



STATE OF OHIO
Emergency Operations Center
NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FEMA-Sponsored Flights of Gulf Coast Evacuees to Ohio: Cancelled

COLUMBUS – Governor Bob Taft requested the president to declare a federal emergency for the state of Ohio on September 9. A federal declaration would allow the state to recoup costs incurred for response and recovery efforts to Hurricane Katrina. Taft declared a state of emergency for Ohio on September 8.

For the second time in a week, Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland prepared to greet and meet the immediate needs of Louisiana residents displaced from Hurricane Katrina. On September 3, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) asked if Ohio could provide long-term housing for 1,000 evacuees by Thursday, September 8. Ohio was to provide short-term housing and food and help the people register for federal assistance, long-term housing and address medical and schooling needs.

Thursday's trip was postponed. FEMA later asked if Ohio would be able to accept 500 evacuees by Saturday, September 10. Again, Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland readily accepted. By Saturday afternoon, Ohio received word from FEMA that the flights were cancelled. Not enough people were willing to be relocated to northern states.

According to American Red Cross estimates, nearly 3,400 Gulf Coast evacuees are residing with friends and families in Ohio. All people who lived in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi and who were impacted by the catastrophic destruction of Hurricane Katrina, are urged to call **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**, TTY **1-800-462-7585**, or visit online at www.fema.gov to register for federal assistance.

An update of Ohio's assistance is as follows:

HURRICANE OPHELIA

- Two Ohio EMA supervisors of the Plans Branch are in Atlanta attending an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) meeting in preparation for response and recovery efforts if Hurricane Ophelia hits landfall later this week.
- Ophelia is currently categorized as a tropical storm and is moving toward the northwest at 4 mph. The storm has the potential to re-strengthen into a hurricane during the next couple of days.
- Storm tracks show that Ophelia will continue to move in a northeast direction, passing over Cape Hatteras, NC and the Outer Banks before heading toward Nova Scotia.

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Housing and Mass Care

Shelters/reception centers are operational in Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland, offering registration for federal assistance, and addressing medical, unemployment, schooling and long-term housing issues.

- 24-hour ARC shelter in Cincinnati to provide medical assistance to hurricane evacuees at the former Linwood School, 4900 Eastern Avenue, Cincinnati.
- ARC Evacuee Application Center in Columbus. Officer access to state and local agency support services: City of Columbus Application Center, 750 Piedmont Road, Columbus. Hours of availability: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. today.
- Federal, state and local support available at the Cleveland Convention Center, Downtown Cleveland. Site will be open until 8 p.m. tonight.

EMAC Requests

The State Assessment Room continues daily operations, monitoring Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) requests for manpower and resources.

- Ohio EMA submitted three names to fill the EMAC request of three public affairs officers to work in Mississippi. Ohio is awaiting reply.
- Mississippi EMAC accepted Ohio's offer to supply four community relations professionals to the State Emergency Operations Center in Jackson, MS.
- Representatives from Lorain County EMA and the Perry Township Fire and Rescue have been deployed. Two more members of the team expect to deploy next week.
- Louisiana is requesting 20 U.S. Public Health Service veterinarians to assist with the care of large and small animals, carcass disposal and other public health related issues. Ohio Department of Health is conducting an assessment of resources. LA needs 10 veterinarians immediately, and 10 more by September 22.

National Guard Resources

- On September 8, the Ohio National Guard assembled a joint task force called "JTF Buckeye" to the Gulf Coast region to assist with defense support to civilian authorities. JTF Buckeye continues operations in Mississippi, subordinate to the Indiana Army National Guard's 38th Infantry Division.
- The 1-148th Infantry Battalion is conducting security and search and rescue missions in Orleans Parish, LA.
- 1,878 Ohio Air and Army Guard members continue to provide services in support of Hurricane Katrina relief and recovery operations.
 - 73rd Troop Command HQ (Army Guard) – to Mississippi
 - 371st Corps Support Group HQ (Army Guard) – to Mississippi
 - 269th Combat Communications Squadron (Air Guard) – to Mississippi
 - 437th Military Police Battalion (Army Guard) – to Mississippi
 - 148th Infantry Battalion (Army Guard) – to Mississippi and Louisiana
 - C-Company (Medical) 237th Forward Support Battalion (Army Guard) – to Mississippi
 - G-Company, 1-137th Aviation Battalion (Air Guard) – to Mississippi
 - 372nd Maintenance Company (Army Guard) – to Mississippi
 - 196th Public Affairs Detachment (Army Guard) – to Mississippi
 - 1-134th Field Artillery Battalion (Army Guard) – to Mississippi
 - Several Military Chaplains were deployed to Louisiana
- The 179th Tactical Airlift Wing (Air Guard) continues to transport troops, equipment and supplies.

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Donations Management

Telephone Pioneers – trained volunteer operators from the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), and Ohio EMA continue to receive calls on the toll-free donations hotline from Ohioans wanting to donate money, supplies, equipment and services to those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

- The **Donations Hotline** number is **1-888-356-6364**. Hours of operation are Mondays through Fridays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- As of 2:30 p.m. today, the Donations Hotline received 28 calls for the day. Since its availability September 7, the Telephone Pioneers have received 279 donation calls.
- The Donations Hotline plans to be operational until October 7.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources Support

- Two ODNR Division of Forestry employees have deployed to San Antonio, TX to assist a 20-person ODNR crew assigned to the U.S. Forest Service. The San Antonio operation is supporting more than 7,000 displaced people from New Orleans.
- To date, 15 U.S. Forest Service-sponsored incident management teams have been activated to support this hurricane recovery effort.
- ODNR-Division of Watercraft crew of 24 returned to Ohio on Friday, after being in Louisiana for a week of search and rescue. All staff had medical and mental health screening; all vehicles and equipment were disinfected.

Law Enforcement

- 37 of the 71 Ohio officers deployed to Mississippi and six of the 42 Ohio officers deployed to Louisiana returned back to Ohio, September 10.
- 54 officers from nine Ohio law enforcement departments have been approved for deployment to Louisiana, but are currently on hold.
- A total of 144 officers from 41 Ohio law enforcement department have registered through Ohio to assist in future Gulf Coast law enforcement operations.

Firefighting

- 50 Cincinnati firefighters have been deployed to Hattiesburg, MS for 21 days.

The Ohio Emergency Management Agency, Ohio Department of Health and Ohio State Highway Patrol continue to coordinate resource requests using the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

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