



To: MHAction Community Leaders and Allies
From: MHAction
Re: Hurricane Preparedness and Recovery
Date: September 4, 2019

Our thoughts and prayers go out to manufactured home community residents who are preparing for and impacted by Hurricane Dorian. MHAction organizes community leaders and partners with allies to ensure manufactured home communities are affordable and thriving, including before, during, and after climate disasters. It is critical for MHAction leaders to mobilize and ensure that low and moderate-income families, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and communities of color are safe and can effectively rebuild our communities. This memo covers:

- **Preparing for the hurricane**
- **Tracking the hurricane and available evacuation and shelter resources**
- **Tips for beginning the recovery process after the hurricane**
- **Organizing strategies that lift up the needs of manufactured home residents**
- **Follow-up with MHAction**

Important note: MHAction is not a governmental agency or service provider. We are a non-profit grassroots organization. We research available resources and share useful information. We encourage you to use this memo as a reference and seek additional input and expertise, as needed.

Preparing for the hurricane

As Hurricane Dorian approaches, our partners at Compass 82 suggest communities, homeowners, and renters take the following steps to prepare:

1. **Gather:** Gather insurance policies, birth certificates, social security #s/immigration documents, car titles, deed, utility bills, family photos, irreplaceable items; if possible, place important papers in a waterproof folder/container; write down important telephone numbers
2. **Record:** Photograph your home's exterior and interior, including walls, floors, and ceilings, and your appliances; email photos to yourself as back up, if possible
3. **Prepare Your Home:** If you have time, secure outdoor objects, protect windows, secure tie-downs, put sandbags in doorways
4. **Protect Yourself:** Make sure you have photo ID & cash, if possible; bring medications, sufficient water, food, and pet supplies with you; fill up on gasoline; bring a battery-operated radio & spare batteries

Tracking the hurricane, evacuation, and shelter resources

- In Florida, you can find updated information on the hurricane, evacuation orders, and open shelters here: <https://www.floridadisaster.org/info>
- In South Carolina, you can find updated information on the hurricane, evacuation orders, and open shelters here: <https://scemd.org/>
- In North Carolina, you can find updated information on the hurricane, evacuation orders, and open shelters here: <https://www.ncdps.gov/dorian2019> or by calling [888-892-1162](tel:888-892-1162)
- In Georgia, you can find updated information on the hurricane, evacuation orders, and open shelters here: <https://gema.georgia.gov/emergencies-0/hurricane-dorian>
- If you or someone with you is in need of emergency medical assistance, call 911.

Tips for beginning the recovery process after the hurricane

- **Feeling foggy:** Many people experience a mental fog after a disaster. This may include exhaustion, lost memory, indecisiveness, high blood pressure, or other signs. Traumatic events take a toll on our communities and our families. Write everything down in case you can't remember details and ask friends, family, and neighbors for help making recovery decisions. Remember to take care of yourself and seek out crisis counseling, if needed.
- **Documenting damage:** After the storm, if it is safe to return to your home, document as much as possible with photos – your street, outside of your home, all of your walls and floors, watermarks inside and outside your home, your appliances and their serial number, any personal items that you are throwing away because they are damaged.
- **Accessing FEMA assistance:** FEMA provides the first set of recovery programs after a disaster. They are intended to assist with basic, necessary expenses and needs. These can include short-term housing and repairs to or replacement of your home as well as resources for food, medical care, child care, transportation, storage, and other costs. The assistance FEMA can provide is described here: <https://www.fema.gov/individual-disaster-assistance>
 - o **To be eligible for FEMA individual assistance:**
 - your home must be in a Presidentially-declared disaster area,
 - you or a member of your household must be a U.S. citizen or have eligible immigration status, and
 - you must have expenses or serious needs caused by the disaster that are not fully covered by insurance.
 - o **To apply for disaster recovery assistance:**
 - Go to www.DisasterAssistance.gov
 - Go to the “Get Assistance” tab at the top of the page, click “Find Assistance,” and answer the questions. You will get a list of programs you can apply for.
 - Click “Apply Online” to complete a FEMA application.
 - To fill out the forms, you will need your/your family member’s social security #, insurance information (if any), information about the damage, your household income, and your contact information
 - Keep copies of information you submit to FEMA and write down the names and numbers of staff with whom you speak so you can follow up.
- **Getting help applying for assistance:** You can call FEMA for assistance with the application process at 1-800-621-3362 (TTY 1-800-462-7585). Also, HUD Housing Counseling Agencies can assist you in assessing your needs, determining your eligibility for recovery programs, and navigating the process of applying. You can find a Housing Counseling Agency near you here: <https://apps.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm>

Organizing strategies that lift up the needs of manufactured home residents

MHAction builds campaigns to ensure a just recovery for our communities. Over the past two years, survivors of Hurricane Irma have been working with tenants’ groups and others to advocate for improvements to Florida’s hurricane recovery programs to ensure that they serve manufactured homeowners, low-income renters, and all disadvantaged communities. Some progress has been made, but, with a stronger movement, we can fight for a just recovery for all.

We need to continue to build campaigns that:

- Strengthen FEMA programs as well as state recovery programs (which are funded by HUD and will be launched after FEMA assistance is provided) so they can serve families and seniors more quickly and do not unfairly bar assistance to those in need;
- Provide low-income homeowners access to affordable flood insurance;
- Hold community owners accountable to provide safe, secure options for evacuation, sheltering in place, and returning and access to safe water and utilities upon return;
- Stop rent increases after hurricanes and stop collection of rent when our communities or homes are uninhabitable.

Follow-up with MHAction

MHAction will continue to seek out information and advice from homeowners, stakeholders, and policy advocates to share with our network. If you have any comments, questions, or tips, please do not hesitate to contact MHAction at evoigt@mhaction.org. Please title your email ‘Hurricane Recovery.’

