



FEMA

Disaster News

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INSPECTIONS DUE FOR DISASTER-DAMAGED PROPERTIES; CHECKS FOR ELIGIBLE LOSSES SOON TO FOLLOW

CLEVELAND – Ohio residents who suffered losses in the severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds and flooding that occurred June 21-23 and who have registered for federal and state disaster assistance must have their damaged property inspected before they can receive financial assistance from the government.

“The inspectors assess the amount of damage and forward that information to FEMA,” said Jesse Munoz, the official in charge of recovery operations for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. “That’s a necessary first step in determining an applicant’s eligibility for home repair grants, rental assistance and other federal aid.”

Housing inspectors usually will schedule appointments within seven days or less after an applicant registers with FEMA by phone or on the agency’s Web site. The data collected during these inspections is transmitted each evening to the FEMA Processing Center. Those with eligible losses should receive a check in about a week or less.

The U.S. Small Business Administration also sends loss verifiers to inspect the property of those who have submitted low-interest disaster loan applications. SBA loans are made to homeowners for the repair or replacement of real estate or personal property. Renters also are eligible for low-interest loans to cover eligible personal property losses.

“We advise applicants to check identification from everyone who claims to be a damage inspector,” said Nancy Dragani, Ohio Emergency Management Agency’s executive director and state coordinating officer.

The inspector will ask to see some proof that the applicant owns or occupies the damaged property and that it is their primary residence. A mortgage statement, property tax receipt or lease agreement will usually suffice. Federal and state officials stress that there is no charge for these inspections.

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It is important that applicants keep their appointments with inspectors; otherwise, the processing of their assistance applications may be delayed. If they need to reschedule appointments, they can call FEMA's help line at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

Individuals may register for assistance by calling **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week until further notice. There is a toll-free TTY line for the speech- or hearing-impaired at **1-800-462-7585**. FEMA also accepts registrations on its Web site at www.fema.gov.

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FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA became a part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

The Ohio EMA coordinates state assistance and resources during an emergency and prepares the state for all hazards through planning, training, exercises and funding activities at the state and local levels. This includes providing eligible assistance to individuals and governmental entities recovering from disaster-related damage and costs.