

Free Home Cleanup Available For Flood Damage, Call 2-1-1 Volunteers lend a hand

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PISCATAWAY, N.J. -- Volunteers are on hand to help New Jersey residents clean their flood damaged homes after the April nor'easter storm. Residents in need of assistance should call 2-1-1 to request a free home cleanup. Priority is being given to the elderly, disabled and others who have circumstances that make cleanup difficult, but all who need assistance with flood cleanup are encouraged to call.

The cleanup is being conducted by volunteers from national agencies, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, Mennonite Disaster Services, Tzu-Chi Foundation and the Christian Reform World Relief Committee. These national agencies are working in affiliation at the local level with the Salvation Army, United Way and Catholic Charities.

The toll-free 211 number is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The 211 operators have valuable information on community programs and services available including housing assistance, counseling services, employment opportunities and health services.

"We want to encourage New Jersey residents to take advantage of the 211 Program when looking for assistance," said Lt. George Georgeles, state coordinating officer for disaster recovery. "It is a valuable resource that unites those who want to help with those who most need assistance."

All residents affected by the April storms and flooding are urged to register with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585 for the speech and hearing impaired. New Jersey residents may also register online at www.fema.gov.

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

FEMA and NJOEM work together to coordinate the federal and state governments' roles in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

(This version corrects "Southern Baptist Church" to read "Southern Baptist Convention" on 05/08/07.)