

# Update on Issues Resulting from Hurricanes

In the midst of all the tragedy and confusion created by recent hurricanes along the Gulf Coast, the regulatory agencies are working together to address the most pressing issues and to look at ideas for future response improvements. This article looks at a few of the issues concerning financial institutions:

- **Contaminated Currency Procedures** – defined as currency that has been damaged by or exposed to contaminants, poses a health hazard or safety risk and cannot be processed under normal operating procedures. This definition does not apply to currency that has been exposed to a bio-terrorist (either biological or chemical) agent. In general, contamination may be caused by the following:
  - Floodwater or any prolonged exposure to water or other liquids
  - Exposure to blood or any other bodily fluids
  - Exposure to sewage
  - Exposure to any foreign substance or chemical, including dye-packs, which may pose a health hazard or safety risk
  - Mold or mildew

The **Federal Reserve Board** (FRB) has procedures to follow regarding the handling of contaminated currency, coins, and checks. Click on <http://www.frb.services.org/Cash/DamagedCash.html> to find out what procedures to follow.

- **Frequently asked BSA Questions** – a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) has been developed by FinCEN in consultation with the other federal banking agencies. The list is available at <http://www.fincen.gov/katrinabsa.pdf> and may be expanded. Additional information can be obtained by calling 1-800-949-2732.
- **5300 Call Reports** – credit unions located in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina may have additional time to submit the 5300 Call Reports for September 30 that are due on October 24. Those with questions should contact the NCUA (<http://www.ncua.gov>).
- **NCUA Provides Information** – The **National Credit Union Administration** has provided answers to frequently asked questions for the public regarding how to receive funds from their accounts; how to access their money remotely; and explains that funds are insured up to \$100,000. The FAQs can be found at <http://www.ncua.gov/Katrina/KatrinaFAQ.htm>. There is also a toll-free phone number (1-800-827-6282) to assist the public with any credit union-related account matters. See the NCUA's disaster information page at <http://www.ncua.gov/Katrina/index.htm>.
- **Joint Press Release** – the federal regulatory agencies joined in a joint press release encouraging all insured depository institutions to assist displaced customers. See <http://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/press/bcreg/2005/20050901/default.htm> for ideas suggested by the agencies.
- **FFIEC Working Group** – formed as an interagency working group to enhance the agencies' coordination and communication on, and supervisory responses to, issues facing the industry in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Contacts are included for each agency. Review the list at <http://www.ots.treas.gov/docs/7/77534.html>.