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FEMA News Desk: (256) 454-3863

Fact Sheet

Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power (STEP) in North Carolina

What is STEP?

- Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power (STEP) is a program managed by the State of North Carolina that provides homeowners with limited, temporary repairs to make a home safe, clean and secure.
- This allows homeowners whose dwellings are currently uninhabitable to return to living in their damaged homes while longer-term repairs continue, meaning people can return to work and school in their communities.
- Depending on the level of damage to the home, the State will coordinate temporary and partial repairs with either a voluntary disaster relief organization or a contractor selected and managed by the State.

What does STEP do?

- STEP will not return homes to their pre-disaster condition. STEP will make minor exterior repairs to ensure that the doors, windows and roof are secure and weatherproof, and that access to entrances are safe. This may include insulating, tarping or patching roof and repairing walls; securing broken windows, and repair or replacement of nonfunctioning exterior doors.
- The home's essential utilities and plumbing will be made safe and operational, and there will be a basic functional bathroom and kitchen facilities—including one useable bathroom vanity, sink, shower/bathtub, toilet and tank; a base cabinet under the kitchen sink, a minimal countertop for food preparation, minimal refrigeration and cooking appliances, and a working kitchen sink.

Who is eligible?

- STEP is available to eligible homeowners in **Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Duplin, Jones, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender and Robeson** counties whose dwellings are currently uninhabitable.
- Only people who have already registered for disaster assistance with FEMA will be considered.
- The home must be an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling that is structurally sound and be able to be restored to a suitable and safe shelter for no more than \$17,000.
- Modular or mobile homes on permanent foundations considered real property by the local government can be considered under STEP.
- Second homes, rental properties, multi-family homes, and mobile homes that are not registered as real properties for tax purposes are not eligible.
- Based on the complexity of work and the capacity of volunteer organizations, some properties will be referred to voluntary relief organizations for the repair work. Properties requiring more extensive or specialized repairs may be referred to a contractor selected by the State.
- Once the STEP repairs are completed homeowners will no longer be eligible for FEMA Direct Housing in a trailer or manufactured housing unit, or for Transitional Sheltering Assistance in a hotel.

How does the process work?

- Homeowners who have damage to their homes and are eligible to participate will receive text messages, emails, and phone calls asking if they want to participate in the STEP program.
- The homeowner must sign a Right of Entry agreement authorizing the inspector and contractor/voluntary relief organization to repair the home. No work can start until the homeowner signs the Right of Entry agreement.
- At this point, an inspector will visit the home to see the damage and determine what repairs are needed to make it safe, clean and secure.
- The repairs will then be assigned to either a contractor or voluntary relief organization for work. Work will be scheduled and repairs will begin.
- Once repairs are complete, an inspector will meet with the homeowner to perform a final walkthrough of the home to ensure the temporary repairs are complete and make the home safe, clean and secure. Photos will be taken to record completed work.

Who pays for STEP?

- The homeowner is not required to pay anything to participate in the STEP program.
- The cost is being shared by the State and FEMA.