

Recovery after Oklahoma Storms and Tornadoes

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced federal disaster aid has been made available to the State of Oklahoma in the area affected by severe storms and tornadoes since May 18, 2013.

Individuals and families impacted by the storms and tornadoes in Cleveland, Lincoln, McClain, Oklahoma and Pottawatomie counties can begin applying for assistance in one of three ways:

- Online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov;
- By phone at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362); or
- By web enabled mobile device at m.fema.gov.

Disaster assistance applicants who have a speech disability or hearing loss and use TTY should call 1-800-462-7585 directly; for those who use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 1-800-621-3362. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

How to Locate Loved Ones during an Emergency

After a disaster, phone lines may get congested. To get in contact with friends and family, use text messaging services and update social media networks.

You can also let your family and friends know you are safe and well after an emergency via <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php>. This website is designed to help make communication between family members and friends easier.

To register yourself on the site, click on the “List Myself as Safe and Well” button. To search the list of those who have registered themselves, click on the “Search Registrants” button. The successful search results will display a loved one’s first name, last name and a brief message.

Helping Children Cope with Disasters

Disasters can leave children feeling frightened, confused and insecure. Whether a child has personally experienced trauma, or has seen the event on television or has heard it discussed by adults, it is important for parents and teachers to be informed and ready to help if reactions to stress begin to occur.

Here are some suggestions to help reassure children:

- Provide factual information about the recent disaster and current plans

for insuring their safety along with recovery plans;

- Encourage your children to talk about their feelings;
- Re-establish your daily routine for work, school, play, meals and rest;
- Involve your children by giving them specific chores to help them feel they are helping to restore family and community life; and
- Praise and recognize responsible behavior.

For more information, visit <http://www.fema.gov/coping-disaster#4> and <http://www.ready.gov/kids/parents-teachers>.

Cleaning Up and Returning Home After a Disaster

After a disaster strikes, use extreme caution when [returning home](#). You may be anxious to see your property but do not return to your home before the area is declared to be safe by local officials. Before entering your home, be sure to take the following measures:

- Check for loose power lines, gas leaks and structural damage;
- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports;
- Use a battery-powered flash light to inspect a damaged home; and
- If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.

When [cleaning up damage](#), take the following safety precautions:

- Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeves and gloves;
- Learn proper safety procedures and operating instructions before operating any gas-powered or electric-powered saws or tools;
- Clean up spilled medicines, drugs, flammable liquids and other potentially hazardous materials; and
- Beware of [post-disaster fraud](#) by asking for identification of federal or state officials and safeguarding personal information.