

KYEM and FEMA to Conduct Joint Damage Assessments

After back-to-back winter storms crippled Kentucky last month and again in early March, Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM) officials said the damages are severe enough to warrant a joint assessment with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to determine if the Commonwealth will qualify for federal aid under the Public Assistance Program.

“Our Kentucky Emergency Management team has been working alongside local officials in these affected counties since the first storm hit last month and we fully understand the impact of these events. We’re confident FEMA will agree that these severely damaged local governments will qualify for federal assistance to help recover from these storms,” said director of KYEM, Michael Dossett.

Beginning Feb. 16, Kentucky experienced the first major winter storm of the season. Along with significant snowfall, the state received record bitter cold Arctic air. In Madison County the air temperature fell to -34 and numerous local cold temperature records were broken across the state. These bitter temperatures, along with debris from swollen waterways, caused water systems throughout 18 counties in Eastern Kentucky to be out of service for several days, prompting Governor Steve Beshear to declare a State of Emergency. Meanwhile KYEM, working along with local government and the Kentucky National Guard, initiated a water supply operation which distributed over 400,000 gallons of bottled water to impacted communities.

Following on the heels of the Feb. storm, Kentucky experienced historic snowfalls beginning March 4. In Hardin County as much as 25 inches of snow fell in a 24-hour period. Much of Kentucky experienced major snow accumulations. The amount of snow and the speed which it accumulated basically brought travel to a stop until highway road crews could catch up with the conditions.

At the request of KYEM, FEMA will be sending personnel to Kentucky to begin joint assessments with members from KYEM, state agencies, and local government officials to survey damages and review storm-related expense documentation. Inspections are expected to begin March 30 and conclude by April 10.

Although the purpose of the assessments will be to determine if Public Assistance might be available to local governments, emergency management officials urge citizens who have suffered private property damage to photograph the damage, save any repair receipts, and report damages and unmet needs to their local county emergency director and insurance provider.

The FEMA Public Assistance Program provides recovery assistance to State agencies, local governments, and certain private nonprofit organizations.

Additional information on the declaration process can be found at www.fema.gov and also on the KYEM web site at www.kyem.ky.gov where you can also follow KYEMPIO on Twitter and 'like' us on Facebook.

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