

Gov. Walker: Walker's administration coordinating with Wisconsin communities in response to severe weather

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Wisconsin communities in response to severe weather**

MADISON – Governor Scott Walker’s Administration is coordinating with local governments, emergency managers, various organizations, and volunteers to make resources available to help those affected by the severe weather, heavy rains, and flooding that is impacting communities across Wisconsin. On August 29, 2018, Governor Walker declared a statewide state of emergency and directed all state agencies to assist as appropriate in the response and recovery efforts.

“We thank all the individuals and organizations who have come together to provide the necessary tools and resources to help all Wisconsinites affected by the recent storms, flooding, tornadoes and other severe weather,” Governor Walker said. “We will continue to make as many resources available as possible while we continue to monitor weather activities in the days ahead.”

This week, downpours hit Southwest, West Central, and Northeast Wisconsin, with up to 6 inches falling in some areas on Tuesday and rain continuing into Wednesday. Heavy rains fell across a large portion of the state bringing strong winds and flash flooding in many areas that have already experienced flooding in recent weeks.

The following information includes an update on activities by a variety of state agencies, as well as available resources:

The **Department of Administration (DOA)** has funding available through the Community Development Block Grant Emergency Assistance Program (CDBG-EAP). The funds may be used to assist eligible, low to moderate income homeowners for housing rehabilitation, business assistance, and repair local public infrastructure. Local communities should work with the Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources (DEHCR) to apply. Please visit their [website](http://www.doa.wisconsin.gov) or call (608) 266-7531. The DOA is also notifying local governments that they may use state contracts to purchase goods and services as they recover from flooding and storm damage. A complete list of contracts available to municipal governments can be found on the State’s procurement website, [VendorNet](http://VendorNet.wisconsin.gov). Questions related to state contracts can be directed to Jim Langdon, Administrator of Enterprise Operations at james.langdon@wisconsin.gov or (608) 264-6109.

The **Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP)** will connect affected farmers for assistance and counseling through its Farm Center. The connection can be made by dialing (800) 942-2474. DATCP has a list of [flood-related resources](#) for food safety, home repairs, manure issues, flooded farmland, and animal planning. Food businesses suffering flood damage and needing assistance in determining whether the food can be salvaged should contact James Beix of the Division of Food and Recreational Safety at (608) 224-4665, James.Beix@wisconsin.gov or the food complaint emergency response line at (608) 224-4714, datcpfoodcomplaintemergencyresponse@wisconsin.gov. Major storms bring transient home improvement workers and scams to Wisconsin communities. Contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection at (800) 422-7128 or datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov to check on complaints against particular contractors. Farmers should contact their local FSA Office to report damaged crops. FSA will also direct farmers to 211 and or the Local/County Emergency Management (EM) Office to report losses not tracked by the FSA.

The **Department of Children and Families (DCF)** offers Emergency Assistance payments to eligible low-income parents who have at least one child in the house and are facing an emergency due to natural disasters, homelessness or impending homelessness, and energy crisis. This one-time payment is available every 12 months and can be used to pay for a security deposit on a new apartment, stop an eviction on a current apartment, or to pay a utility bill. To learn more about the program, including eligibility and where to apply, visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ea>.

The **Department of Financial Institutions (DFI)** has heard from some banks and credit unions and reached out to others. All reported that customers were directed to other branches and online sites if their branch was impacted or closed because of the flooding.

The **Department of Health Services (DHS)** is working with local health departments and local human services departments to provide [flood-related resources](#) and assistance as requested. One such resource is the Wisconsin Flood Toolkit, which is designed to aid local leaders in offering clear and accurate information about protecting people and property before, during, and after a flood. You can find the Wisconsin Flood Toolkit [online](#). DHS is collaborating with local health and the State Lab of Hygiene on supplying test kits for private wells to local health departments for distribution within their communities. Private well users can contact their local health department with any questions about private well testing. Current FoodShare members affected by flooding may request replacement FoodShare benefits, if they had food lost or damaged due to the recent flooding. FoodShare members are eligible for replacement of benefits in the amount of the food lost, but not more than their monthly allotment. Those living in Dane, Green, Iowa, and Rock Counties have an extended deadline of up until September 19, 2018 to request replacement of FoodShare benefits. FoodShare members affected by flooding in Adams, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Ozaukee, Sauk, Vernon, and Washington Counties have an extended deadline of up until October 1, 2018, to request replacement FoodShare benefits. FoodShare members in other counties may also be eligible for replacement benefits, but must request replacement benefits within 10 days of the date they lost their food. To request replacement benefits, members should fill out [this form](#) and submit it to their [local income maintenance agency](#). DHS will continue to monitor the ongoing weather and request appropriate waivers to ensure FoodShare members affected by the ongoing flood situation have enough time to seek replacement benefits.

The **Department of Natural Resources (DNR)** staff have been on site in various capacities all along the flood impacted area. Conservation Wardens assisted in early rescues and evacuations from flooded homes and businesses. They continue to assist local law enforcement officers when called upon with such things as traffic flow, accessing flood areas by boat and other public safety issues. Floodplain engineers, dam safety engineers, and the DNR wastewater team have been monitoring dams in the region and wastewater facilities that were threatened by the initial flooding. DNR parks crews worked around the clock to repair any damage and clean-up debris at parks and trails impacted by the storms. That work continues as some properties remain closed or partially closed. With more rain forecasted, crews will remain in the area assisting with recovery efforts, dam repairs, and providing guidance on what permits might be needed for other repairs. Information that can help you keep your family safe in a flooding emergency and minimize damage to your property can be found at: <https://dnr.wi.gov/emergency/FloodCoping.html>.

The **Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT)** is working closely with other state agencies and local units of government to provide information and services to impacted areas. Safety is the department’s highest priority. Region staff are continually monitoring the highway system and coordinating with counties and locals to close flooded roadways and provide detour information. As water recedes, inspections are conducted to determine if the roadway or structure is safe for travel. When needed, State Patrol provides aerial support units to assess and survey flood damage. Troopers are also assisting with emergency response and highway closures. With more rain in the forecast the situation changes rapidly. Motorists are advised to check 511wi.gov before traveling. Also, due to escalating weather conditions and significant adverse impacts on the state and Interstate systems it became necessary to suspend Oversize Overweight permits in some areas. Additional information can be found on 511wi.gov or wisconsin.dot.gov/Pages/dmv/com-drv-vehs/mtr-car-trkr/osowgeneral.aspx. Questions can be directed to Kristin McHugh, Office of Public Affairs, at kristin.mchugh@dot.wi.gov (608) 261.5896.

The **Department of Workforce Development (DWD)** can provide unemployment benefits to working Wisconsinites whose employer either temporarily or permanently closed due to flooding. Those impacted can file online at <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/>.

The **Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI)** released statements regarding the [recent severe storms](#) and [widespread flooding](#) in Wisconsin, and included information on flood insurance and [important tips in dealing with storm aftermath](#). For a specific complaint about your insurance, refer it first to the insurance company or agent involved. If you do not receive satisfactory answers, you may contact OCI with questions at (800) 236-8517, ocicomplaints@wisconsin.gov, or visit oci.wi.gov. If you need to file a complaint, you may file on [OCI's online complaint portal](#).

The **Public Service Commission (PSC)**, along with local utilities, are monitoring power outages across the state. As flooding conditions continue in Wisconsin, the PSC reminds citizens to avoid downed power lines and to be cautious in flooding conditions. If you have any questions or concerns about the power supply at your home or business, please contact your local utility. If you still have questions or concerns after speaking with your local utility, you may contact our consumer affairs division by calling 1-800-225-7729.

The **Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)** has developed an Economic Disaster Recovery Guidebook for civic and business leaders, local government officials and business support groups that provides numerous resources and tools that will enable local leaders to develop an economic recovery strategy for their own communities. The manual connects disaster management functions with economic principles to identify key issues and suggested actions before and after disaster. The guidebook can be [downloaded here](#).

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) continues to coordinate state resources for response and recovery efforts and is working with local and county officials to assess damages. WEM works closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Small Business Administration (SBA), and other federal agencies to provide situational awareness and to access possible disaster recovery resources. For more information on state emergency management efforts please visit <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/flooding/AUG2018.asp>.