

Get a BERT Bag!

Business Emergency Response Toolkit bags are a great way for a business to start the development of a business continuity plan. BERT bags can be picked up at any Santa Rosa County chamber of commerce free of charge, regardless of chamber affiliation, or at the division of emergency management. These bags provide great information on how to help your business, employees and clients survive a disaster.

Protect Your Home From Wind Damage

Roofs

If you are replacing your roof, take steps to ensure the new roof covering and the sheathing it attaches to will resist high winds.

Gables

Brace the end wall of a gable roof properly to resist high winds.

Garage Doors

Because of their size and construction, garage doors are highly susceptible to wind damage. Some garage doors can be strengthened with retrofit kits.

Exterior Doors and Windows

The exterior walls, doors and windows are the protective shell of your home. You can protect your home by strengthening the doors and windows.

Entry Doors

Make certain your doors have at least three hinges and a dead bolt security lock with a bolt at least one inch long. Anchor door frames securely to wall framing.

Patio Doors

Sliding glass doors are more vulnerable to wind damage than most other doors, so be sure to shutter or install impact-resistant patio doors.

If you have questions about assistance programs and what aid may be available after a disaster in our area, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency provides several methods of getting important recovery information:

- Log on to www.fema.gov. The FEMA Web site provides a wealth of information. On the home page you will see a button labeled "Recovery Information." This page includes a list of questions that are updated frequently to cover current issues and concerns. FEMA urges you to periodically check "frequently asked questions" (FAQ) for updated information.
- Call FEMA's Helpline. In addition to answering your questions, the Helpline representative can tell you the status of your application for FEMA disaster assistance. Call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). The hearing impaired may call TTY: 1-800-462-7585.
- In a declared emergency, one or more Disaster Recovery Centers or DRC's may be opened as a clearinghouse for local, state and federal disaster aid information. Monitor the local media for possible openings and site location(s).

The Disaster Assistance Process

Once an area has been Presidentially declared a disaster:

1. Apply online by visiting www.disasterassistance.gov and clicking the "Online Individual Assistance Center" link (hearing/speech impaired ONLY—call 1-800-462-7585).
2. Within about 10 days after you have applied for help, and if an inspection is required to process your application, an inspector will contact you to make an appointment to visit your property. In some cases you may be contacted the same day that you apply. The inspector will visit your property to assess the damage related to the disaster. There is no fee for the inspection. Inspectors are contractors, not FEMA employees, but your inspector will have FEMA identification. You must be present for your scheduled appointment. You must have proof of ownership and occupancy to show the inspector.
3. Within about 10 days of the inspector's visit, you will receive a letter informing you of the decision on your request for help.