

The Virgin Islands Consortium

'Operation Blue Roof' Program Extended To Nov. 23 In USVI

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ST. CROIX -- The deadline for Virgin Island hurricane survivors to sign up with Operation Blue Roof for free temporary roofing repairs to their homes has been extended to Thursday, November 23, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced Saturday.

The announcement follows multiple issues the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has faced with the program in the territory -- from a late rollout to issues with contractors who have performed, according to multiple homeowners whose houses were outfitted with the blue roofs -- sloppy jobs. One married couple said their child stepped on a nail left in their home by a contractor whose employees left the job with construction debris. "They are

rushing the jobs," this person said.

In its release, FEMA said it approved Governor Kenneth Mapp's request to extend the deadline to allow those who left the islands due to impacts from hurricanes Irma and Maria, to take full advantage of the program.

Survivors should note, this Blue Roof deadline is different from the December 18 deadline to register with FEMA for disaster assistance as a result of hurricanes Irma and Maria.

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

Homeowners must sign a Right of Entry (ROE) form that allows USACE staff on the property to assess roof damage and for contractors to install the plastic sheeting. It generally takes about eight days for a USACE representative to visit the home once the ROE is signed, and the installation will be done about two weeks later. Survivors can help USACE locate their residence by placing visible addresses or plot numbers on their property.

To apply for Operation Blue Roof survivors should visit any of the ROE Centers around the islands. To find a location, call 888-ROOF-BLU (766-3258). Survivors signing up for the program are asked to bring a photo identification, a property tax bill and, if possible, a photograph of the damaged roof for property identification.

Survivors who have experienced any problems with the temporary roofing repairs on

St. Croix may also call Operation Blue Roof at 888-766-3258 or visit the USACE Mobile Command Vehicle at the Sunshine Mall Kmart West, Remainder Matriculate, Frederiksted. On St. Thomas and St. John, survivors may call the USACE local number at 601-619-2821 or visit the USACE Roofing Resident Office on the 1st floor of the Government Employee Retirement System Building, 3438 Kronprindsens Gade, Charlotte Amalie. USACE will send a quality assurance inspector to the property, and any Blue Roof that was not installed by the contractor according to contract standards will be repaired.

Operation Blue Roof should protect property for a minimum of 30 days and allow residents to remain in or return to their homes while recovering from the storms. 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. Not all roof types qualify for the program.

Feature Image: Aerial shot of blue roofs in Puerto Rico. (FEMA)