



SAIPAN

Typhoon Yutu – 2018

Location

Saipan has a population of approximately 52,000 people and is located in the western Pacific Ocean. It is the largest island of the Northern Mariana Islands, which is a commonwealth of the United States. Saipan has a tropical rainforest climate, with an average year round temperature of 84 °F. Sandy beaches and a large lagoon can be found on the western side of the island, with rocky cliffs and a reef located on the eastern side. Tourism is a major industry in Saipan.

Disaster

Typhoon Yutu made landfall on Saipan as a Category 5-equivalent Super Typhoon on October 25, 2018. This was the strongest tropical cyclone to ever impact the Mariana Islands, with wind speeds of 180mph. The majority of buildings in southern Saipan were damaged or destroyed, and the island was left without electricity.

MDS Response

MDS volunteers will serve for terms of at least two weeks, and will stay in hotel accommodations provided by FEMA. Information about transportation and accommodation costs can be found below.

Volunteers will be repairing and rebuilding roofs that were damaged or destroyed by the typhoon.

Accommodations

- FEMA will pay for hotel accommodations for all volunteers. Meals will be at restaurants and MDS will pay for all meals.
- While not recommended by MDS, some volunteers have chosen to purchase their own meals and request reimbursement from FEMA for costs up to a specified amount. Receipts are required. In this case, MDS does not pay and is not responsible for the expenses. When the volunteer gets reimbursement from FEMA, FEMA will send them a 1099-Misc Income form at the end of the calendar year for tax purposes. This income is potentially taxable, but might be exempt if the volunteer has receipts to show for all reimbursements.

Transportation

- FEMA will pay volunteer transportation costs. Volunteer information will be sent to FEMA from the bi-national office, and FEMA will send volunteers an invitational travel letter.
- **Volunteers are responsible to call National Travel to book their flights once they receive the invitational travel letter.**
- Volunteers will leave home on a Friday to arrive in Saipan on a Sunday, and will depart Saipan on a Saturday or Sunday to arrive home on a Saturday or Sunday.
- Contact the Coordinator for Weekly Volunteers at 800-241-8111 with any questions.

