

## DISASTER RECOVERY: SHORT TERM

Winter Storm Fern brought heavy ice and winter weather to Louisiana, leading to major power outages and water system problems in many communities. As recovery efforts focus on restoring power, cleaning up, and making repairs, you may also face legal issues.

### LEGAL ISSUES AFTER A DISASTER: WHAT TO DO NEXT

Legal problems after a disaster may not show up right away. In the first few weeks, you might need to replace lost documents or apply for help from programs like FEMA, disaster unemployment, or disaster SNAP. Here are some important things to do soon after the disaster.

#### DOCUMENT DAMAGE

Taking photos and videos of damage can help with insurance claims and getting help from the government. When it is safe to do so, record all damage inside and outside your home. Write down a list of damaged items and what they are worth. Save receipts for cleanup, repairs, temporary housing, and important purchases. If you can, protect your home from more damage by covering the roof or moving things inside. GOHSEP is leading recovery and asks everyone to report damage with documentation at <https://damage.la.gov>.

#### REPLACEMENT SNAP BENEFITS

After a disaster, the Louisiana Department of Health can approve SNAP replacement benefits if your household loses food bought with SNAP benefits. The deadline to submit a form if you lost more than 20% of your food in certain parishes is February 24, 2026. Learn more about replacement SNAP Benefits at <https://ldh.la.gov/page/replacement-snap-benefits>.

#### RENTERS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

If your rental home was damaged, document everything. Let your landlord or property manager know about the damage as soon as you can, and keep a written record, such as an email or text. If you have renters' insurance, contact your insurance company. Your policy may help cover lost belongings and extra living costs if you cannot stay in your home.

#### IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE A LEGAL ISSUE:

You might be able to get free legal help. Apply online at [www.la-law.org/get-help](http://www.la-law.org/get-help) or call 1-866-275-2572. Be sure to mention Winter Storm Fern when you apply.