



FEMA

Press Release

Date: July 24, 2008
No.: HQ-08-145
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FEMA PROPOSED SNOW ASSISTANCE AND SEVERE WINTER STORM POLICY RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) today released a proposed Snow Assistance and Severe Winter Storm policy for a 30-day public comment period. Under the new policy, FEMA would evaluate declaration requests under the criteria for a major disaster declaration, not an emergency declaration, which would align FEMA's snow policy with its authorizing statute, the Stafford Act. The proposed policy maintains the present criteria that a county experience a record, or near-record, snowfall, but would change the methodology used by FEMA to determine whether a snowfall qualifies as a record or near-record snowfall. Under the proposed policy, FEMA would compare the highest National Weather Service historical record in a county (rather than the lowest as currently used) to the NWS station with the highest current event snowfall within a county to determine if the snowfall event exceeds or is near a true record for a county. The proposed policy would also require that the state meet the criteria for a major disaster declaration.

As part of the request for a major disaster declaration, a governor must take appropriate action under state law and direct execution of the state's emergency plan. The governor must also furnish information on the nature and amount of state and local resources that have been, or will be committed to responding to the disaster, provide an estimate of the amount and severity of damage and the impact on the private and public sector, and provide an estimate of the type and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act. In addition, the governor will need to certify that, for the current disaster, state and local government obligations and expenditures will comply with all applicable cost-sharing requirements.

The proposed policy would be used by FEMA for its consideration in making recommendations to the president. It does not bind the ability of the president, in his discretion, to declare an emergency or major disaster in response to the given event.

The 30-day comment period provides interested parties with the opportunity to provide feedback on the document. Individuals who wish to submit comments can do so by submitting them to Docket ID FEMA-2005-0005 at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role 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.

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