



NJOEM Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) Process

Preliminary Damage Assessment

Preliminary Damage Assessment is the systematic process of gathering preliminary estimates of damage to an affected community in dollar amounts and a general description of the location, type, and severity of damage sustained by both the public and private sectors. It is the basis for determining the necessity of State and/or Federal assistance and type of assistance necessary for effective recovery.

Conducting a Preliminary Damage Assessment

The local municipality must determine what happened, who was affected, where it happened and the extent of the damages. Local damage assessment serves three essential purposes.

- a) PDA provides reliable damage estimates to be used as a basis in applying for State disaster assistance and determining the Governor's need to request a Presidential Disaster Declaration. If State/County dollar value thresholds are met, federal financial assistance may be available pursuant to the Stafford Act.
- b) PDA serves as the basis for effective implementation of the Federal Disaster Assistance Program, should a Presidential Disaster Declaration be granted.
- c) PDAs will assist in setting priorities to mitigate the effects on public health and safety.

Categories of Damage

- a) Public Assistance may be available for debris removal and emergency protective measures (e.g. actions taken before, during and after the disaster to save lives, protect public health and safety, or eliminate the immediate threat of significant damage to improved public and private property through cost effective measures).
- b) The Public Sector Category includes debris and wreckage clearance, emergency protective measures, road systems and bridges, water control facilities, public facilities, public buildings and equipment, publicly owned utility systems, facilities under construction, private non-profit facilities, park and recreational facilities.
- c) The Private Sector category includes damage to homes, businesses, industries, farms, private schools and personal possessions.
- d) Both public and private sector damage will be reported on the preliminary damage assessment report.
- e) If a Presidential Disaster Declaration has been issued, Individual Assistance may be available to individuals and families who have sustained losses, including damage to home, vehicle, personal property, business, or inventory, due to disasters. Individual Assistance may also include grants to help pay for temporary housing, emergency home repairs, uninsured and underinsured personal property losses; medical, dental, and funeral expenses caused by the disaster; and low-interest business disaster loans.

PDA information collection and reporting

a) PDA Forms

Local emergency managers should begin to compile PDA as soon as practical after the incident. Information is collected through “windshield surveys.” A windshield survey is an informal survey to estimate the damages incurred in the jurisdiction.

b) NJOEM Directive 84

Pursuant to NJOEM Directive 84, Preliminary Damage Assessment Reports (PDARs) must be compiled by the Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator within 24 hours after a disaster. A final detailed version should also be prepared; the final version is due within 72 hours after the disaster, and must accurately reflect the magnitude of the damages. Municipalities will forward this information to the County. Schools and other entities, such as private non-profits (PNPs), should also perform PDA and forward that information to the County/Municipality.

- i. Counties will conduct their own PDA for county property.
- ii. The County will forward all of the PDAR information to the State Director as soon as it is received.
- iii. If the disaster conditions make it impossible to submit the PDAR within the specified time frame, the Municipal Emergency Manager should inform the County so that NJOEM can be notified not to exclude their report when making submissions to FEMA.