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# Disaster News

## **ONE WEEK LEFT TO REGISTER FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**OLYMPIA**— Time has almost run out for Washington residents affected by the January severe winter storm, landslides, mudslides and flooding to register for federal assistance. Residents who suffered losses have until **Tuesday, March 31, 2009**, to apply for federal and state disaster assistance.

To register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), call the toll-free number, **1-800-621-3362 (FEMA)** (TTY 1-800-462-7585). Phone lines are open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven days a week. Registration is also available online any time at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov).

**Tuesday, March 31, 2009**, is also the deadline for homeowners, renters and businesses to return completed disaster loan applications to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Being denied an SBA loan is a prerequisite for homeowners and renters to receive certain types of federal and state grants. Residents with disaster damage are urged to submit an application for an SBA loan, even if they do not want the loan.

“Too many people deny themselves extra assistance by failing to turn in an SBA loan application,” said State Coordinating Officer Kurt Hardin. “Even if a homeowner or renter does not want a loan, they should return the application. It is not necessary to take out a loan if accepted, and further assistance is impossible if they do not.”

Residents in the following designated counties are eligible to apply for disaster assistance: Benton, Cowlitz, Clallam, Grays Harbor, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston, Wahkiakum and Whatcom.

Once registered, applicants can track the status of their cases by calling the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-FEMA or at the website, [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov).

"Maybe some have not registered because they have insurance and assume they are not eligible for FEMA assistance," said Federal Coordinating Officer Willie Nunn. "It costs nothing to register, and it is the only way to find out if assistance is available."

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Nunn said there is no need to wait for an insurance settlement before registering. FEMA will not make a final determination of eligibility until all insurance claims have been settled. "That may not happen until after the registration deadline," Nunn said.

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*FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.*

*FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.*

*The Small Business Administration (SBA) is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private nonprofit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. Homeowners, renters and business owners with questions for the SBA should call the Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 (TTY 1-800-877-8339).*