

Preliminary Damage Assessment Guide 2021 Summary of Changes

On June 8, 2020, FEMA released its Preliminary Damage Assessment Guide (PDA Guide), the update to the 2016 Damage Assessment Operations Manual. The PDA Guide was available for public comment for one year which closed on June 8, 2021. All feedback received during the open comment period have been adjudicated. This document highlights key changes made as a result of the public comment period.

Background

- A Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) is the mechanism state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments and the Federal Government use to determine the impact and magnitude of damage following a disaster and the resulting unmet needs to individuals, businesses, the public sector, and communities. The primary objective of the PDA is to collect information, conduct analysis, and provide situational awareness to SLTT government leaders to determine whether the impacts of a disaster warrant a disaster declaration request under the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 5121 et seq.).

Summary of Changes

CHANGES TO EXPEDITED DECLARATIONS

- Updated language in the Expedited Declarations section to include that PDA operations can be conducted post-declaration or for add-on counties/programs.

CHANGES TO INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ASSISTANCE METHODS

- Updated language to clarify that financial assistance, in addition to direct assistance, may be provided to disaster survivors.

CHANGES TO DEFINITIONS OF DEGREE OF DAMAGES FOR INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

- Updated to exclude *Inaccessible* as a degree of damage.

CHANGES TO INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE DOOR-TO-DOOR ASSESSMENTS LANGUAGE

- Updated language in the Door-to-Door Assessments section to exclude *Major or Destroyed* as homes in all damage categories should be assessed.



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CHANGES TO CONTAMINANTS IN THE WATER LANGUAGE

- Updated language to better align with contaminated flood waters and protocols required for observing and validating damages.

CHANGES TO DAMAGE TO PORCH, CARPORT, GARAGE, AND/OR AN OUTBUILDING LANGUAGE

- Updated language to better clarify that these types of structures are generally not eligible for Individual Assistance.

CHANGES TO FEMA OFFICE AND WEBSITE ADDRESS

- Updated language to add new FEMA PDA Program Office and update FEMA.gov website address.