

Initial Damage Assessment Checklist

The Initial Damage Assessment is meant to be just that, an initial assessment of the damage and impacts caused by the disaster. Don't "overdo" the IDA. Try not to spend time on work that will be repeated later, or that doesn't lead anywhere. The IDA only must outline enough damage and impacts to the community to bring in the right programs to take a closer look.

All those using this information should be cautioned concerning the limitations of the data, and the fact that variations should be expected between this initial assessment and the actual number of applications received should disaster assistance programs be offered.

GENERAL

- ___ Examine and note areas of major damage, and "big dollar" damage during the IDA.

- ___ Although insured losses should be noted, DO NOT spend a whole lot of time trying to collect detailed insurance information during the IDA. Determining the details of insurance in place is time consuming and unnecessary at this stage. If detailed insurance information is needed, it can be collected during a second assessment, such as the joint PDA.

[Note: There is an exception which may require an effort to more accurately estimate insurance coverage in-place; "small disasters" may require collecting insurance information during the IDA in order that the Small Business Administration can make a decision on whether or not to dispatch personnel to Oregon to lead an SBA "damage survey."]

- ___ The Individual Assistance Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) Field Data Collection Form is designed to assist you in conducting the IDA for homes and businesses.

- ___ The Infrastructure (Public Assistance) Initial Damage Assessment Data Collection Form may assist you in conducting the IDA for public sector damages.

- ___ Analyze IDA data based on the following questions:
 - ___ Is the damage such that only immediate personal needs exist? If so, these needs can probably be met by volunteer organizations such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Mennonite Disaster Service, and others.

 - ___ Is the damage primarily to the agricultural sector? If so, you may want to ask the state to look into U.S. Department of Agriculture assistance.

 - ___ Are the impacts primarily to businesses which have suffered significant damage or other problems which would cause loss of revenue? If so, you may want to ask the state to look into Small Business Administration (SBA) programs.

 - ___ Is the damage primarily to homes? If so, perhaps the state should request SBA assistance, or request an Individual Assistance joint PDA.

 - ___ Is the damage primarily to publicly owned facilities? If so, perhaps the state should request a Public Assistance joint PDA.

WHO TO INVOLVE

Since speed and accuracy are essential in obtaining the maximum amount of information in the shortest amount of time, there should be more than one person involved in the IDA process. The Local Emergency Program Manager should assemble a team to assist, such as:

- ___ American Red Cross (ARC) officials: depending on the capabilities of the ARC which serves your area, you may want to ask the ARC to coordinate the Initial Damage Assessment effort with respect to homes, and to assess the number of persons significantly impacted by the disaster. In some cases, the ARC will have already done so; you may be able to utilize information they have already gathered.
- ___ Building inspectors and tax assessors from local governments, and appraisers from lending institutions or insurance companies to evaluate buildings, manufactured homes, and businesses
- ___ City / county engineers, public works officials, utility officials, etc. for an assessment of damages to roads, bridges, other public facilities, and utility systems
- ___ Hospital and urgent care facility officials for information on injuries and fatalities
- ___ School district officials to provide school damage figures
- ___ County health officials for an assessment of disaster effects on community health
- ___ Officials in charge of levees, drainage systems, private nonprofit and recreational facilities, etc.
- ___ County agent for farm and ranch damage assessment

COLLECTING INITIAL DAMAGE ASSESSMENT DATA BY TELEPHONE BANK

Local jurisdictions may want to establish a telephone bank to collect initial damage assessment information on damage and impacts to homes and businesses. If you decide to utilize the telephone bank approach, work with local media to reach affected individuals, families, and businesses. For each, try to collect at least the following:

- ___ Name of individual, family, or business
- ___ Address of the damaged or impacted structure
- ___ Mailing address if different
- ___ Telephone numbers where the person reporting the damage or impacts can be reached
- ___ If a home, is it a primary home or a second home? Is it a rental? If so, count the home twice; once as a home, a second time as a business. Try to obtain the appropriate points-of-contact for both.
- ___ Is the loss / damage insured?
- ___ Obtain a brief description of, and - if possible - estimated cost associated with the damage or impact: collect only enough information to be able to categorize the damage as minor, major, or destroyed. Also, note homes and businesses that are not damaged, but which are *directly* impacted, such as loss of potable water, loss of septic system, loss of driveway access, etc. Homes meeting this criteria should be noted as affected habitable; businesses as interrupted.

INITIAL DAMAGE ASSESSMENT BY AIRCRAFT

There are both advantages and disadvantages to conducting an Initial Damage Assessment by aircraft. Consider the following...

Potential disadvantages:

- , Weather
- , Cost
- , Are the appropriate aircraft and pilots available? How about persons able to interpret ground conditions from the air?
- , The aircraft may move too fast, and provide too little detail to allow a very accurate assessment of damages.

Potential advantages:

- , Dual use; aircraft used to assist in evacuation coordination and SAR operations can also be assessing damage.
- , One can often assess the "big picture" better, and examine a large area all at once.
- , It's quick, and sometimes may be safer.
- , It may provide the best access to the disaster area.
- , It can be a tool to help persuade state and federal officials to assist with dollars and resources.

Helicopters have many advantages over fixed wing aircraft, but are also more expensive.

Some of the problems with aerial damage assessment can be overcome with video or photo recording. Persons with interpretive skills can then take a closer look at the details later.