



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, Aug. 29, 2011

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FEMA Home Inspectors Working in Four Flood-Affected Counties

PIERRE, S.D. – In an effort to help people recover from severe storms and flooding March 11 to July 22, 2011, housing inspectors from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are contacting residents in Charles Mix, Hughes, Stanley and Union counties.

People who were affected by the floods in those counties must first register with FEMA to be considered eligible for federal disaster assistance and before an inspector comes. There are four ways to register:

- By phone, call toll-free **1-800-621 FEMA (3362) 6 a.m. – 10 p.m.**
- Online, go to www.DisasterAssistance.gov
- By smartphone, go to m.FEMA.gov and click on “Apply Online for FEMA Assistance.”
- Those with a speech disability or hearing loss, who use a TTY, can call **1-800-462-7585**.

Understanding the Inspection Process

Following registration, a housing inspector will contact an applicant by phone to schedule an appointment to inspect the damaged property. These inspections are critical to the FEMA application process because they document damage. Inspectors do not determine whether an applicant is eligible for assistance or provide estimates on damage.

- An applicant should give clear, accurate directions to the damaged property, the street address and a current phone number.
- A street address is required; post office boxes do not show locations.
- An inspector will try three times to schedule a damage inspection appointment. After that, unnecessary delays may occur.
- Renters must show proof of occupancy such as a utility bill or landlord statement.
- Owners must show proof of ownership and occupancy.
- Damage inspection is free.

It is critical that FEMA has current contact information and accurate directions so inspectors can reach each eligible applicant. If a homeowner is unable to return for the mandatory damage inspection, they may authorize an agent to be present.

Be Alert for Disaster Fraud

FEMA inspectors carry official photo identification and residents should ask to see their photo identification badge. Please contact the local police if money is requested for an inspection, or you believe someone is misrepresenting themselves as an inspector.

- Identification includes the person's name and photo. The badge will say "**Under Contract to FEMA.**"
- Official inspectors will never ask for money or use a vehicle bearing a FEMA logo.