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State News Desk: 916-845-8434
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News Release

Disaster Legal Services Available to California Residents After the Recent Storms and Flooding

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Homeowners and renters in disaster-designated counties affected by the recent severe winter storms and flooding may now have access to free legal advice for disaster-related legal issues. Residents can call a Disaster Legal Service hotline at **888-382-3406** or go to <http://freelegalanswers.org>.

Callers may be asked to leave a message and a specialist will get back to them as soon as possible. Callers should identify their storm-related issue and the county where their storm-damaged property is located.

Some of the issues the legal service can provide help with include:

- Insurance claims for medical bills, loss of property, and loss of life.
- New wills, powers of attorney, and other legal papers lost during the disaster.
- Home repair contracts and contractors.
- Problems with landlords.
- Proof of home ownership.
- FEMA appeals.

The hotline is run by the Disaster Legal Assistance Collaborative, a coalition of nonprofits, legal aid organizations, government entities and law firms in California working together to offer free legal services to communities in the aftermath of natural disasters.

FEMA provides funding to the collaborative but the attorneys are not FEMA employees. The services they provide are confidential and they do not share information with FEMA.

For the latest information on California's recovery from the severe winter storms, flooding, landslides and mudslides, visit [FEMA.gov/disaster/4699](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4699). You may also follow twitter.com/Cal_OES, facebook.com/CaliforniaOES, [@FEMARegion9/Twitter](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion9) and [Facebook.com/FEMA](https://facebook.com/FEMA).

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, limited English proficiency or economic status. If you believe your civil rights are being violated, call the Civil Rights Resource Line at 833-285-7448.

Recently, U.S. SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman [announced a policy change](#) **granting 12 months of no payments and 0% interest**. This pertains to all disaster loans approved in response to disasters declared on or after September 21, 2022, through September 30, 2023. This policy change will benefit disaster survivors and help them to decrease the overall cost of recovery by reducing the amount of accrued interest they must repay.

The U.S. Small Business Administration is the federal government's primary source of funds for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private, nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters, fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 711 to access telecommunications relay services.