

Disaster Recovery Subject Guide

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Introduction

Disasters (fires, floods, storms, earthquakes, etc.) produce chaotic situations even with proper preparation and planning. The first response is always to save and preserve the lives of victims. The next level of response to disaster is to determine the extent of the damage. The Red Cross arrives early and requires no forms, providing precious assistance to both victims and relief workers in the early stages. However, state and federal response agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Small Business Administration (SBA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Energy (DOE), etc. have requirements for the gathering and dissemination of damage data. Some have funds available to assist communities, businesses, and individuals, but **all** require estimates of damage before funds begin to flow. No state or federal agency writes a single check without estimates of damage, on the proper forms, filled out in the proper way. Therefore, the damage assessment process is a critical part of disaster response and recovery and this subject guide is intended to assist property assessment professionals.

Adapted from "The Assessor as an Integral Partner in Disaster Planning, Response, and Recovery" by Morgan B. Gilreath, Jr. *Fair & Equitable*, December 2006, 4 (12), 3-9.



Snapshot on May 7, 2018 of the RSOE real-time map of disasters. <http://hisz.rsoe.hu/alertmap/index2.php#>

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Websites

[**American Planning Association Recovery News Blog**](#) - the APA provides updates on many natural disasters for local officials and includes videos and images. Take advantage of the RSS feed to be notified of new postings.

[**Disaster Assistance**](#) – the U.S. government’s Web site for applying for help after a disaster. List of 72 programs from 17 federal agencies that victims can apply for online.

[**Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)**](#). This agency has a headquarters and 10 regional offices that partner with other federal, state, and local agencies as well as private organizations to prepare for, protect against, respond to, and recover from all hazards.

[**FEMA Emergency Management Institute**](#) – offers self-paced, online courses designed for people who have emergency management responsibilities and the general public. All are offered free-of-charge to those who qualify for enrollment.

[**FEMA Mapping Information Platform \(MIP\)**](#) -The Federal Emergency Management Agency is initiating Risk MAP and has developed a multi-year plan spanning FY10-FY14. The vision for Risk MAP is to deliver quality data that increases public awareness and leads to action that reduces risk to life and property. Risk MAP builds on flood hazard data and maps produced during the Flood Map Modernization program.

[**FEMA’s Substantial Damage Estimator software**](#), Version 2.0, released November 2012. Download program online.

[**Natural and man-made hazards resource list**](#), by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 1993 to present.

[**Natural Hazards Center**](#) by the University of Colorado at Boulder. The Resource center is a virtual portal to both U.S. and international hazards agencies as well as state & regional agencies including relief organizations. Also includes a wealth of statistics on various types of disasters, photographs and images, and annotated bibliographies. The center produces a highly-respected, bi-monthly periodical on hazard issues called Natural Hazard Observer. Readers may sign up to receive the free publication.

[**RSOE Emergency and Disaster Information Service**](#) – offers real-time reports of disasters worldwide including a map with flashing indicators.

[**U.S. Geological Survey Natural Hazards Gateway**](#) -- As the Nation's largest water, earth, and biological science and civilian mapping agency, the USGS collects, monitors, analyzes, and provides scientific understanding about natural resource conditions, issues, and problems. This office coordinates geospatial resources that can be vital to help assessors evaluate damage from disasters and plan recovery efforts.