FEMA TRAILER TIMELINE

MIT FEMA TRAILER PROJECT

FEMA AND KATRINA HISTORY

Congressional Act of 1803: establishes precedence for federal disaster assistance.

"The act, generally considered the first piece of disaster legislation, provided assistance to a New Hampshire town destroyed by fire. Subsequent laws followed, all ad hoc legislation—that is, laws passed after the event in response to hardships, suffering, and losses caused by fires, floods, and other natural disasters."

President George W. Bush: "I hereby direct the Department of Homeland Security to respond to attacks on September 11th."

FEMA becomes part of Homeland Security.

Tropical Depression Ana: Tropical Storm Ana hits Florida and Georgia, Ana is the most northeastern Atlantic hurricane ever to form in August.

Governor Kathleen Blanco declares State of Emergency.

August 27, 2005 — Governor Kathleen Blanco: "We are in a state of emergency."

August 27, 2005 — Hurricane Katrina: "Hurricane Katrina is a Category 5 storm with 145 mph winds."

8:15 AM: Hurricane Katrina: "Hurricane Katrina is a Category 4 storm with 140 mph winds."

1:45 PM: President Bush: "I have declared an Emergency Disaster for Louisiana and Mississippi."

August 28, 2005 — Hurricane Katrina: "Hurricane Katrina is a Category 3 storm with 125 mph winds."

FEMA activates the National Response Plan, 15 federal government departments.

An estimated 80,000-90,000 people remain in Orleans County, the City of New Orleans, and the Hurricane zone. The Convention Center, Superdome, Charity Hospital, and the Ninth Ward are flooded.

FEMA Operations Challenged states in an internal memo that "the Agency is not prepared to execute a major hurricane response."

President Bush visits Gulf area, surveys damage from Mississippi.

52 billion in aid to Gulf Coast Congress.

HOUSING

FLC (Fema) on its website: "Hurricane Katrina has destroyed or severely damaged an estimated 2 million units of housing, or 5% of the housing stock in the affected area. Hundreds of thousands of units will be needed to supplement existing housing units for one year. This projected need is more than double the entire Katrina disaster housing mission of years ago."

FEMA encourages Louisiana parishes to create housing committees. FEMA's housing development director: "Our job is to get people back into their homes."

President Bush: "Federal Government will provide temporary housing for victims of the disaster. But, Such temporary housing must not become permanent housing."

FORMALDEHYDE CONTAMINATION

October, 2005 — November, 2005

Hazardous materials expert in Mississippi: "Formaldehyde was used in the FEMA trailers, and I warned the officials of potential problems associated with placing children in trailers."

March, 2006

FEMA began to inform households of formaldehyde dangers.

FEMA was made aware of the dangers of formaldehyde, but evacuees continued to be placed in the trailers for years to come.

May 2006

FEMA's Office of General Counsel: "Federal agencies are not required to provide the median housing unit, which would be a month after a crisis, to the average family." FEMA logistics expert wrote that "the median is the point at which half has elevated that we are in the middle." Concerned about FEMA's ownership of the issue, FEMA's Office of General Counsel wrote on June 15, "Do not release any leading until we give the OK. We need to know what the press thinks they include worst-case scenario, and what we do or try to respond to them."

A man who had lived in a FEMA trailer in Florida: "Lungs in bad condition."

FEMA sets Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) asked the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to develop formaldehyde sampling data collected by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA's sampling data showed that "formaldehyde levels in 1 and at formaldehyde levels in 2 exceeded the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's health effects in humans. 2. can simple ventilation (opening windows) reduce the opening windows lower the levels of formaldehyde?"

February 2007

ATSDR issues health advisory: "Formaldehyde at concentrations at or above 0.1 ppm may cause nonspecific health effects in sensitive individuals. Exposure to formaldehyde at concentrations at or above 0.1 ppm may cause eye, nose, and throat irritation in the general population."

FEMA Director Paulison states that "the formaldehyde does not present a health hazard."

May 2007

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Chairman Henry A. Waxman: "Instead of responding to FEMA's warnings about the dangerous formaldehyde levels in the trailers, FEMA officials reportedly ignored the warnings and continued to place families in the FEMA trailers. Instead of protecting the health of families, FEMA officials put the health of families at risk."

June 2007

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Chairman Henry A. Waxman: "Instead of responding to FEMA's warnings about the dangerous formaldehyde levels in the trailers, FEMA officials reportedly ignored the warnings and continued to place families in the FEMA trailers. Instead of protecting the health of families, FEMA officials put the health of families at risk."

July 2007

US House of Representatives' Committee on Oversight and Government Reform holds a congressional hearing on the FEMA's use of formaldehyde-laden trailers to house hurricane victims. Witnesses included current and former FEMA officials, industrial hygienists, a pediatrician and a former FEMA trailer resident who developed a chronic cough. The Committee heard about the dangerous levels of formaldehyde in the trailers, the Agency's failure to inform residents of the risks, and FEMA provided trailers and mobile homes to families with known health conditions. Additionally, Chairman Waxman released a summary of the Committee's investigation of the Agency's response to formaldehyde levels in FEMA formaldehyde tests. The Committee's report, which has not recognized the presence and effects of formaldehyde in the trailers, March 2006, Although FEMA kept the trailers and mobile homes in public health, FEMA backpedaled particularly for Office of General Counsel, which wrote that "the Committee's report does not recognize the health implications of the formaldehyde."

FEMA extends renter assistance for victims of Katrina and Rita. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) issues a report on the successfully completed housing initiative for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Section 408 program. Housing Assistance Program,