

DHS Statement on Safety and Enforcement Following Recent Wildfires in the Southwest and Midwest

Release Date: April 28, 2022

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is working with its federal, state, local, and non-governmental partners to support the needs of the areas affected by the devastating wildfires in New Mexico, Nebraska, and throughout the Southwest and Midwest.

In light of these circumstances, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reminds the public that sites that provide emergency response and relief are considered protected areas. To the fullest extent possible, ICE and CBP do not conduct immigration enforcement activities at protected areas such as along evacuation routes, sites used for sheltering or the distribution of emergency supplies, food or water, or registration sites for disaster-related assistance or the reunification of families and loved ones.

At the request of FEMA or local and state authorities, ICE and CBP may help conduct search and rescue, air traffic de-confliction and public safety missions. ICE and CBP provide emergency assistance to individuals regardless of their immigration status. DHS officials do not and will not pose as individuals providing emergency-related information as part of any enforcement activities.

DHS also encourages all eligible individuals to apply for and seek out assistance. Please go to <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/get-assistance/forms> (<https://www.disasterassistance.gov/get-assistance/forms>) for instructions on how to apply for FEMA disaster assistance.

DHS is aware that some survivors may fear applying for FEMA assistance due to their immigration status. If you or a member of your household applies for FEMA assistance, FEMA does not collect information regarding your immigration status and does not proactively provide your personal information to ICE or CBP for immigration enforcement. However, in rare circumstances, based on a specific request, ICE or CBP could request this information if you are a current threat to national security or public safety because you pose an articulable risk of death, violence, or physical harm to any person. Please see, [FACT SHEET: Citizenship Status and Eligibility for Disaster Assistance FAQ | FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20210318/fact-sheet-citizenship-status-and-eligibility-disaster-assistance-faq#:~:text=You%20will%20be%20asked%20to%20sign%20a%20Declaration,no%20information%20regarding%20your%20status%20will%20be%20gathered.) (<https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20210318/fact-sheet-citizenship-status-and-eligibility-disaster-assistance-faq#:~:text=You%20will%20be%20asked%20to%20sign%20a%20Declaration,no%20information%20regarding%20your%20status%20will%20be%20gathered.>)

If you believe that the emergency event may affect your U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) application, petition, or immigration status, please contact USCIS or go to <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations> (<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations>) for more information.

DHS is committed to ensuring that every individual who seeks shelter, aid, or other assistance as a result of the wildfires is able to do so regardless of their immigration status. DHS carries out its mission without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, national origin, or political associations, and in compliance with law and policy.

Topics

[CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES](#) ([TOPICS/CIVIL-RIGHTS-AND-CIVIL-LIBERTIES](#))

Keywords

[OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES \(CRCL\)](#) ([KEYWORDS/OFFICE-CIVIL-RIGHTS-AND-CIVIL-LIBERTIES-CRCL](#))

Last Updated: 04/28/2022