



## What Is FEMA?

The mission of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, known as FEMA, is to lead the nation in preparing for, preventing, responding to, and recovering from domestic disasters. This mission includes natural disasters, like major hurricanes and tornadoes; national security concerns, like terrorist attacks; or environmental concerns, like toxic contamination. FEMA operates across the nation with ten regions to respond in presidentially declared domestic disasters. FEMA has an active role in supporting first responders.<sup>1</sup>

## Conversation Questions

1. What is our responsibility as a country, as a community, and as individuals to respond to domestic disasters?
2. What are the ethical considerations for the government when it comes to responding to domestic disasters? For organizations and businesses? For general citizens?
3. What should qualify as a domestic disaster? How might this definition change?

## Core Resources

- "FEMA Strategic Plan 2014-2018" <https://goo.gl/xyEjXC>
- "How the FEMA Works" <http://people.howstuffworks.com/fema.htm>
- "How to File a Claim for Flood Damage" by Mary Williams Walsh <https://goo.gl/8cYA7T>

## Listen

**"Where Have All the FEMA Trailers Gone?" from *Distillations***  
<https://goo.gl/AQ1DBC>

From the Chemical Heritage Foundation, *Distillations* podcast reports on how science affects humans. In this episode, learn about how FEMA constructed trailers for use immediately following Hurricane Katrina and what has happened to those that remain ten years later.

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<sup>1</sup> From "About the Agency: Mission," <https://www.fema.gov/about-agency>





**“How has FEMA changed in the ten years since Hurricane Katrina? from PBS**

<https://goo.gl/cw6HWK>

This PBS NEWSHOUR interview discusses how FEMA has implemented reforms in the past decade to improve its response.

**Read**

**“The Secret History of FEMA” by Garrett M. Graff**

<https://www.wired.com/story/the-secret-history-of-fema>

This article shares information about how FEMA evolved from President Truman’s Federal Defense Administration into its current role within the Department of Homeland Security.

**“How FEMA Uses Waffle House to Measure Disasters”**

**by Elly Yu**

<https://goo.gl/TfZ9WG>

This article explores how the Waffle House restaurant chain factors into FEMA’s determination of the extent of winter storms or the impact of hurricanes in Southeastern states.

**“FEMA Extends Deadline to Refile Hurricane Sandy Insurance Claims” by David W. Chen**

<https://goo.gl/zNvt76>

This news article explains why east coast residents affected by Hurricane Sandy in 2012 had the opportunity to refile their claims for flood insurance.

