



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 and or eligible entity 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 types of assistance necessary for effective recovery.

Conducting a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA)

The local municipality must determine what happened, who was affected, where it happened and the extent of the damage. 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 the federally designated County and State dollar value thresholds are met, Federal assistance may be available via the FEMA Public Assistance a/o Individual Assistance Program pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Act.
- b) PDA serves as the basis for effective implementation of the Federal disaster assistance programs listed above should a Presidential Disaster Declaration be granted.
- c) PDAs also assist in establishing the priority list of disaster impacts so to respond to and aid in the response and recovery from their effects on critical services, public health, safety, and improved property.

Categories of Damage

- a) FEMA's Public Assistance Program (PA) 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, Public Assistance (PA) includes reimbursement for debris and wreckage clearance, emergency protective measures, plus repair / replacement of road systems and bridges, water control facilities, public facilities, public buildings and equipment, publicly owned utility systems, qualified private non-profit facilities, parks and recreational facilities.
- c) The Private Sector Category, Individual Assistance (IA) includes damage to homes, businesses, industries, farms, private schools and personal possessions.
- d) Both public and private sector damage will be reported in the Preliminary Damage Assessment report. (PDA)

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; plus, low-interest business disaster loans may be offered by the Small Business Administration (SBA)

PDA Information Collection and Reporting

a) PDA Reporting (PDF or Survey123)

After a significant incident occurs, all State, County, Local government and eligible PNP organizations should immediately conduct a “windshield survey” to identify the scope and scale of impact to their infrastructure and /or private sector. A windshield survey is an efficient method to estimate the damages incurred and identify critical service needs.

b) NJOEM Directive #4 (Effective date January 14, 2022)

Pursuant to NJOEM Directive 84, Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) occur during completion of “windshield surveys “. The NJOEM Emergency Response Bureau (ERB) will determine if the event resulted in significant impact and expenses for debris removal, emergency protective measures, damage to critical infrastructure and/ or private property, then advise the County OEMs that “Initial PDAs” be submitted in accordance with Phase One and Phase Two of the process to justify the need for FEMA PA or IA.

* Note: The Recovery Bureau- Public Assistance Unit shall be responsible for contacting State and quasi - State agencies to coordinate initial PDAs to the ERB.

Phase One – during Phase One a completed “Initial PDA” shall be prepared by each State, County and Local government and eligible PNP organizations, then submitted to the County OEM as soon as possible, **but no later than 7 days after the incident date.**

* Note: Municipal coordinators should ensure their school districts and qualified PNPs perform PDAs and forward their information to the County OEM.

- i. The County OEMs must forward the completed “Initial PDAs” to the ERB as soon as possible for review and reporting accuracy.
- ii. If the Initial PDAs do not project the potential to achieve FEMA thresholds toward a federal declaration, the ERB will notify the County OEMs in writing that the State is unable to substantiate a request for federal assistance.
- iii. If it is determined that a possibility exists to achieve the State threshold, the ERB will notify the affected County OEMs and the Recovery Bureau – PA Unit will begin Phase Two.

Phase Two – during Phase Two, a more detailed / updated version of the PDA shall be prepared by each State, County, and Local government and eligible PNP organizations and submitted to the Recovery Bureau – PA Unit as soon as possible, **but no later than 14 days after the incident date.**

- i. The Recovery Bureau – PA Unit will analyze the updated PDAs, verify damage and cost information, then advise the NJOEM leadership if the State has achieved their federally designated thresholds to request a FEMA / State Joint PDA (44CFR 206.33 and FEMA policy) **The Joint PDA should be concluded no later than day 21 after the incident date.**

- ii. Completion of the FEMA / State Joint PDA provides the basis by which the Governor determines to request a federal disaster declaration.
- iii. **Beginning day 22, but no later than the Federal Regulation 30 days after the incident date,** the Governor must submit either one or both of the following:
 - 1. Request Letter for a Federal Declaration
 - 2. Time Extension Request Letter to the FEMA Region II Administrator asking for 30 additional days to perform further PDAs to ensure all State, County and Local government involvement and thresholds being achieved.