



EPA Ready to Support FEMA, State Efforts on Hurricane Laura

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DALLAS - (Aug 26, 2020) EPA has an organized emergency response program for responding to man-made and natural disasters and is positioned to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), state, local, and tribal partners in response to Hurricane Laura.

EPA headquarters emergency operations center is monitoring the storm closely and making preparations to activate in order to support states and regions affected by the storm.

EPA's Region 6 headquarters office in Dallas is taking action to ensure that Superfund sites are secured in advance of the storm, to assist public drinking water system rapid assessments, and to seamlessly integrate emergency response activities with Texas, Louisiana, and other federal response agencies.

EPA supports hurricane preparedness and response in a number of ways, including:

- **Addressing Fuel Shortages:** The Clean Air Act allows EPA Administrator Wheeler, in consultation with Energy Secretary Brouillette, to waive certain fuel requirements to address shortages that occur as a result of the storm. If Administrator Wheeler determines that extreme and unusual fuel supply circumstances exist in a state or region as a result of the hurricane, a temporary waiver can help ensure an adequate supply of gasoline is available in the affected area, particularly for emergency vehicles. EPA has an experienced team standing by to expedite handling of any fuel waiver requests by the states.
- **Monitoring Public Water Systems:** Water systems can be severely impacted during hurricanes due to storm surge, flooding, or loss of power. Both Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and Louisiana Department of Health have uploaded their potentially impacted systems into EPA's tracking system, which enables planning for rapid assessments to restore water systems after the storm passes and flood waters recede. Following the storm, if requested, EPA can assist the states with conducting damage assessments of both drinking water and wastewater systems to identify impacts to critical assets and assist in the recovery.
- **Securing Superfund Sites:** EPA assesses conditions at the National Priorities List (NPL) Superfund sites in the storm's pathway, and tasks each Superfund NPL remedial site manager to assess conditions and make on-site preparations for high winds and heavy rainfall. Following the storm and receding floodwaters, EPA conducts rapid assessments to identify damage at sites and initiate cleanup plans if necessary. Any on-site activities at sites located in the storm's path are ceased until the all-clear is given and on-site equipment is secured. In addition, freeboard for lagoons or ponds is increased to accommodate forecasted rainfall if possible. After a hurricane makes landfall and any flooding recedes, EPA remedial managers will conduct assessments of each Superfund NPL site to ensure no damage has occurred.
- **Assessing Conditions at Major Industrial Facilities:** EPA assesses conditions at the major industrial facilities in the storm's pathway to identify potential impacts and countermeasures. Following the storm and receding floodwaters, spills and releases are reported to the National Response Center. NRC notifies US Coast Guard or EPA based on preapproved jurisdiction boundaries. EPA conducts follow up inspections and damage assessments in response to reports within EPA jurisdiction.

For additional information on EPA's fuel waivers, please visit: www.epa.gov/enforcement/fuel-waivers.

EPA's central hub for disaster and hurricane information is available at <https://www.epa.gov/hurricanes>.

For information on EPA's emergency response capabilities, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/emergency-response>.

For information on FEMA's hurricane preparedness guidance, please visit <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>.

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