

NEWS



CONTACT:

AMY CARRUTH, PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

(601) 352-9100

The Preliminary Damage Assessment Process Fact Sheet

Overview:

The preliminary damage assessment is a first-hand, on-the-ground, survey by teams of federal, state and local emergency personnel to determine the type and amount of damage a disaster has inflicted on individuals and property.

Process/Timeline:

- The first response to a disaster happens at the local level. Within the community, the local emergency services organization works with nearby municipalities, local volunteer organizations, and the state
- When a governor decides that effective response to a disaster is beyond state capabilities, a request for aid is made to the appropriate FEMA regional office.
- FEMA disaster specialists join MEMA and local emergency management representatives to conduct a survey of the impacted area.
- These teams are staffed by specialists with extensive experience in:
 - **Public Assistance** -- inspecting structures, roads, water and sewer treatment facilities and other essential public facilities,
 - **Human Services** -- interviewing residents to determine the extent of the disaster on individuals and families, and
 - **Hazard Mitigation** -- determining possible future preventive actions as well as gauging the effectiveness of measures already in place.
- These joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) teams visit the scene and determine the extent of private and public damages and estimate the types and extent of federal disaster aid needed.
- A joint summary report of the damage assessment is prepared for the governor who can use the data as a basis for deciding whether to request a major disaster declaration from the President.
- The governor's request for a disaster declaration is sent to the President with a recommendation from FEMA.
- The President approves the request or FEMA informs the governor it has been denied.
- The decision timeline depends on many circumstances and can take several days depending on the nature of the disaster. If the request is denied, the governor can appeal the decision.
- There is no established formula to determine whether a state will be declared eligible for a major disaster declaration. The impact of a disaster is always viewed in relation to its effect on communities and individuals. Financial capabilities and insurance coverage factor into the determination process but are not the sole criteria in making a disaster declaration decision.

###