

Beth Graham

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News for Immediate Release

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PEMA Urges Residents to Report Irene-Related Damages to Local Officials

Harrisburg – Pennsylvania residents who sustained damages to their homes or businesses as a result of Hurricane Irene should report those damages to local municipal officials as soon as possible.

“It’s very important for residents to quickly file damage reports with their local governments,” said PEMA Director Glenn Cannon. “Teams of local, county, state and federal staffers are busy doing preliminary damage assessments, but it’s not possible for them to inspect every damaged property so we need the public’s help.”

Each municipality is responsible for collecting damage reports from residents and reporting them to counties for submission to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. PEMA compiles the totals and forwards 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.

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.

“Even if you have insurance and don’t anticipate asking for federal assistance, we are all part of the same team in working to give the federal government an accurate picture of the damages we sustained in this storm,” Cannon said. “Should we get a disaster declaration that includes financial aid for homeowners and renters, we’ll then issue instructions on how people can sign up for assistance.”

Governor Tom Corbett has proclaimed September as “National Preparedness Month” in Pennsylvania – a time for families to take steps to prepare for all types of emergencies.

Residents are encouraged to visit www.ReadyPA.org -- a state resource that encourages citizens to take three basic steps before an emergency or natural disaster:

- Be Informed: know what threats Pennsylvania and your community face.

- **Be Prepared:** have an emergency kit with at least three days' worth of essentials at your home, including food, one gallon of water per person per day, medications and specialized items such as baby or pet supplies. Create an emergency plan so family members know where to meet if everyone is separated when an incident occurs.
- **Be Involved:** Pennsylvanians have a long history of helping one another in times of need. Specialized training and volunteer opportunities are available so citizens can help others in their community in a disaster.

Information such as checklists for emergency kits and templates for emergency plans, as well as other information and volunteer opportunities, is available at www.ReadyPA.org or by calling 1-888-9-READYPA (1-888-973-2397).

Media contact: Cory Angell or Ruth A. Miller, 717-651-2009

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