

Oct. 4, 2011
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Recovery News

SIX EASY STEPS TO POTENTIAL WILDFIRE RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

AUSTIN, Texas – If you're a survivor of the wildfires that struck 22 Texas counties beginning August 30, following six easy steps could help smooth the path to potential state and federal assistance.

The Texas Division of Emergency Management, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) encourage survivors to take these steps:

1. **Register with FEMA today.** The only way to learn if you are eligible for assistance from the state and FEMA is to apply for it online at www.disasterassistance.gov, via web-enabled phone at m.fema.gov, or by calling **1-800-621-3362** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. If you use 711-Relay or Video Relay Services, call **1-800-621-3362**. Operators will answer from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day. If you'd like help with the application, stop in at a Disaster Recovery Center in your area.
2. **Provide complete information when you register.** This includes your name, Social Security number, the date the disaster affected you, your family or your home, your current address and phone number if you are displaced from your home, the address of the damaged home, and any insurance information. Missing information on a FEMA application causes up to one-third of the delays in grant awards.
3. **Jot down your FEMA case number and keep it handy.** Providing your case number can be the fastest way for a FEMA specialist to retrieve your information when you call, click or visit a recovery center.
4. **Stay in touch with FEMA.** Visit a recovery center, go online to www.disasterassistance.gov or call **1-800-621-3362** each time you move or change your phone number. If FEMA can't reach you, potential assistance can be delayed or stopped.
5. **Welcome the housing inspector.** A FEMA housing inspector will call you to schedule an appointment and then meet you at the damaged property. Be on time for the appointment or reschedule before the appointment if you cannot make it. Rescheduling a missed inspection after the appointment can eat time and delay potential assistance.
6. **Complete and return the SBA disaster loan application if you receive one, even if you don't think you will need or want a loan.** If the SBA cannot approve your application, in most cases they can refer you to FEMA for possible additional assistance.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

The mission of the Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas Department of Public Safety, is to support the citizens of Texas and local jurisdictions as they plan for, respond to, recover from and mitigate the impacts of all hazards, emergencies and disasters. For more information, see: www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/#!/femaregion6>, the R6 Hurricane Preparedness website at www.fema.gov/about/regions/regionvi/updates.shtm and the FEMA Blog at <http://blog.fema.gov>.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of funding for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955 (TTY 800-877-8339).