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**STATE OF VERMONT**  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

# DISASTER ASSISTANCE INFORMATION

September 2, 1011

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Dear Folks,

In an effort to keep you informed with the latest information and updates regarding state and federal resources we are providing the following. If there are other issues or matters that you feel need to be addressed please contact us. Information is continuously changing due to the enormity of this event; therefore, if you find incorrect data please notify us immediately.

The resourcefulness and community mindedness of Vermonters will serve as the cornerstone for surviving this disaster. As Calvin Coolidge once said; "Vermont is a brave little state!" Our best to all.

John F. Campbell  
President Pro-Tempore  
Vermont State Senate

Shap Smith  
Speaker of the House  
Vermont House of Representatives

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## STATE RESOURCES

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### **Reporting Damages**

Vermonters who have property affected by the storm should report it to the state. There are several phone lines in addition to the 211 number now in operation. Please note that it is critical to acquiring recovery aid that a statewide inventory of the damage is taken. Also, if repairs are made by a property owner, it is important to take pictures of the damage, document the repairs and keep receipts for potential assistance.

**Individuals:** Individuals reporting property damage should call 211. If calling from an out of state number, dial 866-652-4636 (NEW).

**Businesses:** Businesses should call the Agency of Commerce and Community Development at (ACCD) at 828-3211 to report damage which will be collated for VEM and FEMA. ACCD will also make referrals for financing and technical assistance. The

information needed when businesses make the call is: name of business, location (complete address), description of damage, point of contact, date damage occurred. There are additional questions for historic properties.

Check out ACCD's website for more resources for businesses (NEW):

<http://www.dca.state.vt.us/>

**Housing:** ACCD is also collecting information on mobile home parks and rental housing damaged by the storm. Owners, including housing agencies, should call the Agency at 802-828-3211 to report damages.

**Farms:** To report damages to property including but not limited to barns, milking parlors, crops, fields, equipment, etc., call:

- Your county USDA Farm Service Agency (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>) OR;
- Your county Natural Resources Conservation Services office (<http://www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/index.html>).

Organizations such as the Vermont Farm Bureau (802-434-5646) or NOFA Vermont (802-434-4122) can also be called. These organizations will send a summary of the information to the Agency of Agriculture which will forward it to VEM.

Farmers experiencing loss of crops due to flooding should contact their crop insurance agent as well as the USDA Farm Service Agency (802-658-2803).

### **Emergency Flood Assistance Program for Businesses**

This program, administered by VEDA, is up and running. It will provide \$10 million of very low interest, no first year payment, loans to businesses which suffered losses due to flooding. Interested businesses should go to VEDA's website (<http://www.veda.org/>) for more information.

### **Tax Filing Extension**

An extension of time to file returns with a September 1 due date has been approved by Commissioner Peterson. The following documents will be accepted if they are received by the Department by September 30, 2011:

- Property Tax Adjustment Claim (HS-145 with HI-144)
- Homestead Declaration (HS-131); and
- Renter Rebate Claim (PR-141 with HI-144).

Current Use Application September 1 due date is also extended and applications with a September 30, 2011 postmark date will be accepted.

Property Tax Adjustment Claims processed in time for the September 15 transmission to towns will have the credit applied to the property tax bill. All other Property Tax Adjustment Claims received by September 30, 2011 will have the adjustment mailed directly to the homeowner.

## **State Permitting and Regulatory Requirements**

Agencies and departments throughout state government have been taking steps to ensure that state permitting and regulatory requirements don't unreasonably interfere with prompt recovery and reconstruction efforts in these extraordinary circumstances. Here are some examples:

- **Stream Alteration**

ANR has four stream alteration experts in the field and a point person available by telephone. They are working directly with Vermonters whose projects implicate stream alteration regulations to help them ensure they are managing their projects in the best way possible. In those cases, ANR is not requiring advance permitting, but is working with individuals to get the job done quickly and properly.

For any advice on stream alterations or gravel removal please see the attached list of Stream alteration engineers and their contact numbers. In addition to the engineers, the Chief of the Rivers Program, Mike Kline, can be reached at 802-793-7617 (cell).

- **Commercial Motor Vehicles Engaged In Emergency Relief Efforts**

On Monday morning Commissioner Ide exercised his authority to declare a regional emergency in support of restoration of services following the storm. His declaration means that certain federal motor safety regulations (such as restrictions on hours of operation) shall not apply to a motor carrier or driver providing direct assistance in emergency relief during the regional emergency.

- **Gravel Extraction**

Given the urgent need for gravel in connection with road and other reconstruction projects, on a case-by-case basis, provided the District Coordinator is contacted in advance, the Natural Resources Board is exercising its discretion to not enforce Act 250 requirements in connection with certain gravel extractions by responsible parties who comply with District Coordinator guidance in connection with that extraction. Here are the Act 250 District Commission contacts:  
<http://www.nrb.state.vt.us/lup/publications/nrb1.pdf>.

- **Utility Reconstruction**

Pursuant to his statutory authority, the Governor has already granted one waiver of the requirement of a Certificate of Public Good prior to commencing construction and site preparation for electric facilities. As necessary to ensure rapid restoration of reliable power throughout the state, in appropriate cases the Governor stands ready to issue additional waivers.

- **Occupancy Permits**

The Vermont Division of Fire Safety will give top priority to requests for occupancy permits by businesses forced to relocate due to destruction associated with Tropical Storm Irene. In the meantime, Division of Fire Safety personnel are on the ground coordinating closely with Vermont Emergency Management to

rapidly inspect damaged buildings, identify safety hazards, and keep the recovery process moving forward.

- **Electrical Permits**

The Vermont Division of Fire Safety is waiving permitting fees for electrical and energizing permits associated with storm recovery efforts, and is expediting applications for such permits.

### **Consumer Protection Information**

The office of the Attorney General has a number of helpful resources including guides to avoiding charitable and home improvement fraud. To identify and report fraud or suspicious activity please call 1-800-649-2424 or visit:

<http://www.uvm.edu/consumer/?Page=complaintform.html>

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## **FEDERAL RESOURCES**

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### **FEMA Aid**

In this section you will find information about what qualifies for FEMA Public Assistance and Individual Assistance and how to apply. Please note that calling 211 (and related numbers) is not the same as applying for FEMA Aid. Those counties who have not had the declaration made yet should continue to report damages to 211. Those counties that have been approved for FEMA aid should follow the process outlined below and in the attached documents.

**For more information, visit <http://www.fema.gov/>**

### **FEMA Public Assistance**

**Counties Granted Public Assistance:** Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Rutland, Washington, Windham, and Windsor

**What is Public Assistance:** Public Assistance is oriented to public entities and can fund the repair, restoration, reconstruction, or replacement of a public facility or infrastructure, which is damaged or destroyed by a disaster.

**How to Apply:** A request for Public Assistance must be filed with the State within 30 days after the area is designated eligible for assistance. Following the Applicant's Briefing, a Kickoff Meeting is conducted where damages will be discussed, needs assessed, and a plan of action put in place. A combined Federal/State/local team proceeds with Project Formulation, which is the process of documenting the eligible facility, the eligible work, and the eligible cost for fixing the damages to every public or PNP facility identified by State or local representatives. The team prepares a Project Worksheet (PW) for each project.

**\*For details about the public assistance program, including a guide on the application process visit: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/index.shtm>**

### **FEMA Assistance to Individuals and Households**

#### **Counties Granted Individual**

**Assistance:** Chittenden, Rutland, Washington, and Windsor

*NOTE: The assessment of damages in other counties such as Orange, Windham, and Bennington has not yet been completed. Once these effected counties have been completely assessed, and the total damage has been documented, then the Shumlin Administration will be able to apply for Individual Assistance on their behalf. In the meantime, please continue to report all Individual damage to 2-1-1 and damage to business to 828-3211.*

**What is Individual Assistance:** The Individuals and Households Program (IHP) provides financial help or direct services to those who have necessary expenses and serious needs if they are unable to meet the needs through other means. Up to \$30,200 is available in financial help (adjusted each year), although some forms of IHP assistance have limits. Flood insurance may be required. These forms of help are available: Housing Assistance (including Temporary Housing, Repair, Replacement, and Semi-Permanent or Permanent Housing Construction) and Other Needs Assistance (including personal property and other items).

#### **How to Apply:**

**Telephone:** 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY at [800-462-7585](tel:800-462-7585). Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS) can call [800-621-3362](tel:800-621-3362).

**Online:** Application can be filled out at <http://www.disasterassistance.gov/>

**Smartphone or Tablet:** Use the URL [m.fema.gov](http://m.fema.gov) in your internet browser or download FEMA's App for Android phones:  
[market.android.com/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android](http://market.android.com/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android)

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## **STORM RECOVERY INFORMATION RESOURCES**

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**Vermont Emergency Management Website and Facebook Page:** This site includes the latest updates and helpful information: <http://vem.vermont.gov>.

If you “like” VEM on Facebook you will be given automatic updates on your Facebook homepage as their status changes. Includes great links to press releases and other information. Find it at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Vermont-Emergency-Management/142566220102>

**Governor's Office:**

Governor Shumlin's office website and Facebook page has periodic updates and resources. The website is <http://governor.vermont.gov>. For Facebook updates, you should "like" Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin. For Twitter "follow" VTGovernor. You can also call the Governor's office at 802-828-3333.

**Legislative Branch:**

President Pro Tem of the Senate: (802) 828-3806

Speaker of the House: (802) 828-2245

**Congressional Delegation:**

Sen. Leahy's Office: (800) 642-3193, <http://leahy.senate.gov>

Sen. Sanders' Office: (802) 862-0697, <http://sanders.senate.gov>

Rep. Welch's Office: (888) 605-7270, <http://welch.house.gov>

**Returning to Your Home:** For extensive information on cleaning up your home after flooding, visit: <http://vem.vermont.gov/home/return>.

**Efficiency Vermont:** This organization has standing rebate offers available for efficient refrigerators, heating systems and clothes washers and dehumidifiers for individuals that have need to replace these appliances. For more information visit: <http://www.encyvermont.com>

**Fuel Tanks:** If you find a fuel tank on your property or floating in flood waters, please contact the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association at 802-223-7750 or [info@vermontfuel.com](mailto:info@vermontfuel.com).

**Vermont Travel Information Services:** For the latest information on road closures, call 511 or visit: <http://www.511vt.com/>.

**Ride Share:** This site is designed for commuters to find car pools, but can be a valuable asset for individuals whose cars are damaged or destroyed: <http://www.connectingcommuters.org/>.