

# Workers' Assistance Bulletin:

## Emergency Assistance - FEMA

Union members, their families and other workers who reside in the New York City area and who sustained losses from the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 may be eligible for emergency assistance funds through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Government disaster assistance covers basic needs and will not normally compensate you for your entire loss. If you have insurance, the government may help pay for part of the loss not covered by insurance.

If you suffered losses from the World Trade Center disaster, you may be eligible for some of the following types of aid:

- Crisis counseling to help families and victims deal with the impact of the disaster;
- Disaster unemployment assistance for those out of work as a result of the disaster, in coordination with NYS Dept. of Labor unemployment benefits;
- Emergency minimal repair assistance and temporary rental assistance;
- Mortgage and rental assistance if you are unable to make your housing payment due to a loss in income and have received written notice of foreclosure or eviction;
- Disaster Legal Services

Affected union members, their families and other workers should begin the application process by calling **1-800-462-9029**, or **1-800-462-7585** (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers now operate from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week until further notice. Spanish translation is available. For more information go to FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov>

FEMA staff will help members complete the application over the telephone. The process usually takes 30 minutes. Please have ready the following information so that your application can be taken quickly and is complete:

- A description of your losses
- The street address of your damaged property
- Your current mailing address and a telephone number where you can be reached in the event you have been forced to relocate
- Your Social Security Number
- Your household's approximate gross income at the time of the WTC disaster
- Information on the type of insurance coverage you have.

You are urged to apply as soon as possible since processing normally takes two weeks. You also may contact the New York City Central Labor Council's Labor Support Center Hotline (1-800-506-0036) for further information and referral.

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### **The Disaster Assistance Process for Property Losses**

First, if you have immediate emergency needs for food, clothing, shelter, or medical care contact one of the local offices of the American Red Cross. You can visit a local Red Cross office or call their toll-free number at **1-877-725-0400**.

If your damages are not severe and you are able to start the cleanup process on your own, please consider waiting a few days before you call FEMA. Be assured that FEMA and the other government agencies providing disaster aid will be in the NYC area for as long as it takes to meet everyone's need.

Remember that it is not necessary to delay cleanup until an inspector sees your damaged property. FEMA suggests you take pictures and save receipts in case there is any question about your damages later.

When your application is completed over the phone, FEMA staff will give you an application number, which you must use for future inquiries. You may call their **Helpline** at **1-800-525-0321** to ask about the status of their application.

If you have property damage, an inspector will call you to schedule an appointment to visit your property within a few days of application. There is NO FEE for the inspection. Inspectors are contractors; they are not FEMA employees, but they will have FEMA ID.

You must be present for your scheduled appointment. They will inspect the damage, verify ownership and occupancy, and make a report. Inspectors do not determine eligibility.

If eligible, you will receive a disaster housing check within 7-10 days. Money may be spent for rental housing or for minimal repairs to make your home livable.

**As these are issues which affect your rights, you should review these matters with your union representative and/or your individual attorney.**

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