



# Preliminary Damage Assessment Team

POCKET GUIDE for Individual Assistance



State Emergency Response Team  
*"Failure is not an option"*

# Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) Pocket Field Guide

## Purpose

This field guide serves as a quick reference tool for State/Federal Preliminary Damage Assessment Team members.

## Why do a Damage Assessment?

- Determine the impact and magnitude of an event.
- Identify unmet needs of individuals, businesses, the public sector and the community as a whole.
- Give off-scene responders the elements of information they need to plan for assistance.

## CONTENTS

- Assistance Criteria
- Reporting Requirements
- Things to Remember
- Standard Building Measurements
- Damage by Type
- Summary Worksheet
- Field Notes
- Contact Sheet

## DAMAGE TYPE, RESIDENCE & SAFETY

- Blue — Flood Water Depth Chart
- Red — Destroyed
- Orange — Major
- Yellow — Minor
- Green — Affected
- Gray — Inaccessible
- Black — Residence
- Purple — Safety

## State's Criteria for Requesting Federal Disaster Assistance

Small Business Administration (SBA) only—Disaster Loan Program

There must be a minimum of twenty-five (25) homes and/or businesses with at least 40% uninsured damages. SBA makes an economic injury declaration given at least five (5) small businesses that have suffered substantial economic injury as a result of the disaster.

13 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 123.3(3)

## FEMA

**NO SPECIFIC THRESHOLD required for Individual Assistance, Federal declaration decision based upon but not limited to:**

- Extent of damages (number uninsured, majorly damaged or destroyed).
- Concentration of damages (high concentration of damages in small area).
- Trauma (deaths, injuries, large scale disruption of community services).
- Special populations (e.g. elderly, low-income, persons with disabilities, unemployed).
- Other assistance available (insurance and voluntary agencies).
- Recent multiple disasters (disaster history within the last 12 months).

44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 206.48(b), FEMA PDA Training

# Reporting Requirements

## Timely Reporting

State/Federal PDA Teams should report updated damage numbers to the appropriate PDA Coordinator twice a day. Damage may be reported via telephone, email, fax, courier or other technology.

## Immediate Items to Report

There are a few things that must be reported immediately to the PDA Coordinators so that responders can assist: **special needs individuals** requiring immediate attention (e.g. nursing home damage), **safety concerns** for responders (e.g. team injuries, impending weather), **disruption of emergency services** (e.g. hospitals overwhelmed) and **media-related concerns**.

## Dissenting Opinions

A significant difference of opinion is when team members cannot come to a decision within one damage level of another (i.e. destroyed vs. minor). Any significant differences in opinion within the team regarding damage level should be reported by the team member to their respective PDA Coordinator prior to leaving the damage area. The State and FEMA PDA Coordinators will collaborate to provide a common answer so there is concurrence in the Joint PDA totals.

*State PDA Coordinator Contact Info:*

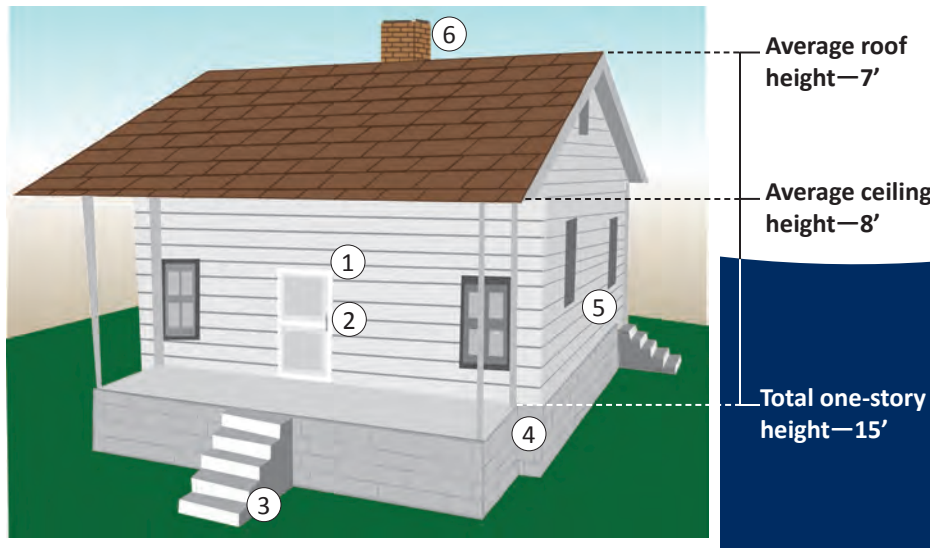
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Conduct **visual inspection** to verify damages.
- ✓ When discussing damages with property owner, be compassionate but also **manage expectations** (you are just evaluating the extent of damage, PDA Teams have no control over approval of disaster declarations).
- ✓ When assessing whether a survivor is insured, determine that they are insured for **THIS TYPE OF EVENT** (flood, wind, fire, etc.).
- ✓ Include impact on **businesses**.
  
- ✓ Be **objective** (don't downplay, don't exaggerate).
- ✓ Focus on **HABITABILITY**.
- ✓ If flood water was **standing** for more than 24 hours or **contaminated**, degree of damage is increased by one level.
- ✓ Identify **special needs** (low income, elderly, unemployed, persons with disabilities) and **human needs** (food, water, shelter, medicine).
- ✓ Reach a **CONSENSUS** among State and FEMA members of the team. If major disagreements occur (ex. Major vs. Affected), call the appropriate PDA Coordinator.
- ✓ Conduct **exit interview** with local emergency management director, or designee, to discuss PDA findings.
- ✓ All parties (local, state, federal partners) should have an idea of what each other's **final numbers** are. Ideally FEMA PDA totals concur with State PDA team totals.

## Standard Building Measurements

1. Door height—6' 8"
2. Door knob—36" from floor
3. Each step—7" high
4. Concrete block—8" high
5. Aluminum siding section—4" or 8" high
6. Brick—2.5" high
7. Electrical Outlet—12"-18" from floor (not pictured)



## Flood Water Depth Chart

### Single or Multi-Family Home

- ◆ 0-12" Affected
- ◆ 1-3' Minor
- ◆ 3-5' Major
- ◆ 5'+ Destroyed

### Mobile Home

- ◆ 0-1" Affected
- ◆ 1"-1' Minor
- ◆ 1-4' Major
- ◆ 4'+ Destroyed

## Flood-Specific Notes

- ◆ Water depths only applicable to living areas (ex. No crawl spaces or uninhabited basements).
- ◆ If standing water for more than 24 hours, increase one level of damage.
- ◆ If contaminated water, increase one level of damage.
- ◆ As a rule of thumb, if water did not reach electrical outlets and flooring is sound, then this is minor or affected damage.
- ◆ Older mobile homes may have plywood or particle board floors.  
Plywood—Major damage at 6"- 4'      Particle—Major damage at 1"



**Destroyed: 5,' standing water,  
Single Family (SF)**



**Major: 3," standing water,  
Mobile Home (MH)**



**Minor: 10," standing water, Single Family (SF)**



**Affected: <12," Single Family (SF)**

## Destroyed Structure Description

**Definition:** Structure is a total loss. Not economically feasible to rebuild. Permanently uninhabitable.

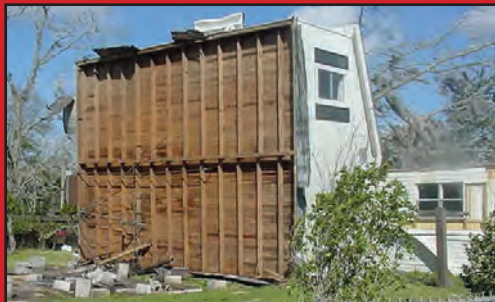
**General Description:** Complete failure of major structural components (complete collapse of wall or roof). Structure leveled above the foundation or second floor is gone. Foundation or basement is significantly damaged.

**Things to Look For:** Structure leveled or has major shifting off its foundation. Only the foundation remains. Roof is gone. Noticeable distortion to walls. For mobile homes, significant damage to the roof covering, sheathing and framing.

**Note:** A structure can also be considered destroyed if it is red-tagged or condemned by building officials.



**Roof & walls collapsed, Single Family (SF)**



**Major shifting off foundation, Single Family (SF)**



**Roof gone, walls collapsed, Mobile Home (MH)**



**Foundation, roof, walls unsound, Multi-Family (MF)**

## Major Structure Description

**Definition:** Building has sustained structural or significant damage and is currently uninhabitable. Extensive repairs are necessary, therefore the structure cannot be made habitable in a short period of time (less than a month).

**General Description:** Substantial failures to structural elements of the residence. Walls partially collapsed. Exterior frame damaged. Roof partially off or partially collapsed. Major damage to utilities: furnace, water heater, well, septic system. Shifting or settling of the foundation.

**Things to Look For:** Portions of the roof missing. Roof clearly lifted. Single family—twisted, bowed, cracked or collapsed walls. Structure penetrated by large foreign object, such as tree. Damaged foundation. Flooring structurally unsound. Mobile home displaced from foundation. Mobile home structural components damaged— windows, doors, wall coverings, roof, bottom board insulation, duct work and/or utility hook up. Can rafters be seen? Any shifts or cracks in structural elements?

**Note:** The difference between major and minor is about the level of uninhabitability. Both major and minor are uninhabitable, but major damage will keep residents out of their home for a month or more.



Wall coverings damaged and exposed,  
Mobile Home (MH)



Roof partially collapsed, Mobile Home (MH)



Structural cracks—roof lifted,  
Single Family (SF)



Foundation damaged, Single Family (SF)

## Minor Structure Description

**Definition:** Structure is damaged and uninhabitable. Minor repairs are necessary to make the structure habitable, but they can be completed in a short period of time (less than a month). The dwelling has some damage, but can be used without significant repair.

**General Description:** Not safe to stay here—Interior flooring/ exterior walls with minor damage. Tree(s) fallen on structure without penetrating. Smoke damage. Minor damage to structural elements.

**Things to Look For:** One wall or section of roof with unsafe but minor damage. Many broken windows. Buckled or broken window frames or doors (security issue). Minor damage to the septic system or other utilities. Mobile home structural elements sustained minor damage— windows, doors, wall coverings, roof, bottom board insulation, duct work and/or utility hook up.

**Note:** Ask yourself, “Is it safe to stay here tonight?” “Is this damage structural?” “Are ALL entrances structurally weak or dangerous?”

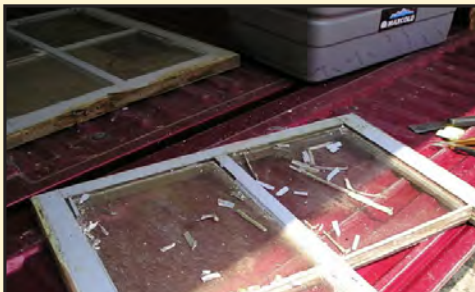
Minor Structure Examples



Tree on structure but no breach,  
Single Family (SF)



Damage to wall small breach,  
Multi-Family (MF)



Window frames broken



Flood septic tank damage

## Affected Structure Description

**Definition:** Structure has received minimal damage and is habitable without repairs.

**General Description:** Damage in which the home is safe to live in, but has been affected by the storm. Damage that is affected may occur to outside but connected structures (garage, porch, carport, etc).

**Things to Look For:** Chimney or porch damaged. Carpet on first floor soaked. A broken window. Damage to cars. Few missing shingles, loose, missing siding. Damage to air conditioning exterior unit. Some minor basement flooding.

**Note:** Remember, the difference between affected and minor is about **habitability**. Can I stay here safely tonight? If the damage is cosmetic only, the structure is affected.



**Broken screens**



**Few missing shingles,  
covered, no impending weather**



**Gutter damage and debris**



**Loose and missing siding**

## Inaccessible Structure Description

**Definition:** Known structures exist in an area that the team or resident cannot safely enter in order to verify damage.

**General Description:** Blocked access due to flooding, downed trees, unhealthy conditions. Resident may have no damage but cannot reside in the home (e.g. apartment complex where only the first floor is flooded but all levels are inaccessible).

**Things to Look For:** No feasible way to gain access to verify damage. Appears that the resident has only been affected but cannot gain access.

**Note:** Do everything you can to see the damage. If the PDA team still cannot gain access, estimate the number of inaccessible homes using information from local officials, flyovers or other technology. If the team can gain access but residents reasonably cannot, then mark the damage level seen for destroyed, major and minorly damaged homes only. DO NOT MARK INACCESSIBLE. **For affected homes that are also inaccessible to the resident, mark inaccessible rather than affected**, to err on the side of the applicant.

## Inaccessible Structure Description



No damage to home, but residence will be inaccessible for an indeterminate amount of time

**PDA Teams cannot enter for safety reasons — determine number of homes inaccessible**



## Residence Information

Before and during a Joint PDA, consult with Emergency Management (EM) Director and local representative to determine occupancy and assistance type. Otherwise make your best house by house judgment.

### OCCUPANCY TYPE

**Owner (O):** A residential structure whose legal possessor is also the permanent resident.

**Renter (R):** A residential structure in which the legal possessor allows a tenant to use the structure as their permanent residence.

**Secondary (2nd):** A residential structure occupied part-time by a person in addition to his or her primary residence (e.g. often beach-front homes, homes in high tourism areas).

### ASSISTANCE TYPE

**Insured (INS):** A structure covered by an insurance policy for the type of event which caused damage.

#### TIPS:

- Renters and low-income residents are less likely to have insurance.
- Homeowners with mortgages are required to have wind insurance.
- Older neighborhoods may not have insurance.
- Most new homes around a large body of water have flood insurance.
- When talking to survivors, first ask if they own the home (indicates **wind** insurance), then ask if they have **flood** insurance.

**Low-Income (Lo):** A structure whose occupant has limited resources to assist in their recovery.

#### TIPS:

- Don't ask survivors if they are low-income (offensive).
- Make best judgment based on County EM, local PDA team member and area statistics.

## Residence Information

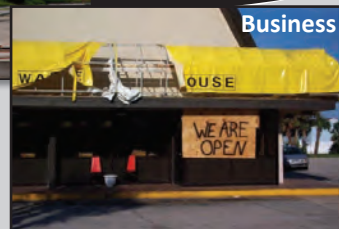
### STRUCTURE TYPE

**Single Family (SF)**: A residential structure designed to host one family, sharing no walls or structural elements with another dwelling.

**Multi-Family (MF)**: A residential structure designed to host more than one family, potentially sharing walls or structural elements with another dwelling.

**Mobile Home (MH)**: A residential structure with no permanent foundation that may be readied for mobile transport.

**Business (BIZ)**: A structure whose sole use is that of a commercial, industrial or professional enterprise.



## **Safety Considerations - You are about to enter a hazardous situation - be careful.**

### **Tips**

- Ask if there are safety considerations at the damage pre-briefing.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- If a situation appears dangerous, back out.
- Use good judgment, remember that emergency personnel may be delayed in assisting you and your team if you are hurt.
- For all medical emergencies, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- If you are feeling ill or have been hurt, contact the PDA Coordinator immediately.
- When in doubt, call the coordinator or appropriate emergency personnel.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Lightweight cotton team shirt
- Long pants
- Waterproof, over-the-ankle boots
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Hand sanitizer
- Drinking water
- Cell phone

### **Depending on Event**

- Rain jacket
- Bug spray
- Gloves
- Respiratory protection

## POTENTIAL HAZARDS

HAZARD	SIGNS	PREVENTION	SUGGESTED RESPONSE
<b>Heat Stress &amp; Exposure</b>	Headaches, dizziness, vomiting, dry, hot skin, confusion, seizures, loss of consciousness.	Block out sun, rest regularly, drink lots of water (at least 1 cup every 20 minutes), avoid alcohol and caffeine.	Move to cool, shaded area, loosen or remove heavy clothing, provide cool drinking water, fan and mist the person with water, call 911.
<b>Severe Weather</b>	Sudden reversal of wind direction, rise in wind speed, sharp drop in temperature, heavy rain, hail and lightning.	Watch for onset conditions and retreat to safety before the weather arrives.	Take shelter in building if possible. When no shelter—avoid high objects, sit or lie down. Drop to ground if electrical charge is felt.
<b>Downed Power Lines</b>  <b>21</b>	Downed power line, downed conductor.	Assume electrical lines are energized. Do not drive over downed power lines. Look for downed conductors as they may energize other objects—fences, water pipes, bushes, trees, etc.	If vehicle electrified, do not get out unless car is on fire. If on fire, attempt to jump completely clear (not touching vehicle and ground at same time). Land with both feet together and bunny hop to safety.

HAZARD	SIGNS	PREVENTION	SUGGESTED RESPONSE
<b>Flood Water Contact</b>	Bacterial infection: stomachache, fever, vomiting, diarrhea.	Wear boots and rain gear. Protect from cuts and scrapes. Wash hands often.	Use soap and water to clean exposed areas. See doctor if ill.
<b>Poisonous Plants</b>	Red rash within days. Possible bumps, patches, streaking or weeping blisters. Swelling, itching.	Wear long pants, boots. Identify plants using "Leaves of 3, let it be."	Rinse skin with rubbing alcohol or degreasing soap. Do not scratch. Take antihistamines and apply wet compresses, calamine lotion or hydrocortisone cream to reduce itching.
<b>Aggressive Dogs</b>	Growling, snarling, snapping, hissing, tail high and stiff, hair on back standing up.	Remain still. Avoid direct eye contact. Allow space for animal to escape. Put something between you and dog (trash can lid).	If you fall, protect your head; curl into a ball with your hands over your ears and remain motionless. Wash wounds immediately with soap.
<b>Arachnids</b>	Spiders: itching or rash, pain radiating from bite, muscle pain, reddish to purplish color skin or blister.	Wear long pants, avoid stacked or undisturbed piles of materials and tall grass.	Identify type of spider if possible, wash bite area with soap and water, apply ice, elevate bite area, seek medical attention.



HAZARD	SIGNS	PREVENTION	SUGGESTED RESPONSE
<b>Insects</b>	Ticks: body aches, fever, headaches, fatigue, rash, stiff neck, facial paralysis.	Wear repellent with Deet, long pants. Avoid sites with woods, bushes, tall grass.	Remove ticks with fine-tipped tweezers—grasp tick firmly as close to skin as possible. Clean area with soap and water.
	Bees, wasps, hornets: severe pain at sting site.	Avoid perfumed soaps, shampoos and deodorants. Bathe daily. If one attacking, do not run. If many, run indoors or jump in water.	Ensure no allergic reaction, wash site with soap and water. Remove stinger using gauze wiped over area or by scraping fingernail over area (no tweezers). Apply ice. Antihistamines may help.
	Fire ants: Burning sensation, red bumps may form white fluid-filled pustules.	Wear long pants, socks tucked in. Avoid ant mounds. May also be found on trees or in water.	Seek medical attention if sting causes chest pain, nausea, severe sweating, loss of breath, severe sweating or slurred speech.

HAZARD	SIGNS	PREVENTION	SUGGESTED RESPONSE
Incident Stress	Disorientation, fatigue, memory loss, behavior shifts (risk-taking, easily angered). Inability to relax off-duty.	Pace yourself (< 12 hour workday), monitor each other, take frequent rest breaks and maintain adequate nutrition.	Inform your Supervisor, demobilize appropriately. Seek counseling. Avoid drugs and alcohol.
Eye Trauma	Speck in eye, cuts, punctures, objects, chemical burn.	Wear safety glasses if needed.	<p><b>Speck in eye:</b> do not rub, flush eye with eye wash, see doctor if speck does not wash out or if pain continues.</p> <p><b>Cuts, punctures, objects:</b> do not wash out, do not try to remove object, stabilize eye without pressure (use paper cup). <b>Chemical burn:</b> flush with drinkable water for 15+ minutes.</p>

# Summary Worksheet

DATE : \_\_\_\_\_

TIME : \_\_\_\_\_

## DESTROYED

O: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

R: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

## MAJOR

O: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

R: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

## MINOR

O: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

R: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

## AFFECTED

O: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

R: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

## INACCESSIBLE

O: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

R: \_\_\_\_\_ LO: \_\_\_\_\_ INS: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

## IMPORTANT NOTES

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Field Notes

Storm Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Industry Impact: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Coverage: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Field Notes continued...

Available Resources: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other—special needs, language barriers, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Shelters open: \_\_\_\_\_ Persons in shelters: \_\_\_\_\_ Feeding status: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDICAL IMPACT** Injuries: \_\_\_\_\_ Deaths: \_\_\_\_\_ Missing: \_\_\_\_\_

# Contact Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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