



Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Emergency Response Efforts

Fact Sheet

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services plays a significant role in preparing for and responding to natural disasters, especially during hurricane season. The Department's efforts can be categorized into three roles: providing overall support for emergency response, providing necessary food and water supplies and supporting protection of animals and pets in the event of an emergency.

Overall Support for Emergency Response

The Department's Division of Forestry (Forestry) is made up of a vast network of willing personnel and strong equipment that respond to wildfires throughout the state. These capabilities enable Forestry to support 11 of the state's 17 preparation and response functions, known as Emergency Support Functions (ESF). Forestry plays an essential role in ensuring Floridians are safe and that they receive the necessary supplies during and immediately following adverse weather. Specifically, Forestry supports emergency response in the following ways:

- Maps, organizes and provides logistical support during search and rescue missions of missing or injured persons
- Manages logistical staging areas where supply trucks register, report inventory and receive assignments. Staging areas also serve as a base camp where emergency responders can eat and rest
- Aids vehicles distributing necessary supplies that cannot make it through hazardous areas to reach their destinations by using Forestry equipment to pull specialty trucking items through or by diverting trucks to a route with less challenging terrain
- Helps to rebuild areas that were the most devastated by the impact of a hurricane. Efforts include aerial drops of supplies, restoration of electricity, removal of debris and clearing of roads for search and rescue teams

Necessary Food and Water Supplies

The Department is the lead agency for ESF 11 and is responsible for identifying and distributing food and water in the event of a hurricane or other emergency. Specifically, the Department:

- Identifies food, water and ice needs in anticipation of and in the aftermath of a disaster or emergency
- Obtains foods provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and purchases food from other commercial vendors
- Coordinates with agencies of ESF 6 (Mass Care), such as the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army, to ensure delivery of food and water supplies to disaster survivors

Protection of Animals

The Department is the primary agency for ESF 17 and is responsible for coordinating the state's protection of animals in case of an emergency or disaster situation. During an activation response, the Department will:

- Prioritize and respond to requests for assistance in the protection of animals and pets
- Provide assistance to producers for animal needs in impacted areas
- Assist in damage assessment

The Department coordinates with both government and non-governmental entities under the State Agricultural Response Team (SART). SART includes a wide-ranging host of private organizations that work with the Department in preparing for and responding to hurricanes and other natural disasters.

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