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**Memo to:** All County Emergency Management Directors

**From:** Sima Merick, Executive Director  
Ohio Emergency Management Agency

**Subject:** *Assistance Toolbox- 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*

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The Assistance Toolbox has been developed by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) Disaster Recovery Branch (DRB) to provide a step-by-step explanation of the actions to be taken by local government to:

- Identify unmet needs of disaster survivors and communities
- Evaluate statewide impacts
- Engage state and local recovery partners for possible resources
- Evaluate applicability of state or federal supplemental assistance

This Toolbox also discusses the declaration process, assistance programs, recovery focused planning and public information and provides checklists for conducting damage assessment and coordinating Disaster Recovery Centers. This information is current and accurate at this time. However, this is a living document and as programs change and new information becomes available, updates will be made available on our website. Please contact the Disaster Recovery Branch at 614-799-3667 if you have questions or recommendations.

**Mission Statement**

*To coordinate activities to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters*

# Introduction

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**Purpose of Damage Assessment** Conducting damage assessment following an incident produces data to help decision makers at the local, state and federal level do the following:

- Identify unmet needs of disaster survivors and communities
- Evaluate statewide impacts
- Engage state and local recovery partners for possible resources
- Evaluate applicability of state or federal supplemental assistance by providing quantitative data regarding:
  - The degree of damage to the private sector - herein referred to as Individual Assistance (IA) - which addresses assistance to disaster survivors, businesses and non-profit organizations.
  - The costs incurred by the public sector - herein referred to as Public Assistance (PA) – which addresses assistance to local and state governments and certain private non-profit organizations for damages to their infrastructure and costs associated with debris operations and emergency protective measures.

It is fundamental to timely and accurate damage assessment for the county EMA to assign personnel who are trained and/or experienced in the damage assessment process to coordinate the assessment at the local level.

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**Timeframe for Completing Damage Assessment** The damage assessment process for IA and PA may occur concurrently or separately. The timing is dependent on the nature and urgency of the event.

Addressing the needs of disaster survivors is the priority, therefore, conducting the IA damage assessment first is the best course of action.

Due to the nature of information needed for the PA damage assessment (total estimated cost of the response/recovery), this is normally a longer process to complete and should be secondary to completing the IA damage assessment.

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**Responsibility for Damage Assessment** The county EMA is the primary point of contact for damage assessment in the county and should compile the damage assessment forms and forwards them to Ohio EMA.

It is recommended that the county EMA establish pre-incident, local damage assessment teams to conduct the IA damage assessment.

The county EMA should establish pre-incident, the process for gathering PA damage assessment from the public sector.

## Introduction

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### Assistance Benchmarks

*There are benchmarks for determining whether or not to seek federal or State financial assistance which will be explained in Tab C. You should not assume that thresholds until damage assessments are complete. Damage assessments provide local governments the data to explain to the public, elected officials and the media the impacts of the incident.*

*Finally, when the benchmarks are reached DO NOT STOP the damage assessment process but be sure to report into the local damage assessment team leader and county EMA office that the benchmark has been met. This should then be reported to Ohio EMA.*

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### Submitting Damage Assessment

Damage assessment is reported by the county EMA to the State EOC via:

- WebEOC – Damage Assessment Boards and/or;
- Assessment Room (email [emawatch@dps.ohio.gov](mailto:emawatch@dps.ohio.gov))

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### Table of Contents

#### [Tab A – Individual Assistance Damage Assessment](#)

This Tab addresses the damage assessment process for the private sector, individuals, households, businesses and private non-profit organizations.

#### [Tab B – Public Assistance Damage Assessment](#)

This Tab addresses assistance to the public sector including the damage assessment process and debris management.

#### [Tab C – Federal Declaration Process](#)

This Tab outlines the criteria and steps that take place following a disaster in order to obtain federal financial assistance.

#### [Tab D – Assistance Programs](#)

This Tab outlines some of the more common federal, state and non-governmental agencies assistance programs. Please refer to the State Recovery Strategies for additional information and resources.

[http://ema.ohio.gov/Recovery\\_StateRecoveryStrategies.aspx](http://ema.ohio.gov/Recovery_StateRecoveryStrategies.aspx)

#### [Tab E – Planning](#)

This Tab provides an overview of recovery, mitigation and debris management planning. Pre-incident planning can facilitate quicker and more comprehensive recovery for impacted communities. The Ohio EMA has several resources for assisting with local planning efforts.

# Introduction

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## [Tab F – Public Information](#)

This Tab provides some tools and tips to assist with the public information side of recovery from the damage assessment process, assistance programs and debris management. It also discusses interactions with elected officials and managing expectations related to recovery assistance.

## [Tab G – Terms](#)

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### Checklists

#### [Appendix A – Checklists](#)

This Appendix has checklists for local damage assessment coordinators and team members (*feel free to edit these checklists to suit your needs*), Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments (Joint PDAs) and Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) (*please do not edit these checklists*).

- Damage Assessment Coordinator Checklist
- Damage Assessment Team Leader Briefing Checklist
- Damage Assessment Team Member Checklist
- Disaster Recovery Centers Checklist
- Individual Assistance Damage Assessment Checklist
- Public Assistance Joint PDA Checklist
- Media and General Public Checklist
- Sample Damage Assessment Team Equipment Checklist

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### Forms

#### [Appendix B – Forms](#)

This Appendix has forms for conducting IA and PA damage assessments.

- Individual Assistance Damage Assessment Street Sheet
- Public Assistance Damage Assessment Form
- Public Assistance Damage Inventory Forms

# Introduction

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