



Disaster News

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Disaster Recovery Centers to Open in Riverside and Kern Counties

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) announced that Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) will open in Riverside and Kern Counties on Thursday March 24, 2005, to serve residents who suffered damages during the severe storms of December 27, 2004 – January 11, 2005.

The Riverside DRC will open March 24 through close of business April 2, 2005 and will only operate on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The Kern DRC will open Thursday, March 24 through close of business on March 30, 2005.

The only way disaster victims can register for assistance is by calling **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**. The TTY number is **1-800-462-7585** for those who are speech- or hearing-impaired.

“The only way to register is over the phone. It takes just a few minutes,” said Federal Coordinating Officer, David Fukutomi. “If residents still have questions about their application status, they can call the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-3362 or visit the DRC.”

The centers will provide people with an opportunity to meet face-to-face with recovery specialists. Representatives of state and federal, as well as loan officers from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), will be on hand to answer questions and provide recovery information. Written materials about various assistance programs are also available to individuals and business owners.

At the request of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, FEMA added six counties to the disaster declaration on March 16, after reviewing additional disaster assessments provided by the state. Residents and business owners in Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties may be eligible for disaster assistance if they suffered damages and losses as a result of the storms of December 27 – January 11.

Riverside County DRC

Alessandro Valley Gym
23301 Dracaea Ave.
Moreno Valley, CA
Thurs and Fri, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sat. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Kern County DRC

Community Services District Office
3179 35TH Street
Rosamond, CA
Mon. through Fri., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sat. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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OES coordinates overall state agency response to major disasters in support of local government. The office is responsible for ensuring California's readiness to respond to and recover from natural, manmade and war-caused emergencies and for assisting local governments in their emergency preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery efforts.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available to any individual without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, economic status, or disability. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against in receiving disaster assistance, you may contact one of FEMA's Equal Rights Officers (EROS) at 1-800-525-0321, or contact your State Office of Equal Right.