergency management office; and
- save receipts from cleanup and repairs on their property.

"Homeowners, renters, and business owners should document damage with photographs and detailed information on the losses they have sustained," Cannon said. "Even if you have insurance and don't anticipate asking for federal assistance, this information will show the overall impact of this storm, and could help local communities get money to rebuild roads, bridges, and other public infrastructure."

Cannon said this information will also be crucial if Pennsylvania later gets a disaster declaration, making financial aid available to individuals and businesses. He said at that time, state and federal officials will issue instructions on how people can sign up for assistance.

If a disaster declaration that includes Individual Assistance (IA) is issued, the Federal Emergency Management Agency will staff disaster recovery centers (DRC) in the counties included in the IA declaration. DRCs are one-stop shopping for citizens, where they can get

information on every available federal resource in order to recover from the flooding.

Each municipality is responsible for collecting damage reports from residents and reporting them to counties for submission to PEMA. PEMA compiles the totals and sends them to federal officials to be considered as part of the state's request for a federal disaster declaration.

To find contact information for your township, borough or city, look in the government section (Blue Pages) of your local telephone directory or search online.

Cannon said that at this point, there is no federal Individual Assistance available for citizens to repair and rebuild their homes. It's important to note that at this point in the recovery process, reporting damages to local officials is only for recording and filing purposes. It is not a means of registering for services or funding. Cannon said the preliminary damage reports being conducted will provide a clear picture of whether or not the commonwealth could qualify for IA funding.

Cannon also noted that Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare has a mental health crisis counseling hotline open to those who need help coping with mental health issues related to the flooding. The number is 1-866-803-6382. The hotline is staffed by trained crisis workers 24-hours a day during the immediate crisis period.

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