

- Administration
- Bureau of Motor Vehicles
- **Emergency Management Agency**
- Emergency Medical Services
- Office of Criminal Justice Services
- Ohio Homeland Security
- Ohio Investigative Unit
- Ohio State Highway Patrol



February, 2011

Memo to: All County Emergency Management Directors

From: Nancy J. Dragani, Executive Director
Ohio Emergency Management Agency

Subject: Policy Memo: State of Ohio Criteria to Request Individual Assistance

Since September 2005, the State of Ohio has based requests for federal disaster assistance for private damages (Individual Assistance, IA) on specific damage criteria which is consistent with federal guidance from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The State also uses the same criteria to add counties to a FEMA IA declaration.

The purpose of this criterion is to minimize confusion; provide a basis for requesting federal IA programs; and to ensure there is consistency among the IA Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) teams during the Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA). This criterion *does not* impact the Public Assistance Program declaration criteria.

In order for a county to seek federal disaster assistance from the SBA or FEMA IA Program, specific information must first be provided to the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) for review and analysis. The county must be able to provide the Ohio EMA with street sheets listing the physical address of damaged structures and provide a map of the impacted area(s). Following is the State's criteria for requesting IA or to seek to be added to an existing FEMA IA declaration:

There must be a minimum of twenty-five (25) primary homes and/or businesses with 40% uninsured damages.

Please note that typically primary residence include privately-owned single-family homes, apartments, mobile homes, condominiums, etc. However, there may be instances of non-traditional homes, such as converted vans or buses, campers, etc. which may be a primary residence. Please apply the same criteria to traditional and non-traditional structures or call the Disaster Recovery Branch, 614-799-3671 for guidance.

**INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE
PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT (PDA)
CHECKLIST**

Individual Assistance (IA) refers to primary homes and businesses.

Local Damage Assessment

- ___ Provide Incident Status Report form to Ohio EMA within 12 hours of event.
- ___ Provide detailed assessment on the Damage and Needs Assessment form to Ohio EMA within 36 hours of event. (Form AGN-0035). *(There are 4 degrees of IA damage: destroyed, major, minor and affected.)*
- ___ Provide updated information on the Damage and Needs Assessment form to the state as new information becomes available; or closeout the incident.
- ___ Upon request, provide “street sheets” and summary sheet to the Disaster Recovery Branch (Ohio EMA).
- ___ Insurance information: It is imperative that the extent of insurance coverage be determined as soon as possible.

Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment

- ___ An Ohio EMA representative will contact the county EMA director regarding the time and location of the PDA.
- ___ Local officials to provide:
 - ___ local representative to participate on the PDA team. This person should be familiar with the area and have knowledge of the types of damage and problems which occurred. Other team members will include FEMA, SBA, State, etc.
 - ___ Maps. Maps should be “marked up” to reflect damaged area. *(Individual damages should be mapped separately from public damages.)*
 - ___ Tour route. A predetermined route should be mapped out in advance. Heaviest, impacted areas should be viewed /surveyed by the team first.
- ___ Pre-assessment briefing. Local representative to provide overview of event and damages to PDA team. *(Please have the most current information available. When providing a list of damaged homes and businesses, please sort by geographical location and severity of damage, as opposed to alphabetically.)*
- ___ Tour damaged areas.

**Guidance for Conducting
FEMA and SBA Individual Assistance Damage Assessment**

SINGLE FAMILY, CONDOS, APTS.	TORNADO EVENT	FLOOD EVENT	REPAIRABLE
AFFECTED	-Some shingle damage -Few broken windows -Cosmetic damage to siding	- Without basement: less than 12 inches of water on first floor - With basement: less than 12 inches of water in basement; -No structural damage	Yes - within 30 days or less; less than 50% damaged
MINOR	-One wall damaged -Section of roof damaged or missing	- Without basement: less than 2 feet of water on 1 st floor. - With basement: 12 inches up to basement full of water.	Yes - within 30 days; less than 50% damaged
MAJOR	-Substantial structural damage to walls, roof, etc.	- Without basement: 2 - 4 ft. of water on 1 st floor - With basement: Basement full of water <u>and</u> up to 2 feet of water on the 1 st floor. - Collapsed basement wall(s) Note: For SBA purposes, a collapsed basement wall(s) is considered minor damage.	Yes - but is substantially damaged in excess of 50% ; may take over 30 days
DESTROYED	-Total loss -Structure is compromised	-Without basement: over 4 ft. of water on 1st floor - With basement: Basement full and over 2ft. of water on 1st floor	No - not repairable; cannot be safely occupied

MOBILE HOMES	TORNADO EVENT	FLOOD EVENT	REPAIRABLE
AFFECTED	-Minor dents to roof or siding	-Water standing under or around mobile home but not touching the bottom board -Indication of water being around a mobile home but not having touched the bottom board following a flash flood	Yes
MINOR	-Utility connections broken -Slight movement on piers/foundation	-Utilities flooded -Piers/foundation shifted -Water touched or soaked the bottom board but did not enter the primary living area	Yes - within 30 days; less than 50% damaged
MAJOR	-Wall and roof damage -Shifted on piers/foundation	-Water soaked bottom board <u>and</u> the primary living area -Piers/foundation washed out or away	Yes - but is substantially damaged in excess of 50%
DESTROYED	-Total loss -Bent frame -Buckled walls, roof	-Washed off piers/foundation -Frame bent or twisted -Mobile home has turned over on its side/top -4ft+ water above floor level	No - not repairable; cannot be safely occupied

Source: From FEMA's Operation Manual, "Preliminary Damage Assessment for Individual Assistance," April 2005

FLOOD DAMAGE: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING

4 FT +

Basement

Examples:

- **Without basement:** over 4 feet of water on 1st floor.
- **With basement:** Basement full and over 2 feet of water on the 1st floor.

DESTROYED

FLOOD DAMAGE: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING

2-4 FT

Basement

Examples:

- **Without basement:** 2-4 feet of water on the 1st floor.
- **With basement:** Basement full and up to 2 feet of water on the 1st floor.
- Collapsed basement wall (s)*

MAJOR

FLOOD DAMAGE: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING

1-2 ft.

Basement

1 FT. - FULL

Examples:

- **Without basement:** less than 2 feet of water on 1st floor.
- **With basement:** 12 inches up to basement full of water.

MINOR

FLOOD DAMAGE: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING

Less than 12 inches

Basement

Less than 12 inches

Examples:

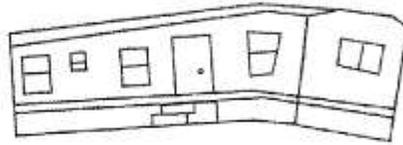
- **Without basement:** less than 12 inches on 1st floor.
- **With basement:** less than 12 inches.
- No structure damage

AFFECTED

*Note:

For SBA purposes, a collapsed basement wall(s) is considered minor damage.

FLOOD DAMAGE: MOBILE HOME

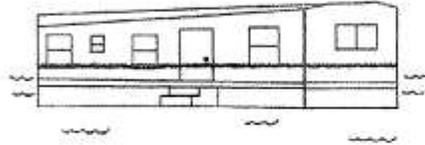


Examples:

- Washed off piers/foundation
- Frame bent or twisted.
- Mobile home has turned over on its side/top.
- 4 feet + water above floor level.

DESTROYED

FLOOD DAMAGE: MOBILE HOME

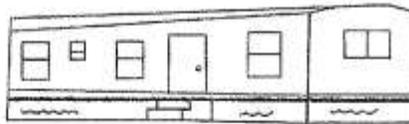


Examples:

- Water soaked bottom board and the primary living area.
- Piers/foundation washed out or away.

MAJOR

FLOOD DAMAGE: MOBILE HOME

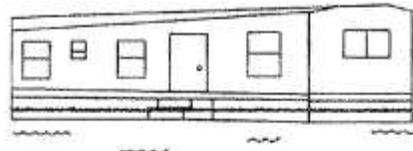


Examples:

- Utilities flooded
- Piers/foundation shifted
- Water touched or soaked at the bottom board, but did not enter the primary living area.

MINOR

FLOOD DAMAGE: MOBILE HOME

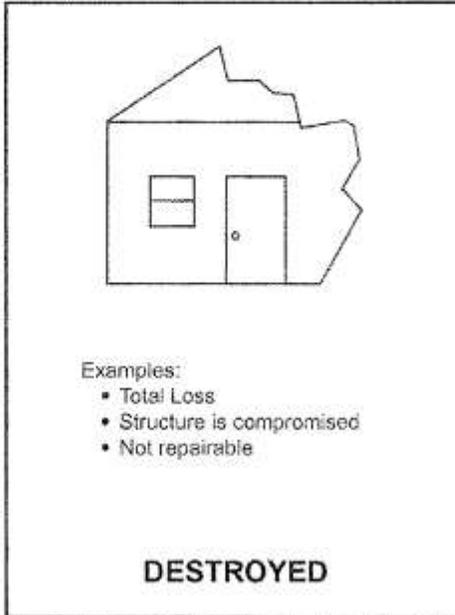


Examples:

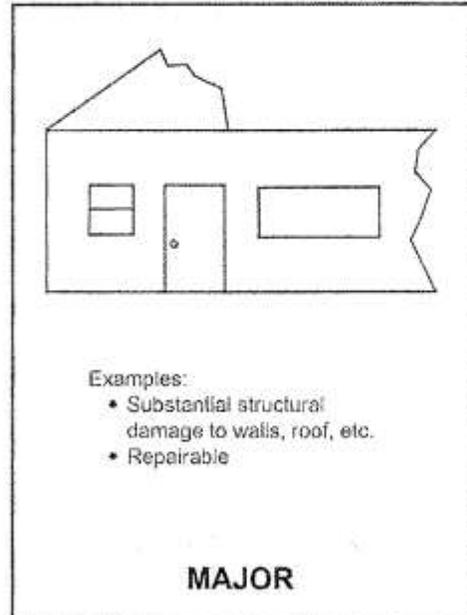
- Water standing under or around mobile home, but not touching the bottom board.
- Indication of water being around a mobile home, but not touching the bottom board following a flash flood.

AFFECTED

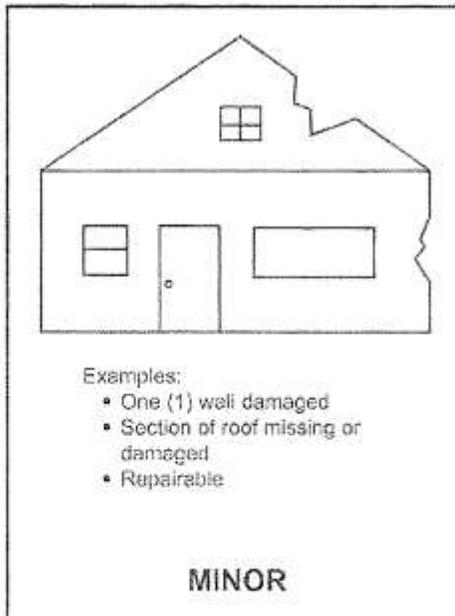
WIND DAMAGE: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING



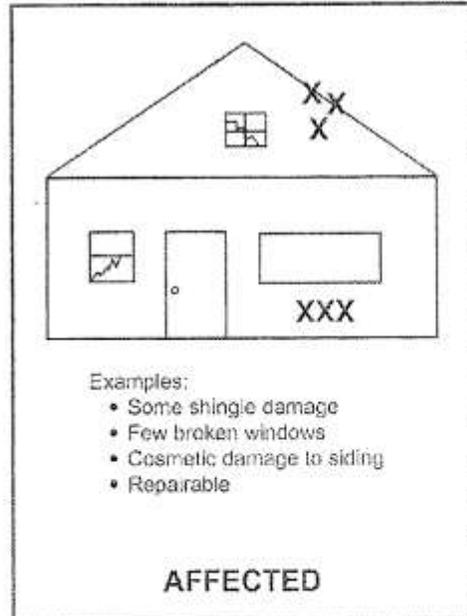
WIND DAMAGE: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING



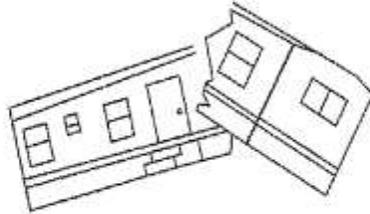
WIND DAMAGE: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING



WIND DAMAGE: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING



WIND DAMAGE: MOBILE HOME

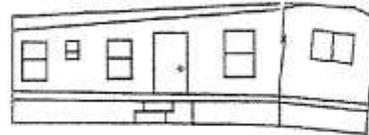


Examples:

- Total Loss
- Bent Frame
- Buckled walls, roof

DESTROYED

WIND DAMAGE: MOBILE HOME

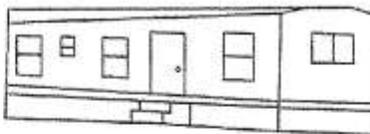


Examples:

- Wall and roof damage
- Shifted on piers/foundation

MAJOR

WIND DAMAGE: MOBILE HOME

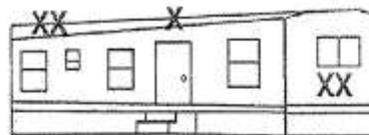


Examples:

- Utility connections broken
- Slight movement on piers/foundation

MINOR

WIND DAMAGE: MOBILE HOME



Examples:

- Minor dents to roof or siding

AFFECTED

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE: INSPECTIONS IN THE FIELD

Homes and personal property

Within 48 hours of a Presidential Declaration which includes Individual Assistance (IA), FEMA inspectors arrive in the counties to begin inspections to homes. All FEMA inspectors are contract employees and can be easily identified by their FEMA photo ID badges.

Every person/household seeking disaster assistance must first register with FEMA by either calling the registration line at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362), or applying on-line via the FEMA website (www.DisasterAssistance.gov). Within approximately 10 days following registration, the inspector will call the applicant to schedule an on-site inspection of the damaged property.

It is important to understand that not all disaster-related damages are eligible for federal disaster assistance. FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP) is not intended to restore the applicant's property to pre-loss condition or compensate the applicant for deferred maintenance. The IHP covers basic needs only and provides minimum assistance to make a home safe, sanitary and/or habitable. In the event the applicant has insurance applicable to the cause of damage, FEMA may help pay for basic needs not covered under the applicant's insurance policy. FEMA will not duplicate benefits.

Inspectors record the applicant's damage. They do not determine eligibility. FEMA inspections are not as detailed or itemized like an insurance claim. Inspectors limit the scope of their inspections to home repairs and essential household items, affecting habitability and/or living conditions. The average time to complete an inspection is approximately 15-20 minutes, depending on extent of damage. Applicants will be asked to provide proof of ownership (if applicable) and/or proof of occupancy (i.e. utility bill, mail, driver's license, etc.) at the time of inspection.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) can provide disaster loans to individual homeowners and renters. If through the FEMA registration process an individual pre-qualifies for SBA loan assistance, they will receive an SBA disaster loan application package in the mail. Applicants are encouraged to complete and return the loan application as soon as possible, as further FEMA assistance may be dependant on a final determination from SBA.

Completion and submission of the loan application may warrant a SBA loss verifier to contact the applicant to schedule an inspection of the damaged property. SBA will determine the cost to repair or restore the primary home to its pre-disaster condition and repair or replace personal property. A renter may apply for a personal property loan only.

Depending on program eligibility and need, it is conceivable for applicants to have multiple inspections (FEMA, SBA). Local building officials may conduct an inspection to determine whether a structure is habitable and safe to occupy. If the applicant is insured, a claim adjustor from the applicant's insurance company may also want to inspect the damages. Inspectors, loss verifiers and insurance adjustors conduct inspections pertinent to their own programs.

Businesses

FEMA does not provide disaster assistance grants to businesses, but will accept registrations from business owners for the purpose of linking them into the Small Business Administration (SBA) loan process. SBA offers low interest disaster assistance loans to businesses for the purpose of repairing damages to real property; machinery and equipment; and inventory. Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) are also available to small businesses unable to pay bills or meet operating expenses. A loss verifier will contact the business owner to schedule an inspection.

DISASTER-RELATED BUILDING INSPECTIONS LIST

The purpose of this information is to summarize the inspections that could take place following a disaster incident or event in your community. Your property may be subject to some or all of these inspections. You are strongly encouraged to contact your local building, zoning, and/or floodplain administrator prior to repairing your damaged structure to ensure that all necessary permits are obtained.

Damage Assessment Related Inspections	Who Does the Inspection?	What Do They Inspect?	Why Are They Doing the Inspection?	When Do They Do the Inspection?	What is the Result of the Inspection?
<u>American Red Cross (ARC) Damage Assessment Teams</u>	Trained ARC Damage Assessment personnel	Incident-damaged occupied, primary residences (apartments, single family homes, mobile homes, etc.)	To determine what forms of ARC assistance to provide	Inspections are conducted immediately after the incident as soon as homes are accessible and/or when allowed entry by local officials.	The information necessary for ARC to provide assistance has been identified and verified.
<u>County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and/or Local Officials</u>	Representatives from county EMA offices and/or local officials	Damages reported by residents; and pre-identified risk areas	To gather initial damage data to: - identify the scope and impact of the incident; - identify resources needed for emergency response and/or recovery	Inspections are conducted immediately after the incident occurs.	Information has been gathered to: - provide emergency response needed to save lives and protect property; - request a Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) from the state.
<u>Joint (federal/state/local) Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) Teams</u>	- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Small Business Administration (SBA) personnel; - state EMA; - local person with knowledge of location of damages	Incident-damaged occupied, primary residences (apartments, single family homes, mobile homes, etc.); SBA assesses businesses.	A Joint PDA is required by federal regulation to obtain the data needed to support a state request for federal disaster assistance.	Upon request by county EMA and following completion of local PDA	The state has data to support a request for federal disaster assistance. FEMA and SBA have the data needed to respond to the state request, if submitted.
Safety/Rebuilding Related Inspections	Who Does the Inspection?	What Do They Inspect?	Why Are They Doing the Inspection?	When Do They Do the Inspection?	What is the Result of the Inspection?
<u>Local Building Officials</u>	Certified building officials	Damaged buildings	To conduct safety and habitability inspections	Immediately after the incident and as soon as the building/home is accessible	Notification of accessibility (structure is safe to enter, has limited access or is condemned) and actions to take to access
<u>Local Flood Plain Manager</u>	Local floodplain administrator or certified building officials	Structures located in the 100-year floodplain that were built prior to the community's initial Flood Insurance Rate Map	This is one step in determining if a structure is "substantially damaged", defined as damage that equals or exceeds 50% of the structure's pre-event fair market value.	Substantial damage field inspections occur in the first few weeks after the incident and when the structures are accessible.	Information that will assist the local floodplain administrator determine if the structure is substantially damaged and how to comply with current flood damage reduction regulations. A local flood hazard area development permit must be obtained prior to any repairs.
<u>Local Building/Permitting Officials</u>	Building, zoning, and/or local floodplain administrator	Compliance of constructed or planned repairs to property and/or structure with local regulations	To ensure that repairs and/or planned construction meet local health and safety regulations	Beginning several days after the event and potentially lasting for several years	Obtaining the local permits, certificates of occupancy, and any other required documentation to demonstrate compliance with local building/zoning/floodplain regulations



DISASTER-RELATED BUILDING INSPECTIONS LIST

The purpose of this information is to summarize the inspections that could take place following a disaster incident or event in your community. Your property may be subject to some or all of these inspections. You are strongly encouraged to contact your local building, zoning, and/or floodplain administrator prior to repairing your damaged structure to ensure that all necessary permits are obtained.

Grant/Loan/Insurance/Other Inspections	Who Does the Inspection?	What Do They Inspect?	Why Are They Doing the Inspection?	When Do They Do the Inspection?	What is the Result of the Inspection?
<u>FEMA Habitability Inspectors</u>	Contractors hired and trained by FEMA	Uninsured event-related damages to primary residences of homeowners and renters	This is one step in determining eligibility for FEMA disaster assistance from the Individuals and Households Program (IHP).	An inspection is scheduled after FEMA assigns the FEMA registration to an inspector.	If damages and/or disaster-related costs are determined eligible, grants for various types of FEMA IHP assistance can be provided.
<u>Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Loan Program Loss Verifiers</u>	SBA loss verifiers	Event-related damages to primary residences of homeowners and renters; businesses	This is one step in determining eligibility for SBA disaster loan assistance.	SBA loss verifiers will conduct inspections after SBA receives a disaster loan application packet from a homeowner, renter or business.	SBA will propose a loan package for the eligible damages identified in the inspection.
<u>Voluntary Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations</u>	Case managers	Essential unmet needs	To determine essential unmet needs which would be forwarded to voluntary, non-governmental organizations for possible assistance	Inspections are conducted once insurance proceeds have been received and disaster assistance has been provided by FEMA and SBA.	Voluntary organizations may provide various forms of assistance for essential unmet needs.
<u>Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Project Managers</u>	Local official designated to manage a mitigation grant project	General property inspection and collection of records and information needed to develop a mitigation project grant application	To identify properties and interest in participating in a locally sponsored mitigation project that will reduce or permanently eliminate future risk to lives and property from natural hazards	Inspections are conducted several weeks to several months after the damage event.	Development of a mitigation project application. Project implementation will not occur until 18-24 months after the disaster declaration.
<u>Insurance Adjustors</u>	Insurance adjustors from insurance companies	Damages covered by the insurance policy	Inspection is in response to an insurance claim filed by the policyholder.	Inspection is conducted as soon as possible after the policyholder files a claim.	Settlement of the claim, which is based upon the adjustor's inspection and the policyholder's coverage

NO FEES should be charged for any of the listed inspections or assessments.

Ask for ID – do not allow entry to any person who is not willing to provide proper identification.

Safeguard personal information. Social Security and bank account numbers will not be required from inspectors.

If in doubt, do not give out information.





REGION V RECOVERY DIVISION

FACT SHEET

Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs)

The first fixed DRCs should be identified and scheduled to open between 48 hours and one week post-disaster declaration. When evaluating locations, keep in mind the following criteria:

Staffing

The building should be capable of housing, on average, 6-10 FEMA staff, 5-10 other federal agency staff, and state staff as needed (this number varies according to the size of the disaster).

Premises

Identify a facility that is an adequate distance from the affected area with square footage totaling about 1200-1500 square feet (64 square feet per person). You may want to consider the proximity of public transportation to make the building as accessible as possible to applicants. Also keep in mind parking space; the lot should be well-lit and have at least 40 spots available.

The building and neighborhood must be secure, safe and sanitary. FEMA conducts an inspection of any facility before it can be used for a DRC, assessing standards that include:

- Adequate ventilation, electricity and lighting
- Functional heating/cooling system and potable water
- Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Secure windows, exits and entrances
- Fire safe and low crime area
- Availability of janitorial services
- Ability to support numerous (10+) phone and data lines
- Adequate number of tables/chairs
- Compatible for inside wiring
- Functional restrooms
- Available for a minimum of 3 days, from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, Monday through Saturday and possibly on Sundays and holidays.

Setup Considerations: Mobile DRCs (MDRCs)

When searching for a location to put a fixed-mobile DRC or MDRC, remember the area must permit a 39 foot recreational vehicle to be parked (minimum height clearance of 14 feet), while still allowing for adequate visitor parking space. The site should be level, solid and provide an unobstructed southern view for satellite functionality.

For fixed-MDRCs (or those plugged into a building) all of the facility requirements listed above are applicable. MDRCs have a 150' cable that can be extended to supply phones and computers for the facility, so ensure the vehicle can be parked within those parameters. For MDRCs that are not connected to a fixed structure, there should be adequate space surrounding the vehicle to allow tents to be setup for accepting applicants.

FEMA DISASTER RECOVERY CENTERS

Following a Presidential disaster declaration that includes the Individual Assistance (IA) Program, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in conjunction with the state and local EMAs, may open temporary facilities called Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs). DRCs may be opened in presidentially designated counties in order to provide direct customer service. **The disaster survivor must register for assistance by calling the toll-free FEMA teleregistration line at 1-800-621-FEMA [3362] or by going on-line to the FEMA website at www.DisasterAssistance.gov.** Individual Assistance addresses uninsured losses caused by the disaster for categories of damage such as: damage to homes (both owner-occupied and renters), personal property (basic appliances, essential clothing and furniture), medical, dental, funeral and transportation.

FEMA requires DRCs to open within 48 hours to 1 week following the day of declaration. This timeframe allows disaster survivors the opportunity to apply for assistance, have inspections completed and receive their eligibility determination letters. FEMA program representatives can then specifically address the applicant's needs and recovery issues, as opposed to providing the same general information available from the FEMA HELPLINE or FEMA teleregistration. This timeframe also allows FEMA the opportunity to inspect proposed DRC sites and ensure that the facilities meet criteria for use. Finally, this timeframe gives the media ample time to publicize the availability and location of the DRCs.

FEMA may not open DRCs in every disaster declaration or in every county included in the declaration. Also, in some instances, FEMA may use alternatives to "fixed" or "stationary" DRCs. For example, FEMA and SBA may put together a team that goes to a pre-identified, publicly announced location for 1-3 days, and then move to a new location in another county. The period of time a DRC is open is dependent upon the number of visitors. Closure of the facility will occur following a public announcement by FEMA.

DRCs co-locate program representatives, typically FEMA and SBA, and any other State and/or local agencies or departments that want to be represented, into one facility to answer questions of disaster survivors that have completed the application process. Program representatives answer questions about the various forms of assistance, explain what happens next in the process, make copies of documents that may be needed for the various programs and offer recovery information, such as how to incorporate mitigation actions while repairing or rebuilding.

DRCs provide an excellent opportunity for disaster survivors to meet face to face with program specialists to receive specific information pertaining to their individual needs and recovery issues.

FEMA **must** conduct a safety and security inspection of any facility before it can be used for a DRC. If the facility does not meet FEMA minimum standards, it will not be used. **Recovery Centers should be established as close to the impacted areas as safely possible.** Following is the FEMA DRC Guidelines and Checklist for your use when looking for a facility to be used as a DRC. It contains information regarding FEMA-specific requirements and basic criteria. This is the criteria FEMA uses when inspecting potential DRC sites. **Please do not announce the location or address of a DRC until approved by FEMA.**

If you have any questions, please contact Brigitte Bouska, State DRC Coordinator, at (614) 799-3671 or Recovery Branch Chief at (614) 799-3669.

**FEMA DISASTER RECOVERY CENTER
GUIDELINES AND CHECKLIST
(Current as of November 2011)**

Following is a list of FEMA-specific requirements and basic criteria to consider when looking for a facility to be used as a DRC. This is the criteria that FEMA uses when they inspect potential DRC sites:

- ___ Name of facility and complete street address. Recovery Centers should be established as close to heavily damaged areas as safely possible.
- ___ Local and/or facility point of contact. (Name and phone number(s))
- ___ Neither the State nor FEMA will pay for the rent for use of the facility. FEMA will only pay for utilities or phones installed by them.
- ___ Can tables and chairs be made available? (The lack of these items will **not** affect FEMA acceptance of the site. FEMA can provide if needed.)
- ___ Facilities should be available from 7:30am-7pm daily, Monday through Saturday, and possibly on Sundays and holidays.
- ___ The facility needs to be available a minimum of 3 days without interruptions for prior commitments (i.e. basketball games, weddings, parties, meetings, etc.). Duration of usage will be dependent upon the number of applicants being served. An estimate will probably be available at the onset of the declaration.
- ___ Is janitorial service available?
- ___ If a portion of the facility is occupied, will FEMA be permitted to use the unused portion?
- ___ Facility needs to have safe entrances and exits to the parking area.
- ___ The size of the facility will vary dependant upon the number of local/State/Federal/Voluntary Agencies co-locating and the number of anticipated number of applicants to be served. At a minimum the space should be at least 1200-1500 square feet. This requirement will be site and need-specific. For example, if the DRC is not expected to have hundreds of visitors, the size could be as small as 700 square feet. If a large facility is needed, the space required could be up to 5,000 square feet.

FEMA-SECURITY AND/OR SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:

General Building Condition:

- ___ Basic structural integrity without damages. Does not leak.
- ___ Meets Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and is accessible to the physically impaired.
- ___ Walking surfaces must be safe.
- ___ No indication of hazardous materials or hazardous building materials (i.e. asbestos).

Electrical:

- ___ The electrical system must be sufficient to support additional equipment. (computers, faxes, copiers, etc.)
- ___ Electrical receptacles are well-grounded.
- ___ Lighting is in good condition.
- ___ Emergency lighting has been tested and is functional.
- ___ Parking area has good surface and is well lighted.

HVAC:

- ___ Equipment is functional and in acceptable working condition.
- ___ There is no indication of fuel leaks or hazardous materials in the building.
- ___ Comfort level is considered to be acceptable.

Fire Protection:

- ___ There is a functional fire alarm system.
- ___ Adequate multi-purpose fire extinguishers are located throughout the FEMA work area. (FEMA can provide, if necessary)
- ___ There are adequate exit signs throughout the FEMA work area.

Hygiene:

- Building is free of mold and other potential exposures.
- Restrooms are clean and functional.
- Sewage system is tied into the city system.
- Building has potable water.

Security:

- The facility is not located in a high crime area.
- Parking lot is well lighted.
- All the exterior door and windows that enter the FEMA work space can be secured and locked.
- Local law enforcement is available to respond if needed.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

FEMA Community Relations (CR) is an information collection, dissemination and public relations activity used to determine whether disaster-affected communities and individuals are receiving the assistance to which they are entitled. The primary goal of CR is to promote the availability of disaster assistance in the declared county.

In an effort to establish an immediate, identifiable on-scene presence, CR staff will converge on the designated counties within 2-3 days of a Presidential Declaration which includes Individual Assistance (IA). The county EMA director is the most important point of contact (POC) for CR. As such, CR staff will first want to meet with the EMA director to discuss proposed CR activities. Whenever possible, CR will contact the county EMA office to schedule an appointment prior to his or her arrival.

During the initial meeting CR will:

- Brief the EMA director on the IA application/ disaster assistance process.
- Brief the EMA director on Public Assistance and Mitigation programs, if applicable. (It is important to note that CR staff are not experts in any one disaster program, but can provide necessary, general information.)
- Ask the EMA director for a contact list of local officials and community leaders. This list should include daytime and evening phone numbers. CR staff will want to visit/contact these people to provide them with registration and program information.
- Gather information on problems and issues faced by the EMA director and other officials.
- Inquire about and be sensitive to the local political climate.
- Develop a footprint of the damaged area(s).
- Determine which of these areas have individuals and households most in need of disaster assistance. CR will target these areas first.
- Request information regarding cultural, ethnic and religious differences. Identify any language issues. (i.e. Should flyers be made available in another language other than English?)
- Identify special needs populations. (Which local agencies may assist in locating these individuals?)

Depending on the severity of the disaster, Community Relations will remain in the county for approximately 2-6 weeks. Their primary objective is to meet with as many organizations and people as possible, educating them on the disaster relief process and programs. As part of their outreach activities, CR may canvass neighborhoods, going door-to-door, dispersing information flyers regarding: teleregistration; open Disaster Recovery Center locations; Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster assistance; the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP); etc. Often, CR will partner with FEMA Human Services (HS), serving as the field contact for bereavements. They may also support HS in securing signed Release of Information forms from applicants. CR serves as the conduit of information back to the Joint Field Office (JFO).