



FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR TYPHOON MANGKHUT & SUPER TYPHOON YUTU SURVIVORS

SAIPAN, November 5, 2018 — A legal hotline is now available for people impacted by the Typhoon Mangkhut and Super Typhoon Yutu in the Northern Mariana Islands. Disaster survivors facing legal issues related to the typhoons who are unable to afford a lawyer may call the hotline at **(670) 234-6243** from 9am to 3pm local time to be connected with an attorney who has volunteered to provide free legal assistance.

The type of legal assistance available include:

- Replacement of identification documents other important destroyed legal documents;
- Assistance with life, medical, and property insurance claims;
- Help with home repair contracts and contractors;
- Assisting in consumer protection matters, remedies, and procedures;
- Counseling on mortgage foreclosure problems;
- Counseling on landlord–tenant problems; and
- Assistance with securing FEMA and other government benefits available to disaster survivors.

The hotline is a partnership between the Micronesian Legal Services Corporation, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Legal assistance may not be available for fee-generating cases. Such matters should instead be referred to an attorney in private practice. Survivors with fee-generating cases can contact the Bar Association of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for help finding an attorney with specific matters. Attorneys that are interested in volunteering should [sign up here](#) immediately.

Major Disaster Declaration

On September 29, 2018, and October 26, 2018, Major Disaster Declarations were issued for the Northern Mariana Islands as a result of Typhoon Mangkhut and Super Typhoon Yutu, making federal funding available to individuals and business owners in the Northern Mariana Islands who were impacted by storms. The declarations provided assistance for the following designated counties:

- **Mangkhut:** Rota (Municipality), Saipan (Municipality), Tinian (Municipality)
- **Yutu:** Northern Islands (Municipality), Rota (Municipality), Saipan (Municipality), Tinian (Municipality)

To register with FEMA and apply for assistance, visit DisasterAssistance.gov or via smartphone at m.fema.gov. Applicants may also call (800) 621-3362. Applicants should be prepared to provide basic information about themselves (*i.e.*, a current telephone number, Social Security number, and an address to receive mail), insurance coverage, and any other information to help substantiate the loss. Note: if you are eligible for an Individual Assistance grant you are not required to pay back FEMA. There is no income threshold for Individual Assistance grants, but you may be referred to the Small Business Administration (SBA) for a low interest disaster loan, which must be repaid. Disaster survivors can also visit a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) for face-to-face assistance.

DRCs are generally open Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 6:00pm, Saturdays from 10:00am to 4:00pm. DRC locations can be found in the [FEMA App](#). Download it for free from the [App Store](#) or [GooglePlay](#). You can text **DRC** and a **zip code** to **43362** (4FEMA) to locate a Disaster Recovery Center in your area. Standard message and data rates apply.

Please note that registrants generally have 60 days to apply for assistance from the declaration date, and 60 days to appeal a decision with FEMA that you do not agree with. Please contact the DLS hotline if you need assistance with an appeal.

Background

When the President declares a major disaster, FEMA, in cooperation with the ABA YLD, establishes a toll-free number for disaster survivors to request legal assistance. Funding for the toll-free line comes from FEMA under the authority of Section 415 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 100-707). The ABA YLD in turn partners with state bars, local bar associations, and legal aid entities to recruit volunteer lawyers in affected areas to handle survivors' cases.

Hotline Partner Members

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division—The ABA YLD is the largest national organization of young lawyers, provides leadership in serving the public and the profession, and promotes excellence and fulfillment in the practice of law. Its parent organization, the ABA, is the national voice of the legal profession and the largest voluntary professional membership group in the world. (https://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers.html)

Federal Emergency Management Agency – FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including terrorism. (<https://www.fema.gov/>)

Micronesian Legal Services Corporation – The Micronesian Legal Services Corporation (“MLSC”) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation established in 1970 to provide low income persons in Micronesia with free legal assistance in civil matters. Its service area covers islands scattered through an area that is approximately three thousand miles from east to west and one thousand miles from north to south. MLSC is governed by a nine-member board of directors and has offices in four countries: the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

National Disaster Legal Aid Online – NDLA (available at: disasterlegalaid.org) is a collaborative effort of Lone Star Legal Aid, the American Bar Association, the Legal Services Corporation, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, and Pro Bono Net.

United Policyholders – UP (www.uphelp.org) is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) consumer advocacy group that specializes in helping disaster survivors with insurance claim issues. UP also trains case managers and legal aid lawyers to assist clients with insurance and disaster recovery matters.

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