



FEMA

# EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BULLETIN

Week of October 27, 2014

Important Dates and Deadlines:

[Unified Federal Review  
Applicant Guidance](#)  
(November 28, 2014)

[Proposed Public Assistance  
Policy on Insurance](#)  
(December 8, 2014)

## Unified Federal Review Applicant Guidance Open for Comment

FEMA, in conjunction with its interagency Steering Group, announced the public review period for the Draft Environmental and Historic Preservation Guidance for Federal Disaster Recovery Assistance Applicants. The Draft Applicant Guidance is an important step in the implementation of the Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review Process (Unified Federal Review). The Unified Federal Review was legislatively mandated in the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act. The law amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and authorizes several significant changes to the way agencies may deliver Federal disaster assistance and establishes efficiencies that will expedite the recovery process. Additional information on the Unified Federal Review is [available online](#).

The Draft Applicant Guidance will assist in navigating through and understanding Environmental and Historic Preservation compliance requirements when multiple agencies may be involved in funding or permitting a disaster recovery project. The guidance provides overview of the process for applying for federal assistance and permits. It also outlines types of information Applicants should submit to federal agencies to assist in expediting the Environmental and Historic Preservation review.

The development of the Draft Applicant Guidance has been led by the Unified Federal Review Steering Group, comprised of the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Council on Environmental Quality in coordination with its federal interagency working group. The input provided during the public review will inform the further development of the guidance.

To access the Draft Applicant Guidance and for further instructions on submitting comments, please visit the [Unified Federal Review webpage](#). **Comments can be submitted through November 28, 2014.**

## FEMA Amends Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) Program

FEMA amended the Fire Management Assistance Grant Program (FMAG) to provide grantees with additional flexibility in receiving reimbursement following a declaration. On October 24, 2014, FEMA published a [Federal Register Notice](#) formally modifying the program. These changes will become effective on November 24, 2014.

This revision to the program lengthens the extension period that can be requested by a grantee for submitting a grant application to FEMA, and extends the project worksheet submission period from the current 3-month time period to 6 months. This provides increased flexibility to applicants who may benefit from additional time to prepare the documentation necessary to support a grant application and may reduce or eliminate financial losses due to delayed invoices by third parties that exceed the maximum 3-month deadline extension. Additionally, FEMA codified the requirement that a fire or fire complex must be on public or private forest land or grassland for a state to receive a fire declaration. This requirement is mandated by section 420 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) and is FEMA's current practice.

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FEMA's Office of External Affairs provides this bulletin to highlight recent and upcoming program and policy activities and announcements.

Feedback is welcome at [fema-ea-bulletin@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:fema-ea-bulletin@fema.dhs.gov). Previous editions are available at the [FEMA library](#).

## Open Joint Field Offices

CA, HI, IA, KY, MI, MT, ND,  
NE, NM, NY, SD, TN, WA

[Learn more.](#)

## Halloween Fire Safety

While Halloween in many areas is a festive time, it does come with fire hazards. By following some simple safety tips you can ensure a safe Halloween for you and your family.

- Provide children with flashlights to carry for lighting or glow sticks.
- When choosing a costume, stay away from long trailing fabric.
- Choose costumes made out of material that won't easily ignite if it comes into contact with heat or flame.
- If your child is wearing a mask, make sure the eye holes are large enough so they can clearly see out of them.
- Keep decorations such as cornstalks, crepe paper and other flammable decorations away from all open flames and heat sources, including light bulbs, candles etc.
- Use a glow stick or battery-operated candle in a jack-o-lantern. Make sure children are supervised at all times when candles are lit.
- Remember to always have working smoke alarms.



This bulletin is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of policies that are open for public comment, nor does it describe all of the instructions or requirements necessary to submit a comment. For a complete list of instructions and deadlines please click the hyperlinks included. FEMA does not endorse any non-government organizations, entities or services.

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The change to the program also exempts project worksheets for administrative costs from the \$1,000 project worksheet minimum, enabling the agency to reimburse a project worksheet that is less than \$1,000 for administrative costs only.

In March of 2013, [FEMA published](#) a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Federal Register requesting comments on these revisions to the program. The comments received were generally supportive of the changes and FEMA made no adjustments to the program changes based on the comments.

The FMAG program is authorized by section 420 of the Stafford Act. For more information on FMAGs, visit [www.fema.gov/fire-management-assistance-grant-program](http://www.fema.gov/fire-management-assistance-grant-program).

### Tribal Pocket Guide Now Available

FEMA's Tribal Affairs Branch released a new tool to better explain FEMA policies and programs to federally recognized tribes. The document, *FEMA and Tribal Nations: A Pocket Guide*, provides FEMA's tribal partners readily accessible information about the agency. The pocket guide explains FEMA's policies on tribal engagement, outlines key FEMA programs and how they relate to tribes, and provides contact information on how to reach the agency's tribal liaisons.

Developed in coordination with national tribal organizations, the pocket guide was released this week at the 2014 National Congress of American Indians' Annual Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. To obtain a hardcopy of the pocket guide, please contact a [Regional Tribal Liaison](#) or email [FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov).

### Cell Phones Can Alert Individuals to Severe Weather

In the fall, severe weather such as tornadoes and flash flooding can occur without warning. FEMA reminds the public to be aware of severe weather conditions in the area and know how to prepare for the unexpected. When severe weather occurs, imminent threat weather alerts can be sent directly to cell phones to give users a critical window of time to follow directions and to find safety.

These imminent threat weather alerts are just one type of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) that are sent directly to cell phones. The National Weather Service Forecast Offices send imminent threat weather alerts for severe weather warnings for tornadoes, flash floods, extreme wind, tsunami, hurricane, typhoon and dust storms. Local public safety officials may also send WEAs to cell phones for a wide range of emergency warnings.

Cell phones capable of receiving WEAs grab attention with a unique tone and vibration designed to alert individuals to an imminent threat in the area. All that is needed is a wireless device that receives the 90-character WEA messages. No signups are necessary to receive the free WEA alerts. WEAs are sent from cell towers in a warning area and resemble text messages. However, unlike text messages, WEAs use one-way cell broadcast technology that ensures the alerts will not get backlogged during times of emergency when networks are highly congested. The WEA is a "heads-up" that there is dangerous weather in the area. Local radio and TV sources can provide detailed warning information about the threat.

The availability of WEA alerts will depend on wireless carrier's network availability and if individuals have a handset that can receive WEAs. To determine if a wireless device can receive WEA alerts, contact the appropriate wireless carrier for more information or [check online](#). For a list of public safety agencies using WEA, visit [www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system-authorities](http://www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system-authorities). State AMBER Coordinators in coordination with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children can also send WEAs for missing children and if ever an extreme national emergency were to occur, a presidential WEA could be sent to wireless devices.

States and counties interested in becoming alerting authorities can go to [www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system-authorities](http://www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system-authorities) for more information. Toolkits and other resources are also [available online](#).

### REMINDER: Proposed Public Assistance Policy on Insurance Open for Comment

FEMA seeks public comments from state, tribal, territorial and local governments, private non-profit organizations, and interested members of the public regarding its proposed Public Assistance policy on insurance. Comments must be submitted through the process outlined in the [Federal Register Notice](#) and are due on **December 8, 2014**.

The mission of the Office of External Affairs (OEA) is to engage, inform, and educate all of FEMA's stakeholders in support of the Agency's programs and initiatives to achieve its mission. OEA accomplishes its mission by coordinating and maintaining visibility of public and internal communications; advising FEMA program and support offices on decision-making regarding policies, plans, and actions that affect stakeholder, media, and Congressional audiences; and organizing outreach efforts targeted at principal stakeholders to include local, state, territorial, and tribal governments, the private sector, national organizations and associations, and the American public.

