

Hurricane Katrina Response: Updates and Guidance for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers in Maine

Q: Who is coordinating Maine's emergency management and healthcare response?

A: The Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) continues to coordinate the communication, recruiting, and response efforts for Hurricane Katrina statewide. Maine participates with the other 49 states in the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) which functions as a resource management coordinating tool for disaster-stricken areas. EMAC has already been activated for Hurricane Katrina, and requests have come in for healthcare providers, water rescue teams, environmental strike teams, incident command teams, and public information officials.

As soon as possible MEMA will provide updates on **possible deployment dates, and additional information**. Stay tuned!

MEMA – contact info:

Phone: (207) 624-4400 or (800) 452-8735 (in-state toll-free)

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Points of Contact (POC)

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This disaster is following the expected course we see in many disasters: initial casualties from the incident itself; followed by suffering from chronic diseases and the pregnant, and then by relief injuries and continued acts of violence. The final phase includes complications from lacking infrastructure, including infectious disease. Word from the field is that there are few patients, as most have evacuated and that medical support is not the limiting factor in patient care. Rather, public service infrastructure is - including electricity, plumbing, and safe water.

Other state agencies in Maine are coordinating with MEMA in this response. For example, the Bureau of Health (BOH) is providing support to MEMA in the development of medical screening and vaccination requirements for potential emergency response and healthcare volunteers.

Updated guidance from CDC on worker/responder safety, vaccinations, and other health-related issues can be found at the following links:

- *Hurricane-Related Information for Health Care Professionals*
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/hcp.asp>

- *Interim Immunization Recommendations for Emergency Responders: Hurricane Katrina*
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/responderimmun.asp>
- *Hurricanes – What You Should Know*
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/index.asp>

Hospitals may have received an email from a group of national hospital representative organizations (including the American Hospital Association), asking each to fill out a survey indicating willingness to provide resources such as personnel, supplies, and equipment (www.hospitalreliefforts.org). This will then be shared with U.S. DHHS for possible mobilization of such resources. Please note: MEMA and MHA are aware of this, and have instructed us to still go through MEMA for any official volunteer sign-up and deployment, as this will assure appropriate processing and protection of volunteers under EMAC.

Under the federal Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), volunteers' liability will be covered. Volunteers will work as "agents of the State of Maine" throughout their deployment. Liability excludes gross negligence.
(<http://www.emacweb.org>)

If deployed under EMAC, volunteers would be asked to travel to a specified area and provide assistance. Volunteers are warned to be prepared to be self-sufficient for as long as 48 hours, however EMAC makes every effort to make travel, lodging and transportation arrangements for their volunteers.

Q: What is the Federal Government doing to respond?

A: Please see **Appendix A** below for detailed updates from several U.S. Government Agencies. Note: I cannot confirm the accuracy of the information listed.

Federal officials hope to have ten field hospitals in place by this weekend, and as many as forty over the course of the next six to eight weeks. Each facility will have 250 beds and a clinical staff of 100. Staff make-up will include volunteer physicians, nurses and technical staff. The precise mix of needed staff is not yet certain. We have been told that the "deployment" time for each volunteer has been set at 16 calendar days.

Q: What else can I do to help at this time?

Volunteers should not report directly to the affected areas unless directed by a government or voluntary agency (such as FEMA, MEMA or ARC). Self-dispatched volunteers can put themselves and others in harm's way and hamper rescue efforts. Voluntary organizations are seeking cash donations to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina in Gulf Coast states.

While the impetus to respond is very strong, all members of our healthcare community are urged to hold off until an established mechanism of response is created. There are a multitude of concerns with "medical freelancing" at disaster sites, including accountability, reliability, quality control, integration with the relief system as a whole, lack of logistical support, and lack of proper medical intelligence and personal protective equipment. See the attached article "Convergent Volunteerism" for more on this.

If you have not already done so, please facilitate the collection of *Healthcare Volunteer Contact Information* using the form attached to this message, provided by MEMA. Completed forms should be emailed or faxed immediately to Olan Johnston or Rayna Leibowitz at MEMA (contact information above).

* Please try to keep track of the numbers of individuals volunteering from your organizations by name and profession. If you could share this aggregate data with this office (Penny Hudson, HUDSOP@MMC.ORG, 207-662-5142) that would help us continue to coordinate supply and demand regionally and statewide.

Of course, organizations and individuals can also help my donating to one of the many (FEMA recognized) relief organizations currently responding throughout the Gulf Coast. A list of organizations is available in **Appendix B**.

APPENDIX A

FEMA

- FEMA deployed 39 Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT) from all across the U.S. to staging areas in Alabama, Tennessee, Texas, and Louisiana and is now moving them into impacted areas. Other DMAT Teams, including MA Teams, are on standby.
- Eighteen Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) task forces and two Incident Support Teams have been deployed and pre-positioned in Shreveport, La., and Jackson, Miss., including teams from Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. An additional eight swift water rescue teams have been deployed.
- FEMA is moving supplies and equipment into the hardest hit areas as quickly as possible, especially water, ice, meals, medical supplies, generators, tents, and tarps. There are currently over 1,700 trucks which have been mobilized to move these supplies into position.

Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is making available all of their capabilities to help state and local officials provide care and assistance to the victims of this storm. HHS efforts include:

- The first 250 mobile hospital beds and associated equipment have arrived at the Louisiana State University (LSU) facility in Baton Rouge. Thirty eight public health service officers are at the facility and along with disaster medical assistance teams and State health care professionals. As of this morning, 50 of the beds are operational.
- HHS has placed 415 Public Health Service officers on stand-by for deployment to support medical response in the affected states.
- The HHS Secretary's Operations Center mobile command post is en route to Baton Rouge and should arrive today. This bus provides office space along with computer and communications support for the HHS Secretary's Emergency Response Team (SERT).
- HHS is using the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) to identify available hospital beds, and working with DOD, Veteran's Administration, and others to move patients to these facilities. At last count, there were 2,600 beds available in a 12 state area around the affected area. Nationwide, the NDMS has identified 40,000 available beds in participating hospitals.
- Louisiana state officials have received 27 pallets of requested medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). These pallets include basic first aid material (such as bandages, pads, ice packs, etc), blankets and patient clothing, suture kits, sterile gloves, stethoscopes, blood pressure measuring kits, and portable oxygen tanks. This equipment is being used to set up the mobile hospital at LSU in Baton Rouge.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) experts are now working with Louisiana state officials to implement a mosquito abatement program.

Coast Guard

- The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) worked through the night and has rescued or assisted more than 1,250 people.
- Secretary Chertoff has authorized the recall to active duty of 550 Coast Guard Reservists to support response and recovery activities.
- USCG ships, boats, and aircraft continue to support FEMA and state and local authorities with rescue and recovery efforts. USCG has also activated three national strike teams to help in removal of hazardous materials; ships and boats continue to support the national relief efforts.

National Guard

- The National Guard of the four most heavily impacted states is providing support to civil authorities. Guard units are also providing generators, medical assistance and shelters. Currently, more than 31,500 members from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida are engaged and providing assistance.
- The National Guard is augmenting civilian law enforcement capacity, not acting in lieu of it.

Department of Defense

As directed by the Secretary of Defense and in accordance with the National Response Plan, U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) is supporting the FEMA disaster relief efforts. NORTHCOM, the lead Department of Defense (DOD) organization for Hurricane Katrina response, is moving and/or mobilizing the following resources to support FEMA's response and recovery efforts:

- NORTHCOM established Joint Task Force (JTF) Katrina to act as the military's on-scene command in support of FEMA. Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, Commander of the First Army in Fort Gillem, Ga., is the JTF-Commander. JTF Katrina will be based out of Camp Shelby, Miss.
- U.S. Transportation Command is flying eight swift water rescue teams from California to Lafayette, La. These teams will provide approximately 14 highly trained personnel with vehicles and small rigid-hulled boats capable of rescuing stranded citizens from flooded areas.
- USS Bataan sailed to the waters off Louisiana to provide support. Currently, four helicopters from the Bataan are flying medical evacuation and search and rescue missions in Louisiana. Bataan's hospital may also be used for medical support.
- The Iwo Jima Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG) is preparing to sail from Norfolk, VA loaded with disaster response equipment. The ARG consists of four amphibious ships, and will be off the coast of Louisiana in the next five days.

The hospital ship USNS Comfort is departing Baltimore to bring medical assistance capabilities to the Gulf region, and should arrive in seven days.

Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) dispatched a team of 66 transportation experts to support state and local officials in the damage assessment of highways, railroads, airports, transit systems, ports, and pipelines. DOT is also supporting detour planning and critical transportation system repairs.

There are a number of key highways and important road bridges that have sustained significant damage, including the I-10 bridges between New Orleans and Slidell, La. I-10 is closed throughout much of Louisiana and all of Mississippi, while it is limited to one lane in each direction and around Mobile due to pump failure in one of the tunnels in Mobile. Other major highways, such as US 90, 98, and 49 in the affected areas are closed. I-59 is closed starting 20 miles south of Meridian to points further south.

Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is sending experienced emergency response personnel. To date, the Forest Service has assigned 10 management and logistical teams and seven crews of 20 people each to the affected areas and host communities. These resources are intended to assist in setting up logistics staging areas, the distribution of food products, and debris removal.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is providing food at shelters and mass feeding sites, issuing emergency food stamps, infant formula, and food packages to households in need.

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service is providing information pertaining to keeping food safe. Consumers can call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 24 hours a day at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854); for the hearing-impaired TTY 1-800-256-7072.

Department of Labor

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) continues to coordinate with the interagency community in providing support as outlined in the National Response Plan.

- Region VI has deployed its eight members Emergency Response Team to Baton Rouge to assess the situation and begin to provide technical assistance to recovery workers and utility employers engaged in power restoration. In addition, OSHA is

contacting major power companies to the areas affected to provide safety briefings to employees at power restoration staging areas in affected communities.

- OSHA is releasing public service announcements to inform workers about hazards related to restoration and cleanup.

Department of Treasury

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced special relief for taxpayers in the Presidential Disaster Areas struck by the hurricane. These taxpayers generally will have until October 31 to file tax returns and submit tax payments. The IRS will stop interest and any late filing or late payment penalties that would otherwise apply. This relief includes the September 15 due date for estimated taxes and for calendar-year corporate returns with automatic extensions.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross is providing a safe haven for nearly 46,000 evacuees in more than 230 Red Cross shelters, from the panhandle of Florida, across Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, and Texas. The Red Cross is launching the largest mobilization of resources for a single natural disaster involving thousands of trained disaster relief workers, tons of supplies, and support. The American Red Cross is asking everyone in affected areas to remain safely in shelters until local officials have deemed it safe to leave.

The Red Cross relies on donations of the American people to do its work. Citizens can help by calling 1-800-HELP-NOW (1-800-435-7669) or by making an online contribution to the Disaster Relief Fund at www.redcross.org. Because of logistical issues, the Red Cross cannot accept donations of food or clothing.

APPENDIX B

The following list includes the Federal Emergency Management Agency latest recommendations for support:

Adapted from: <http://www.fema.gov/press/2005/katrinadonations.shtm>

- [American Red Cross](#), 800-HELP-NOW (435-7669) English, 800-257-7575 Spanish
- [America's Second Harvest](#), 800-344-8070
- [Adventist Community Services](#), 800-381-7171
- [B'nai B'rith](#)
- [Catholic Charities USA](#), 800-919-9338
- [Christian Disaster Response](#), 941-956-5183 or 941-551-9554
- [Christian Reformed World Relief Committee](#), 800-848-5818
- [Church World Service](#), 800-297-1516
- [Convoy of Hope](#), 417-823-8998
- [Corporation for National and Community Service Disaster Relief Fund](#)(202) 606-6718
- [Lutheran Disaster Response](#), 800-638-3522
- [Mennonite Disaster Service](#), 717-859-2210
- [Nazarene Disaster Response](#), 888-256-5886
- [Operation Blessing](#), 800-436-6348
- [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#), 800-872-3283
- [Salvation Army](#), 800-SAL-ARMY (725-2769)
- [Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief](#), 800-462-8657, Ext. 6440
- [United Methodist Committee on Relief](#), 800-554-8583

For further information: [visit the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster \(NVOAD\).](#)