



# FEMA

October 29, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Federal Coordinating Officers  
FEMA-1603-DR-LA/ DR-1604-MS/ DR-1607-LA

ATTENTION: Public Assistance Officers

FROM: *Thad Allen*  
Thad Allen, Vice Admiral, USCG  
Federal Coordinating Officer  
Disaster Recovery Manager

*David Garratt*  
David Garratt  
Acting Director of Recovery

SUBJECT: Disaster Specific Guidance - Hurricanes Katrina and Rita  
Eligible Costs for Re-Interring Human Remains

**PURPOSE and APPLICABILITY:** The following guidance for reimbursement of state, county and municipal governments for costs incurred, and the provision of direct federal assistance for the work described herein, applies to major disaster declarations FEMA-DR-1603-LA, FEMA-1604-DR-MS, and FEMA-1607-DR-LA.

**GUIDANCE:**

Persons deceased as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita should be identified to the fullest extent possible, and reunified with family members who have requested such assistance. Human remains disinterred as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita shall be, to the extent possible, returned to the location from which they were disinterred.

Local coroners shall be responsible for initial efforts to identify the human remains discovered in their Parishes or Counties. It is expected that local coroners will work with local cemeteries to create a list of disinterred human remains and provide that list to the appropriate State and Federal authorities. Such Parishes and Counties may seek FEMA reimbursement for the costs of additional staffing and facilities if necessary to accomplish this task.

Stafford Act assistance is available for work done to re-casket and transport human remains back to the place of disinterment. FEMA assistance is also available for reasonable re-interment costs in publicly-owned cemeteries.

FEMA may provide assistance under the Stafford Act to fund the family reunification and identification services listed below:

1. A physical location including a call center may be established to serve as a collection center for victim identification information from persons seeking information on missing or deceased family or loved ones. Such location may include reasonable and appropriate facilities necessary for providing and collecting victim identification information.

2. A regional mortuary may be established for use as a collection point and identification center for human remains of those deceased or disinterred as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

3. Assistance is available for the reasonable costs of identifying human remains disinterred as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Upon identification, Stafford Act assistance is available under the Public Assistance program for the costs of casketing, transporting remains to the location of disinterment, or last known Parish or County, and if being re-interred in a publicly-owned cemetery, reasonable costs of re-interment. Costs of re-interment in a privately owned facility are not eligible for public assistance.

4. Assistance with the costs of DNA collection and matching of samples from relatives is available only with respect to human remains that cannot be identified by other reasonable and practical methods and where family members have requested assistance with reunification and have voluntarily provided samples for matching.

Questions regarding this memorandum should be addressed to James Walke, Chief, Public Assistance Branch, Recovery Division, at 202-646-2751.

cc:

Office of the FEMA Director  
Regional Directors (Regions 4 and 6)  
Acting Director, Response Division  
Chief Financial Officer  
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Office of Intergovernmental Affairs  
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