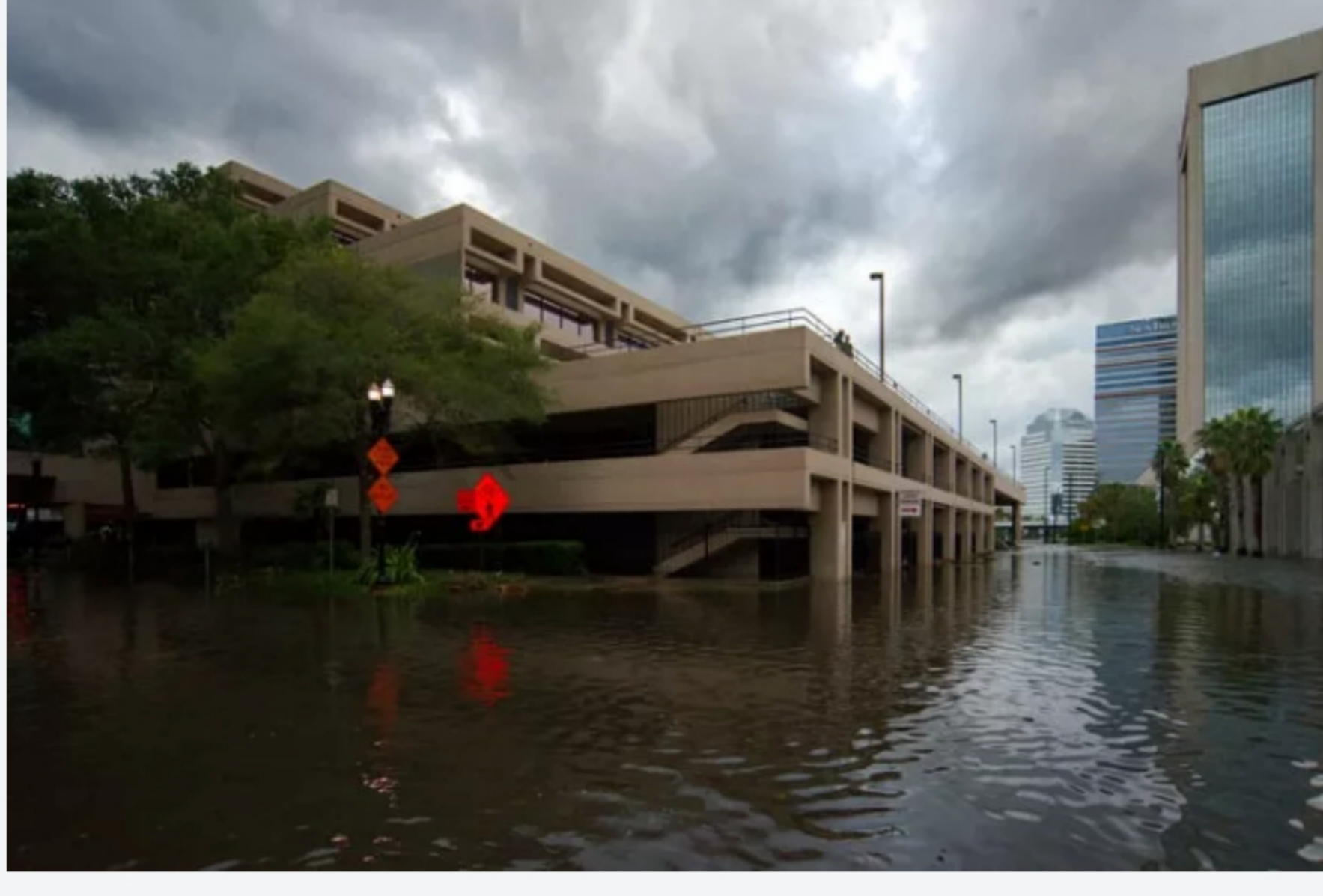


# What to Know about Post-Disaster Contracting

NOVEMBER 5, 2018 BY **JOBSITE EDITORIAL STAFF**



A long period of rebuilding is ahead for the hurricane-ravaged Southeast, including hardest hit areas of Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, and South Carolina. Hurricanes Michael and Florence devastated the states with winds up to 155 mph and catastrophic flooding. As people assess the damage and decide how to rebuild, contractors who are registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can help people rebuild homes and businesses.

## Hurricanes Michael and Florence devastated the states with winds up to 155 mph and catastrophic flooding.

Brock Long, FEMA's chief, recently toured the hurricane-damaged Panhandle and called the damage some of the worst he's seen.

Debris collection in Florida may take another month and continue into the holidays, some sources claim. In Florida's **Leon County**, crews are expected to collect more than 350 cubic yards by the time operations are complete.

In **Florida**, twelve counties have been named disaster areas, and as of October 19, FEMA has approved grants for 7,620 applicants for more than \$32 million. In **North Carolina**, FEMA has approved 29,655 applications to help people in 30 counties at a cost of more than \$104 million. In **Georgia**, 858 applications have been approved to help people in 13 counties for more than \$2.4 million so far. In **South Carolina**, eight counties have been named disaster areas with 4,362 applications accepted for more than a total of \$18.2 million. All of these numbers are still likely to go up.

Contractors register with the **System for Award Management (SAM)**, and renew registration each year to take on work through FEMA. Some may not be aware that FEMA changed the login system for SAM this summer after some security issues. Therefore, when users log in for the first time after June 29, they will need to establish a new login and password. The change is the result of some third-party fraud.

Because of the phenomenal damage and the expected long period of rebuilding, contractors not registered with FEMA may want to start the process with SAM to secure some of these projects.

Each year **SAM** contractors must submit a notarized letter to the Federal Service Desk, but it no longer needs to be submitted before registration. There are specific templates for different business types, and some information about how to choose these and set up the letter can be found **here**.

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The process of SAM renewal takes about 20 to 40 hours each year, so many contractors hire a third party to do the renewal. Some third-party companies make SAM renewal a primary focus of their business, adding other services, such as marketing or website creation, as well.

In addition to FEMA registration, contractors can register with state agencies, including the **Disaster Contractors Network** in Florida and **NC E-procurement** in North Carolina. In South Carolina, clean up contractors can be listed **here**.

In other storm clean up news, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced that it received authority to issue alternative/emergency permitting procedures in response to conditions resulting from Hurricane Michael. These procedures will be effective for a six-month period, through April 8, 2019.

The Corps of Engineers' emergency work may include:

- discharge of dredged or fill material into waters
- work in navigable waters to include dredging to restore navigation and relieve flooding
- stabilization of eroded shorelines
- repair and replacement of authorized structures including docks and bulkheads
- installing temporary utility lines and access roads
- replacing existing roads and bridges
- installing water intake structures
- and removal and disposal of debris in waters

After Michael, new, more stringent building codes are likely for the Panhandle, as the current codes were set to a maximum wind speed of 135 mph. On the Atlantic, after Hurricane Andrew, structures are meant to withstand winds up to 175 mph, according to reporting by **NPR**. The Florida Building Commission is revising the state codes with input from realtors, residents, and the insurance industry.

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