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SITUATIONAL AWARENESS UPDATE

COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
69 West Washington - Suite 2630 Chicago, IL 60602 V. 312.603.8180

Toni Preckwinkle, *President - Cook County Board of Commissioners*
Michael G. Masters, *Executive Director*

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Please report relevant information and direct all media inquiries to the DHSEM DUTYDESK via e-mail: DUTY.DESK@cookcountyil.gov or phone: (312) 603 – 8180 or (312) 603-8185.

Fraud Awareness & DSATs

Illinoisans should remain vigilant about protecting their personal information and be alert for potential disaster fraud.

- Federal and state officials always have ID clearly visible. If someone represents himself/herself as a federal or state employee, but does not produce identification, ask to see it.
- FEMA does not charge for information that it gives out.
- Anyone with knowledge of fraud, waste or abuse may call the FEMA Fraud Hotline at 1-800-323-8603 or contact state or local law enforcement officials.

FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams (DSATs) are visiting homes and high-traffic locations throughout affected communities in Illinois to distribute information about disaster assistance and provide an opportunity for residents to register.

- DSAT members will offer residents the opportunity to use a tablet computer to register, or ask to enter an application on their behalf.
- Survivors will have to share personal information if a DSAT member registers on their behalf. They should ask for federal identification before providing personal information.
- If survivors prefer to use personal computers or phones to register, DSAT members will provide the steps to do so: call 800-621-3362 (TTY 800-462-7585), visit disasterassistance.gov or use a mobile device at m.fema.gov.

Disaster Assistance 101

The major federal disaster declaration, signed by President Obama on May 10, offers Individual Assistance in the counties of Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Fulton, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, McHenry and Will.

- As Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments continue in other parts of the state, additional counties may be included at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of the assessments.

If your home was damaged as a result of the recent storms and flooding, and you live in a designated county, you can apply for FEMA assistance.

- Call the toll-free number 1-800-621-FEMA (3362), TTY 1-800-462-7585, or register online at www.disasterassistance.gov.
- If you have not taken this step, you are likely NOT registered for FEMA assistance. If you're unsure, call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) and a representative can assist you.
- Disaster Recovery Centers are being opened in areas affected by the disaster where you can register and speak one-on-one with a FEMA representative about your case. Refer to your local news for locations once they are open, or visit www.fema.gov.

When you register, be prepared to provide the following information:

- Social Security number
- Daytime telephone number where we can call you back
- Current mailing address and address and zip code of the damaged property
- Your insurance information, if available

You will be given an application number which will help locate your file in the system. Write this number down and keep it secure for future reference.

In most cases, a FEMA inspector will call you within a few days of registering to arrange a visit to your damaged home or apartment.

- The FEMA inspector will come and look at disaster-related damages for FEMA's Individuals and Households Program.
- A FEMA inspector will ALWAYS have an official badge visible during the inspection. Ask to see the badge before allowing him/her to enter your home.
- You will be asked to sign a document saying that you were lawfully present in the United States at the time of the disaster. Proof of ownership or occupancy also is required.

If you qualify for FEMA assistance, you will receive a federal government check or the funds will be directly deposited into your designated bank account. A separate letter also will be sent to you explaining how you may use the funds.

- The grant funds may be used for rental assistance if your home or apartment is uninhabitable because of the disaster.

- Homeowners may use FEMA housing repair grants for essential repairs to make your residence safe and sanitary. These grants are for repairs necessary to make primary rooms functional.
- Residents may also receive assistance for eligible disaster-related medical, dental or funeral expenses.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) may send you a loan application after you call to apply. It is very important to complete the forms and return them to the SBA.

- SBA offers low-interest loans to help homeowners, renters and business owners after a disaster.
- An applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for FEMA assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

If you have questions:

- About FEMA assistance, call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362); you can also visit www.disasterassistance.gov or www.fema.gov.
- About the SBA loan application, contact the toll-free SBA helpline at 1-800-659-2955.

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