



# RUSK COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Thomas Hall, Director  
311 Miner Avenue East  
Ladysmith, WI 54848  
Telephone (715) 532-2121  
FAX (715) 532-2248  
Cell (715) 642-1202  
E-mail [thall@ruskcountywi.us](mailto:thall@ruskcountywi.us)

## Recovery efforts continue in Rusk County

Residents continue to pick-up after last week's tornado. A full damage assessment has not been completed, as it is taking time to cover the path of the storm through the County. Preliminary reports show a nearly 30 mile impact area, with most concentrated damages being in the Cty W/Log Cabin Rd. area southwest of Weyerhaeuser, Amacoy Lake area south of Bruce, and in the Conrath area. Elsewhere along the path there was significant tree loss, and sporadic property damage. The full damage assessment will provide additional details, but a number of homes were destroyed or suffered significant damage, and local agriculture was impacted with the loss of structures and livestock. Heavy rains in the days following the tornado have slowed some clean-up work and caused additional issues including localized flooding.

In terms of recovery, as of today, all power has been restored throughout the County, with the exception of damaged/destroyed properties where power cannot be connected.

Volunteers will still be needed and are appreciated. Those who would like to volunteer should contact 2-1-1.

County and local officials are coordinating with State and Federal agencies to determine what assistance is available to local residents to assist in their recovery. A contingent of State agencies will be visiting the area tomorrow to see the damage (Tuesday, May 22).

Disaster victims from last week's tornado should continue to document damage and provide information to Rusk County Emergency Management by dialing 2-1-1. The information gathered will be used to help determine what possible state programs may be available to provide recovery assistance.

Most federal disaster aid would only cover uninsured losses. It is not designed to replace personal items but rather to assist with home repairs. It is important for homeowners, renters and businesses to work with their insurance company to determine what is covered and how to file a claim. Disaster victims should make a detailed list of all damaged or lost property and take photos of the damage. Some other tips from the State of Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance include:

- Do not throw out any damaged property without your insurance adjuster's acknowledgement. If local officials require the disposal of damaged items before the insurance company's claims adjuster can inspect the damages, take photos and keep a swatch or other sample of damaged items for the adjuster (e.g., cut swatches from carpeting, curtains, and chairs).
- Separate damaged items from undamaged items.

- To avoid scams, make sure to take your time. If you feel pressured to sign a contract quickly, take a step back and investigate. Rebuilding your home or business is important, but quickly signing a contract with an unscrupulous contractor can make a bad situation worse.
- Contact your insurance company again if an adjuster has not been assigned to you within several days.

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) and Rusk County Emergency Management continue to work with local officials on recovery efforts for debris removal and damage to infrastructure. WEM administers the Wisconsin Disaster Fund (WDF) which is a state-funded reimbursement program intended to assist county, local and tribal units of government to recoup costs incurred in responding to, and recovering from, natural disasters. This includes protective measures, debris removal from public property and repairs to infrastructure. The state reimburses up to 70 percent of eligible costs, with the local government responsible for the remaining share. The fund does not cover losses suffered by individuals, businesses or the agricultural sector, or those covered by insurance

For residents seeking assistance, the following resources are available.

- Any residents in need of volunteer assistance to clear debris from the recent storm damage should call 2-1-1. They will need a name, phone number, and location.
- The Red Cross center in Conrath closed on Sunday (5/21) evening. However, they will continue working with affected residents. If you have been affected and have not already been in contact with the Red Cross their contact number is 715-559-7365.
- Anyone in the need of clothing, food, bedding or household furniture should contact:
  - Donation Center at Mosaic Center. Phone 715-458-5306
  - ICAA Connections Store in Ladysmith 715.532.7542
  - The Salvation Army is also available to provide assistance at 715.403.1285
- Rusk County Health and Human Services may be available to assist residents within their regular scope of programs. (715) 532-2299
- Funds remain open for donations at Pioneer State Bank and Ladysmith Federal, both in Ladysmith.

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