

The Virgin Islands Consortium

First Blue Roof Being Installed In U.S. Virgin Islands

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ST. THOMAS -- The first residential temporary roof made of blue plastic sheeting was installed today on St. Thomas, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced this afternoon. The program, available to qualified homeowners and known as Operation Blue Roof, can make some damaged structures habitable again until more permanent repairs can be made.

Operation Blue Roof is carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in partnership with the FEMA and the U.S. Virgin Islands government to provide homeowners affected by Hurricane Irma with fiber-reinforced blue plastic sheeting to cover their damaged roofs until permanent repairs can be made.

“Operation Blue Roof allows short-term relief, and makes it possible for residents to stay in their homes while exploring permanent roof replacement options, said Brig. Gen. Diana Holland, the commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Atlantic Division.

Operation Blue Roof should protect property for a minimum of 30 days, reduce temporary housing costs, and allow for residents to remain in or return to their homes while recovering from the storm. This is a free service to homeowners. The program is for primary residences, or occupied rental properties that can be repaired with plywood, plastic sheeting, and in some cases a minor amount of rafter replacement or repair. Vacation rental properties and commercial properties are not eligible for the program. Not all roof types qualify for the program.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. The structure is the primary residence of the individual or household requesting emergency roof covering; AND
2. The residence has sufficient roof framing intact (more than 50 percent) to support the plastic sheeting as a temporary repair, and will otherwise be capable of providing safe shelter once the plastic sheeting is installed; AND
3. The resident certifies that he or she is the owner of the residence requested to be covered. For renters, the property owner must request the roof be covered and the renter will reside there once covered; AND
4. The resident certifies that he or she will shelter in the residence requested to be covered; AND
5. The roof to be repaired is composed of standard roof shingles, corrugated metal or a similar material which lends itself towards temporary repair with plastic sheeting or similar method. Roofs composed of materials such as slate, asbestos or clay tile, or other material or damaged metal framing which would be exceptionally difficult to repair, or likely to be damaged, shall not be roofed. Mobile Homes will be assessed on a case by case basis and will be covered if practicable.

Right of Entry

Everyone requesting temporary roofing assistance needs to sign a Right of Entry (ROE). Corps of Engineers' teams began house-to-house ROE collection Friday on St. Thomas in the Anna's Retreat neighborhood.

“We will continue ROE collection Saturday, and are bringing more personnel in to expand operations,” said St. Thomas Blue Roof Mission Manager Jay Lang. “It will take several days for personnel to arrive due to limited air support capabilities on the island right now; nevertheless our contractors are starting to install temporary roofs on houses.”

As USACE begins implementing this important program and more of their temporary roofing teams arrive to the Virgins Islands, residents are encouraged to listen to their local government officials and radio stations for information on where these ROE centers will be located.

Be aware of SCAMS. This is a free service, if asked to pay it is not Operation Blue Roof.

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