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MEMORANDUM

TO: Zack Moore, MD, MPH
State Epidemiologist and Epidemiology Section Chief
Division of Public Health
N.C. Department of Health and Human Services

FROM: Jennifer Haigwood, Director 
Occupational Safety and Health Division

DATE: October 11, 2024

RE: Disaster Declared Areas – Applicability and Enforcement of OSHA Standards

Regarding the ongoing emergency situation in western North Carolina, the N.C. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Division has suspended programmed compliance activities in the declared disaster counties. The OSH Division will continue to address unprogrammed activities (fatalities, accidents and complaints) in accordance with normal procedures. Most valid complaints will be handled by letter. Given the extent of damage to property and infrastructure (including water), the OSH Division is utilizing a commonsense approach to evaluating OSHA complaints and how those complaints are addressed with employers. All employer responses will be evaluated with the current emergency situation in mind.

As to specific concerns regarding water availability and hygiene facilities, employers should consider the following:

1. Bottled/potable water should be available on-site for drinking.
2. A means to use the restroom within a reasonable travel time.
3. A method of bottled/potable water and soap or other hand sanitizer be available for use.

If employers are making a reasonable attempt to comply with basic hygiene practices and implement something similar to the guidelines listed above, the OSH Division would not consider those employers to be in violation of applicable OSHA standards.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please let us know.