

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SNOW EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS**

***My community has received federal aid for snow emergencies in the past. Will we be able to get aid for this season?***

FEMA has tightened eligibility for receiving snow emergency assistance. Federal assistance is intended for storms that produce record snowfalls or otherwise cause an extreme hardship to the community. FEMA will consider the following factors when evaluating aid requests for near-record storms:

1. Heavy snowfall over a very extended period of time;
2. Severe winds and extraordinary drifting;
3. Extraordinary ice formation;
4. Cumulative effect of snow on the ground.

***How do I find out if a snowfall we had was a record?***

The National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) is the primary source of snowfall data. NCDC provides current daily snowfall totals from its Cooperative Observers Network (COOP) Monitoring Stations at: <http://ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/snow.html>.

***How do I obtain historic snowfall data?***

Historical snowfall record data is also provided by NCDC at: <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/ussc>.

***How can I tell if my county exceeds or approaches a record snowfall?***

A COOP monitoring station's current event snowfall is compared to the historic record snowfall for the same station whenever possible. If the historic record snowfall is exceeded at any station within a county, the current event will be considered a record snowfall in accordance with the FEMA Snow Assistance Policy 9523.1, which can be found at: [http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/9523\\_1.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/9523_1.shtm)

Daily and cumulative snowfall totals for the event in question must be compared to the historic record snowfall over the same time period. For example, if the current event snowfall occurs over one day, the snowfall for that day should be compared to the one-day historic record snowfall. If snow falls over two days, then the cumulative total for those two days should be compared to the two-day historic record snowfall, etc. Snowfall may occur over a time period of 24-hours or less, but will still be considered a two-day snowfall if the snowfall accumulations occur during two 24-hour observing periods.

Snowfall within 10 percent of the historic record amount is considered to be a near record snowfall.

***Why doesn't FEMA provide assistance automatically whenever there is a major snow event? This season's snowfall is already costing us a lot of money.***

FEMA's policy is that state and local government bear the primary responsibility for responding to emergency situations. Federal assistance is supplementary and is appropriate only when an event is of such severity and magnitude that response requirements exceed state and local capabilities.