

Oct. 3, 2011  
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# Recovery News

## **DISASTER ASSISTANCE POSSIBLE FOR WELLS AND SEPTIC SYSTEMS DAMAGED IN WILDFIRES**

**AUSTIN, Texas** — Wildfire survivors in 22 Texas counties are reminded that disaster assistance may be available to help repair wells or septic systems that were damaged during the blazes.

Officials with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) say survivors who are unsure whether their insurance covers fire damage to a well or septic system may want to confirm with their insurance company. In many cases, water storage tanks, well pumps and septic systems are not covered by homeowners insurance.

In these situations, FEMA may be able to help.

Homeowners in all 22 counties designated for disaster assistance for the wildfires on or after Aug. 30 may be eligible for aid to repair or replace damaged septic systems and private wells that are the sole source of water for the home. This assistance may be available even if the home itself was not affected.

"The health and safety of survivors is important to us," said Federal Coordinating Officer Kevin L. Hannes of FEMA. "Survivors who have damage to their wells or septic systems are encouraged to inform FEMA even if they have already registered."

Survivors should notify FEMA if their private well or septic system was damaged or contaminated due to the wildfires. Homeowners are encouraged to call the FEMA Helpline at **1-800-621-3362** even if a housing inspector has visited the home. Individuals with speech or hearing impairments can call TTY at **1-800-462-7585**. Multilingual assistance is also available by phone. Applicants can also visit a Disaster Recovery Center in their area to speak with a FEMA representative in person.

The counties designated for Individual Assistance (IA) under the Texas wildfire disaster declaration are Anderson, Bastrop, Caldwell, Cass, Colorado, Fayette, Gregg, Grimes, Harrison, Henderson, Hill, Houston, Leon, Marion, Montgomery, Rusk, Smith, Travis, Upshur, Walker, Waller and Williamson. The IA program provides grants to eligible survivors to repair or rebuild homes to a safe, sanitary and functional state. Grants are not intended to restore a home to its predisaster condition.

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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](http://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](http://www.fema.gov/about/regions/regionvi/updates.shtm) and the FEMA Blog at <http://blog.fema.gov>.*