

# Minnesota Building Official

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## *Disaster Preparedness Manual*

**Fourth Edition – Revised 2011**

*Suggestions for improvements to this manual are welcomed.*

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# Minnesota Building Official Disaster Preparedness Manual

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## FOREWARD

In a typical year, 22 tornados are reported in Minnesota, with some of these striking cities and causing structure damage. Less frequent, but equally devastating, are floods which periodically inundate river cities and towns.

When natural disasters strike a community and cause structure damage, the local building department plays a key role. This role typically includes *Damage Assessment*, the initial phase of inspecting the damage inflicted on each structure, and *Damage Recovery*, the much longer phase during which a community rebuilds. In each phase citizens rely heavily on building department staff for expertise, guidance and assistance.

In these emergency situations it is important that the building department respond immediately, knowledgeably and effectively. Few other departments work as closely with citizens whose lives have been placed in turmoil. Not only must building departments perform damage assessment inspections amid this turmoil, it is also necessary to assist the public by effectively communicating the role the building department is performing and what citizens should do to repair and reoccupy their homes.

Often, the local building official will have had no previous experience responding to these types of emergencies. The local jurisdiction may have a City *Emergency Management Plan* with the building official's duties listed; however, this duty list is often very general with few of the specifics necessary for proper guidance. The building official is often at a loss as to what the department's full role and responsibilities are, or, if any outside resources are available to assist.

AMBO's Disaster Mitigation Committee was created to inform, educate and assist building departments facing this challenge. In cooperation with DLI's Construction Codes and Licensing Division, the committee's mission is to help building officials, building inspectors and permit technicians become better prepared for natural disaster emergencies and to respond more effectively when they strike. One of the committee's goals was to create a disaster preparedness manual (tailored to conditions in Minnesota) for building departments to reference when preparing for, or responding to, a disaster striking their community. As a quick reference, it has intentionally been written as a short, nuts-and-bolts-type guide containing practical information.

However, this manual should not be confused with, or used in place of, a local jurisdiction's emergency management plan. This preparedness manual should be used in conjunction with local emergency management plans which, of course, take precedence.

The Building Officials Disaster Preparedness Manual contains information, guidance and advice for the building department. The four stages of a disaster are described along with information helpful in addressing the numerous dilemmas and decisions the building department will face in each phase. An overview (Chapter 1) is also provided to explain how the building department's role changes as the emergency moves from phase to phase. In the Appendix are sample forms, placards, and recommended policies and procedures which a local jurisdiction may find useful.

With the information, support and education offered by the Disaster Mitigation Committee, the Construction Codes and Licensing Division and the Disaster Preparedness Manual, it is intended that local building departments will more effectively assist their community in a time of critical need. Also, it is intended that this booklet be continually updated and improved. Any suggestions for improvement are welcome and should be directed to AMBO's Disaster Mitigation Committee or Construction Code and Licensing Division.

## **ADVICE FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS**

Following are pieces of advice offered by building officials who have experienced first hand the effects of natural disasters. Each disaster experience is, of course, unique; however, advice is often worth considering. Also keep in mind this is only advice and it should be considered in light of the severity of the event occurring.

1. Do not waive permit fees following a natural disaster. At first the inclination is to be compassionate, however, many additional expenses will be incurred by the building division (inspection assistance, printing, fuel, materials, overtime, etc.). Also, the cost of permits is typically covered by homeowners/business insurance. Immediately inform your supervisor of the long-term consequence.
2. The amount of effort and work required to complete damage assessment inspections is typically underestimated. With adequate, qualified assistance you will complete the process much sooner, which is of significant benefit to the community.
3. Depending on the severity of the occurrence, the building official should not go into the field performing inspections, but rather, stay in the office to coordinate inspection/office activities, and, to make decisions and answer questions.
4. Obtain a volunteer building official (from outside the affected city) to coordinate volunteer inspectors and to schedule all field inspections.
5. When performing initial damage assessment inspections, inspectors should work in pairs so that one inspector can discuss with and inform the homeowner, while the other performs the inspection. This is particularly true when inspecting a severely damaged structure (safety reasons).
6. Look at and inspect those homes adjacent to visibly damaged buildings for hidden damage not readily apparent from the exterior. Often a change in air pressure can damage a home (interior sheetrock cracks can indicate hidden damage).

7. If you are volunteering to help another city in the damage assessment phase, do not arrive until a time has been verified. Often an affected jurisdiction needs set-up time to prepare for volunteers.
8. Be aware that city, state and federal damage assessment forms are not interchangeable and may not be compatible. This will likely not change in the near future as each agency requires different information and processing. The resultant multiple inspections required for many sites will appear to be bureaucracy at its worst (especially to home and business owners), however, at this point in time it is reality.
9. When roofing companies come into town, following an event, be sure to initiate inspections on some of the first jobs so that work can be inspected and workers instructed regarding local conditions and codes. This will help avoid large scale problems arising later.
10. Following a wind storm/tornado event, attic insulation is often blown away from the wall line resulting in cold spots and ice dams the following winter. Attics in a few undamaged homes should be inspected to identify this potential problem.
11. Establish a common format for all to use when estimating dollar amounts of damages. It is very difficult to estimate these amounts accurately and consistently (also compare with Red Cross estimates). If possible, have an assessor identify damage amount estimates.
12. It can be helpful to set up districts or quadrants and to assign specific inspectors to each area.
13. Keep good records of inspection results and record the purpose of the inspection. Other groups may try to use this information for their own purposes later.
14. Other groups (i.e. Red Cross or FEMA) may be out doing their own surveys. However, only the building inspector (or other assigned personnel such as the city engineer) has the authorization to placard damaged structures as habitable or not.
15. Accurate maps (with addresses on them, if possible) are very valuable. Often house numbers and street signs have blown away.
16. It is much easier to deal with residents if you have good handouts to give covering the most common types of repairs (roofing, siding, windows, garages, fences, etc.).
17. Many homeowners will want the building inspector to solve their problems dealing with insurance companies. The best you can do is provide good advice, provide copies of code sections and try to stay out of the middle (also refer them to the Commerce Department).
18. Cracked foundations are a problem as to whether or not they were caused by the event. Inspectors should document observations but not speculate on the cause.
19. If you have inspectors estimate a dollar figure for damage, others will use that figure to their advantage and against the building department. It is best to use the assessor's average value against the damage multiplier.

20. Find out your involvement in the demolition and structure disposal process to avoid conflicts and unrecorded documentation requirements.
21. Portable kiosks/displays can be placed in damaged neighborhoods to quickly inform residents.
22. Do not stop unpermitted roof repairs, find a different method to address this issue.
23. If entry passes are necessary to pass through National Guard stations have someone obtain them in bulk for inspectors. In the past damage assessment inspections have been delayed when each inspector has had to wait for hours to obtain a pass.
24. Beware that some insurance adjusters have used placards to their advantage. You may be requested to re-inspect a structure you initially placarded as 'unaffected'.
25. Inform property owners not to commit to contracts or tear down a structure until insurance issues have been addressed.
26. Project an image as a helper and not an impediment to the recovery process.
27. Obtain qualified permit technicians to organize and assist in the permitting process to avoid delays, mistakes and confusion.
28. Simplify the permit fee schedule for common repairs such as reroofs and residing. Use flat rates and avoid formulas.
29. As many as four out of five construction permits (vs. reroof/siding) will require input/assistance by a building inspector. Have staff in office able to perform plan reviews.
30. Arranging for inspection assistance by email is less likely to tie up valuable phone lines.
31. Unless a severely damaged structure is in danger of collapse, requiring demolition may not be necessary. Insurance adjusters often classify these as not worth repairing (costing more to repair than rebuild). This avoids negative publicity and still results in the building's removal.
32. A big part of your time will be spent answering questions such as: what do the placards mean, have you condemned the homes with red tags and what is required of me before I can move back into my home. Handouts are valuable time savers.
33. Emphasize patience, tolerance and compassion to all staff members repeatedly. As busy and difficult as the work is, it's much worse on the homeowner and family.

## **Minnesota Building Official Disaster Preparedness Manual**

### **Fourth Edition- Revised 2010**

Hazards that potentially cause disasters include earthquakes, extreme heat, fires, floods, winter storms, hazardous materials, hurricanes, landslides, multi-hazard, nuclear, thunderstorms, tornadoes,

tsunamis, volcanoes, wildfires, and dam safety issues. Fortunately, Minnesota is not susceptible to all of these hazards. However, many do impact the state on a yearly basis.

Since the last update of this manual in 2005, terrorism has risen to the forefront as a national disaster concern. Consequently, there is now more government entities involved in developing disaster plans. While the focus of this manual will continue to be providing Building Officials with information and tools they can use in the field, references have been added to other entities also involved in disaster planning activities and the resources they have developed, such as:

- **Minnesota Disaster Mitigation Plan Manual**, Department of Administration

[http://www.dps.state.mn.us/dhsem/uploadedfile/state\\_mitigation\\_plan.pdf](http://www.dps.state.mn.us/dhsem/uploadedfile/state_mitigation_plan.pdf)

- **Minnesota Disaster Management Handbook**, Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

[http://www.hsem.state.mn.us/Hsem\\_search\\_results.asp?searchtext=disaster+management+handbook&Submit=Go](http://www.hsem.state.mn.us/Hsem_search_results.asp?searchtext=disaster+management+handbook&Submit=Go)

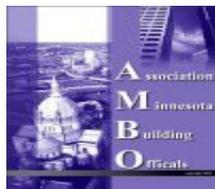


**Use the Minnesota Building Official Disaster Preparedness Manual to:**

1. **Help define your role as a Building Official in the development of a community disaster plan.**
2. **To identify what forms and supplies are needed before a disaster has occurred.** Once your role is defined, select and refine the information and tools provided in this manual to prepare you for a disaster. Although the web is proving to be a wonderful resource, when a disaster strikes at midnight, phone lines and/or the web might not be available. Have a plan, prepare your tools, and know what state resources are available and how to access them long before a disaster strikes.

### **Building Official VOLUNTEER Network**

The State of Minnesota, Department of Labor and Industry, Construction Codes and Licensing Division is coordinating the VOLUNTEER program to identify individuals who can be called upon to assist with a disaster event. A volunteer registration form has been included in the Appendix of this manual. Please contact the Construction Codes and Licensing 651.284.5012, [www.dli.mn.gov](http://www.dli.mn.gov), or the AMBO Disaster Committee, [www.ambo.us](http://www.ambo.us). for more Information.



# CHAPTER 1

## OVERVIEW OF A NATURAL DISASTER EXPERIENCE

This chapter is intended to give the reader an overview of a building department's typical role in a disaster event so that its role in each of the four phases can be understood in context of the whole.

First, the four phases of a disaster will be described, next the typical role and responsibilities of a building department will be explained, then various tasks and duties performed by building departments are identified, and lastly, how a response progresses is detailed.

### The Four Phases of a Disaster Event:

Disaster events are separated into four separate phases (however, keep in mind these four separate phases actually overlap):

- Phase I - Preparedness
- Phase II - Damage Assessment
- Phase III - Recovery/Reconstruction
- Phase IV - Mitigation

#### **Phase I - Preparedness:**

This phase is basic preparation for a disaster event. It is here where preparations made by various city/county departments (including the building department) will be most evident.

Foremost, the local building official must be knowledgeable of the department's role and responsibilities as described in the local jurisdiction's Emergency Management Plan. This is essential.

Furthermore, the building official should be knowledgeable in how local building departments have historically responded during disaster events, what duties and tasks they have carried out, and, how volunteer assistance is provided. To be truly effective, the building official must learn the department's responsibilities and how to effectively carry them out.

Basic preparation efforts may include:

- Having the local Emergency Management Plan available (and read).
- Having the Disaster Preparedness Manual available (and read).
- Forms and maps stockpiled.
- Having key phone numbers updated and readily available.
- Understanding the roles of other departments and agencies.
- Knowing how to quickly obtain inspection assistance.
- Knowing how damage assessment inspections are performed.
- Being knowledgeable of insurance and liability issues.

Keep in mind, the building department's preparation efforts will be evident by way of its effectiveness.

## **Phase II - Damage Assessment:**

This phase is when a jurisdiction inspects and documents the damage caused by the disaster event. In this phase the typical role of a building department is to send inspectors out to assess damage to structures, placard damaged buildings for occupancy worthiness, and then, to produce reports on the numbers of damaged and destroyed buildings (often a combination of national, state, county, and private agencies are also involved in assessing damage to buildings, but typically for other purposes). Because this role must be completed very quickly, additional inspection and office assistance is most often necessary, and it usually can only be obtained from other jurisdictions.

Also, residents impacted by a disaster event (by way of damage to their homes or businesses) must be kept informed as to the status of any restrictions on the use of their building, and, steps necessary to reconstruct and/or reoccupy.

Furthermore, the department's role documenting structure damage is critical because this documentation is necessary for the disbursement of state/federal reimbursement funding if an official disaster declaration is declared.

## **Recovery/Reconstruction:**

This phase of a disaster event is when a community responds to and repairs the damage inflicted by a disaster. It often begins immediately following an event and overlaps the Damage Assessment phase. This overlap adds to the work load and, if preparation and organization are lacking, causes even more confusion.

The building department's primary role in this phase will be performing plan review, issuing permits, inspecting repairs, and enforcing contractor licensing laws; all the while confronted with a very significant workload increase, and, opposition to code/zoning enforcement in the name of expediency. Here, the effectiveness of the building department in communicating with the affected public is critical.

This phase often lasts for up to a year, and, additional paid assistance during this period is almost always necessary.

## **Mitigation:**

This phase is when a community evaluates the natural disaster experience and initiates changes or improvements (physical or procedural) so that less damage, and/or a more effective response, will result in future occurrences.

Here, the building department's role will largely depend on direction from the local jurisdiction's administration, however, the daily routine of reviewing plans and performing inspections will have a significant impact on the ability of structures to withstand damage from future natural disasters.

## **Role and Responsibilities of a Building Department**

First of all, each jurisdiction should have an Emergency Management Plan on file. This plan takes precedence. It typically spells out the role of the building department. However, these plans are usually very general and lack specifics. Typically, the building department's role and responsibilities will be stated as:

- Inspect each damaged structure; placard for habitability and complete a damage report.
- Maintain accurate records of all damaged structures.
- Create maps identifying damaged structures.
- Obtain inspection/office assistance if necessary.
- Report to supervisor (often different from one's normal supervisor).

Often, the difficulty is knowing before hand what is involved in carrying out and completing these responsibilities. The building official will be asked:

- What are the department's immediate goals and objectives?
- How will the department accomplish them?
- How will all buildings be inspected, and, within what time frame?
  - What is a standard timeframe?
- Will outside assistance be necessary?
  - How many?
  - From where?
  - Are they paid?
  - How soon will they arrive?
  - Are there supplies for them?
  - Who will supervise them?
- How are insurance and liability issues handled?

These are questions the building department will be asked. Is your department prepared to answer them? The building official will be expected to know what to do, and to have answers to these questions. Your response should be:

- This is how a typical response progresses...
- These are some of the issues and situations that will arise...
- These are some decisions the building department and city administration will be faced with in the next few hours and days...
- And finally, this is how the building department will accomplish its goals and objectives...

Each building official should have an overall understanding of a disaster response, an understanding of its department's role in a disaster, access to outside resources and minimal supplies and forms on hand.

### **Various Tasks and Duties of a Building Department**

Following are some of the typical tasks and duties a building department might initiate following a disaster event:

- Identify areas of structure damage:
  - Ask police or fire which neighborhoods or areas have been damaged.
  - Do a "windshield survey." No inspections, the purpose is to identify the overall area of damage and to determine approximately how many structures must be inspected.
- Plan out the department's response (for both the damage assessment and recovery phases). Set goals and objectives – for example:

- Inspect all damaged structures:
  - Complete within 3-4 days (this will vary).
  - Complete a damage assessment report on each damaged structure.
  - Post a placard on each damaged structure.
  - Create a documentation file for each damaged structure.
- Obtain inspection assistance for the Damage Assessment Phase:
  - Enough assistance to inspect each building within the 3-4 days.
- Obtain outside assistance for office operations:
  - Assistance for phones, permit issuance, inspection recording, etc.
- Make decisions regarding policy and procedural issues:
  - Will there be extended office hours? (typical).
  - Will the building official remain in the office to oversee operations and make decisions, assigning an assistant to organize inspections?
  - Who will conduct orientations for assisting inspectors and what will it include?
  - Will dollar valuations be assigned to damage assessment reports?
  - What are the right-of-entry parameters for inspectors?
  - Who will have authority to order dangerous buildings demolished.
  - What information will inspectors give residents at inspections?
  - Will permit fees remain or will they be waived?
  - For what work will permits be required, for what work will plan reviews be required, and, how long will plan reviews take.
  - How best to inform citizens of required permits for repairs, and about contractor licensing requirements?
  - Will assisting inspectors have authority to stop work where there is no permit, or, where unlicensed contractors are working?
  - At what point will a structural review by an engineer be required?
- Prepare for additional office and field staff:
  - Write out policies and procedures for distribution to all staff.
  - Create/obtain necessary forms (damage assessment reports, placard, etc).
  - Create a file for each damaged property.
  - Create maps for inspectors and to record damaged areas.
  - Create inspector packets (containing maps, forms, pens, tape, etc).

In an organized response you set goals, objectives, policies and procedures so that all staff understand their part of the puzzle and the public is given accurate and consistent information.

### **How a Response Progresses**

Following is an example of how a building department response to a disaster event would progress:

#### **Disaster Response:**

- Staff performs a windshield survey to identify numbers of structures damaged.
- Building official meets with supervisor to verify and coordinate the role and responsibilities of the building department.
- At this point many building departments request assistance from the state, specifically the Construction Codes and Licensing Division. This division has

trained staff who can provide the local building official with valuable advice in organizing a response.

- Building official creates goals and objectives for responding to the disaster event as well as continuing normal ongoing daily operations.
- Building official makes decisions regarding policies and procedures.
- Staff begins implementing policies and procedures:
  - Creating files, maps, handouts, packets, etc.
- Volunteer inspector assistance (usually) arrives on the first day following an event.
- Orientations begin and are a daily occurrence as each day brings new assisting inspectors and permit technicians.
- Damage assessment inspections (usually) begin in the afternoon of the first day, are in full swing the next day, and completed within 3-4 days (more for major events).
- Documentation of inspections progresses, files are created, maps of damaged areas are updated daily.
- Information requests come in from other departments and from the public (for various types of reports and maps related to the damage). Accurate documentation is critical!
- Permits to repair damaged structures flood in. Applicants want permits issued without delay so that repair work can begin.
- Controversy erupts as unlicensed contractors are discovered and stop-work orders issued.
- Regular non-disaster work, including plan reviews and inspections, continues.
- Inspections of damage and placarding of structures is completed in a few days, however, re-inspections and re-classification of damaged structures will occur for weeks for a variety of reasons.
- The work load stays very high as the Disaster Response Phase moves more and more into the Recovery/Reconstruction Phase.

### **Recovery/Reconstruction:**

- Additional paid assistance inspection must be found as volunteer inspectors are usually only available for a week or two.
- A significant increase in office work results as phone calls increase, permit issuances increase, plan reviews increase, documentation increases and requests for report summaries and updated maps continue.
- As unpermitted repairs are discovered and stop work orders are issued, frustrated and angry homeowners must be dealt with.
- Demolition of buildings will be ordered (or requested) and permits must be coordinated with the PCA for removal of hazardous materials.
- The reconnection of utilities must be coordinated so all parties are aware of reconnection procedures and restrictions.
- Disputes will arise between homeowners and insurance companies which will involve the building official and take significant amounts of time.
- While critical, documentation of structure damage and labor expenses are very time consuming; however any disaster-caused damage must be identified as such. This could be very important for future reimbursement funding.

The Damage Assessment and the Recovery/Reconstruction Phases will run in tandem and while damage assessment work tapers off relatively quickly the Recovery/Reconstruction Phase continues on often for up to a year or more.

### **Conclusion:**

Building department staff will be interacting with distraught citizens for a long time. These citizens, as well as the city's administrators, will be demanding an organized and well run disaster response by the building department.

It is recommended that building departments initiate minimum preparations and training to better prepare their departments to respond to disaster events which can have significant and devastating effect on many of the citizens in the community.

## CHAPTER 2

### PHASE II - DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

This phase of a disaster event is when a local jurisdiction assesses the damage caused by a natural disaster. Often a combination of state, county, city and private agencies are involved assessing overall area damage. The building department's role (consult your jurisdiction's Emergency Management Plan) typically will be to assess the damage inflicted on structures, evaluate occupancy worthiness, and, document and report this information to the assigned authority. Also, the building official should understand that property owners impacted by way of damage to their homes and businesses need to be kept informed as to the status of restrictions on their buildings and any steps necessary to reoccupy and/or rebuild.

#### **Determining the scope of damage:**

- Damage assessment for building departments usually begins with a preliminary report from the police or fire department as to the area of damage. A 'windshield survey' is often then conducted by the building department to identify those areas requiring damage assessments and approximately how many structures must be visited. It is recommended to inspect homes beyond the perimeter of obvious damage, as often damage is not readily apparent.
- Most often the local building department is not used for purposes of quickly compiling a count of damaged structures to determine if a state or federal emergency is to be declared. This is often conducted by the local disaster coordinator's staff – a very quick survey estimating damage to structures as well as other types of infrastructure.

#### **Setting goals and objectives:**

In consultation with the building official's supervisor, specific goals and objectives should be immediately decided.

- Sample goals:
  - Complete a damage assessment report and placard each structure as soon as possible.
  - Document inspection reports and placards used for each structure and report this information to supervisor. Also, map all damaged structures by placard status.
  - Maintain communications with emergency coordinator (through supervisor) to verify any additional responsibilities due to state or federal declarations.
  - Open communication channels with the public regarding placarding, inspections and permits. (Many complaints, following an event, revolve around the affected property owner not being kept informed as to steps necessary to rebuild and/or reoccupy the structure, and, thereby causing delays).
- Sample objectives:
  - Determine if outside assistance will be required in the field or office and acquire if necessary.

- Set up files to document all assessed structures, additional personnel, hours worked, inspections performed, permits issued and expenses incurred (see Appendix for sample forms).
- Contact Department of Labor and Industry, Construction Codes and Licensing Division to see what assistance may be available.
- Create a color coded map of assessed properties based on placards posted (this map will change frequently and, be in high demand from other departments and agencies).

Decide policy on a number of issues and write them out so that information given out by staff is accurate and consistent:

- Extended office hours are typical.
- Will permits be charged for or will they be free (cities often eliminate charges for permits during an emergency, however, they are usually covered by insurance and the building department will likely require additional paid staff for quite some time).
- How often to meet/report to supervisor.
- For what work will a permit be required (see sample handout in Appendix – homeowners need to be informed).
- When will a plan review be required and how long will it take to obtain.
- How will contractor licensing be enforced (in the past departments have enforced it, but also have utilized rapid contractor licensing in conjunction with Department of Labor and Industry Licensing personnel). Often jurisdictions will request a Labor and Industry licensing representative to assist.
- Who will be assigning dollar valuation to structure damage (it is extremely difficult for volunteer inspectors to estimate damages). One approach has been for Assessing Department to establish an average value per home in the area and then apply a standard multiplier to the damage identified on the damage assessment report:

**Destroyed – 100% of average value**

**Major damage – 50% of average value**

**Minor damage – 25% of average value.**

This is typically not the building official's decision but it should be verified that it is occurring. Other agencies may be performing similar tasks but using different criteria for different purposes (such as the Red Cross).

- What authority will you restrict from field inspectors or office staff (for example: stopping work on a job should be left to the local building official making exceptions on how the structures are placarded, demolition permits or permits issued on existing non-conforming uses should be reviewed by the local building official before issuance).
- Utility reconnection process (utilities operate differently everywhere – it must be coordinated with utility companies to determine how reconnections will occur).

- What additional information, if any, will the field inspector give to the homeowner or post when placarding a structure? Communication with the public is critical. In addition to the placard, it is recommended that the following also be given to the homeowner or posted, possibly in the form of a policy page (see sample in Appendix):
  - A statement as to the purpose of damage assessment inspections and placarding.
  - A copy of the damage assessment report.
  - When a permit may or may not be required.
  - How and where to obtain a permit.
  - Building department office hours.
  - Phone numbers of city offices, utility companies, Red Cross, tree removal service and debris haulers.
  - When a licensed contractor is required and the protections afforded the property owner.
  - Advice on finding reputable contractors and avoiding scams.
  - Any other city-produced handouts as appropriate.
  - At the damage assessment inspection the inspector could identify if any permits are required based on the damage assessment report.

#### **Obtaining inspection/office assistance:**

- See Chapter 7 which describes how to obtain volunteer assistance.
- Also be aware that the Department of Labor and Industry, Construction Codes and Licensing Division regional representatives can be a valuable and immediate resource particularly in outstate areas. It is recommended they be contacted immediately.
- The building official, prior to inspections commencing, should give an orientation to all staff. Volunteer inspectors should be given an overview of the city and briefed on any pertinent policies/priorities. The documentation of damage, public information handouts and record-keeping procedures should be discussed. Priority inspection sites should be identified. Also, it should be specified what would constitute an ‘uninhabitable’ home. This is a significant action that should be carefully thought through and then uniformly enforced.

#### **Office organization:**

- Phone calls, counter calls, permits and plan reviews will multiply. Assistance typically is needed.
- A damage area map should be readied to identify the damage report/placard classification on individual properties. Maps of the area of damage which include individual property addresses should be produced for field inspectors. Street signs and addresses on homes will be missing.
- Additional copies of various forms and applications must be readied. (See samples in Appendix).
  - Damage Assessment Inspection Reports.
  - Placards – color coded.

- Permit applications.
- Timecards (for volunteers).
- Policies and handouts.
- If the jurisdiction does not have paper “property files” organized by address, a file for each property should be created.
- Accurate documentation of damage assessment reports, individuals, hours worked, expenses, etc. is critical following disaster events in order for potential reimbursement
- funding (to both the jurisdiction and property owners) from state and federal agencies (if a declaration is made).

### **Field inspections:**

The primary focus of Damage Assessment is to placard those structures that could pose life-threatening consequences on the inhabitants. The secondary focus is to perform damage assessment inspections on each and to document the findings.

Placarding Categories: (copies in Appendix):

- **Unaffected Habitable** No Damage Observed – blue
- **Habitable** Repairs Required – green
- **Uninhabitable** Limited Entry Enter at Your Own Risk – yellow
- **Unsafe Structure Keep Out** – orange
- **Dangerous Keep Out Uninhabitable** – red
- **Sorry We Missed You** – white

*Placarding a structure means to post a placard which identifies its occupancy worthiness as to if it is currently habitable or not. Performing a damage assessment inspection identifies its level of damage. They are usually both performed during one inspection. It should be noted that while often the damage level and placard categories do correlate, sometimes they do not (for example a shopping mall undamaged but without power for smoke evacuation would have no physical damage but be placarded as uninhabitable). In the Appendix are information sheets which advise how to categorize both the placarding and damage reporting.*

It is recommended that two inspectors perform placarding/damage assessments together. If possible, assisting inspectors should be teamed with inspectors of the affected jurisdiction. The combined experience and familiarity with the area can help the assessment process. If occupants are present during an inspection, one inspector can perform the assessment while the other answers questions. An additional benefit to working in teams is safety - inspectors can look out for each other while working in damaged buildings. For a list of equipment inspectors should carry into the field, see Chapter 2.

The following considerations should be taken into account when inspecting a damaged structure:

- Right of entry – usually owners will be home and be grateful for the inspection. If no one is present inspectors typically leave a note requesting the owner arrange/schedule an inspection. However, if doors and windows are blown out and the structure is ‘open’ to the public, a full inspection and placarding is typically performed (verify right of entry procedures with city attorney).
- Is it safe to enter? If in danger of collapse it should be inspected from the outside only.
- Are power wires down or is gas escaping? Typically no, because utilities have already been shut off.

- Is the structure displaced from its foundation, twisted, leaning or bowed? This is usually an indication of major damage.
- Make exterior observations first, and then proceed to the interior (using the damage assessment report form). It is suggested to use a specific pattern for inspections, i.e. begin in the basement and then work upwards using a clockwise movement while going through all rooms on all levels. If you use the same pattern on all structures, you are less likely to miss something.
- Different inspectors will provide strikingly different levels of detail in their documentation. They should be instructed as to the level of detail required (a sample completed form is in the Appendix).
- Of particular importance are utility re-hookups. Procedures will differ depending on location but should be coordinated with the utility companies and the electrical inspector. Procedures should be written down and given to all staff and affected property owners.
- Placards should be posted (with tape) to be visible from the street, near entrances.
- Consider giving each inspection team a camera (one time use 35 mm or digital).
- Taking at least one picture of the structure (and one of the placard to identify the structure) documents the building condition at the time of the event. This additional documentation can be invaluable later on (after repairs have been made to the structure) for purposes of reimbursement funding. State and federal agencies will require documentation of a structure's damaged condition prior to releasing funds. Damage assessment reports can be vague for these purposes.
- If taking pictures, check with the jurisdiction and the property owner before taking any pictures of private property.
- Office debriefings should occur daily to determine progress, identify and resolve problems and coordinate future inspections.
- Daily inspection results should be entered onto the damage assessment map and into appropriate files. Timecards should also be collected daily from volunteer staff and filed. Expenses should be recorded daily.
- Consider having muster meetings at specified times and locations, have everyone assisting with inspections sign in or take a roll call at these times.

### **Communicating with the public:**

All staff should be aware that communicating information to affected property owners, whether over the counter or at the inspection, is a critical function of the department. Owners will want the damage to their properties repaired immediately. They will want to know what restrictions the placard places on their structure, what the damage report identifies, and, what steps they must take to begin repairs and/or reoccupy. It is here that conveying information to affected property owners, through handouts, can significantly reduce confusion, frustration and confrontation, and, speed the recovery process. As stated previously, written policies and public handouts should be created immediately, given to inspectors, and made available at a general assistance location or be available at a centrally known location. (See examples in Appendix Chapter).

# PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

The effectiveness of any disaster response effort will be enhanced by preparation. The following are recommendations designed to allow for an immediate response to a disaster event which overwhelms a local jurisdiction's capabilities and requires outside inspection assistance.

## ORGANIZATIONAL:

### To be on hand and available.

- \_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the community's Emergency Management Plan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ An organizational chart (typically it is different under emergency conditions).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identity of who has authority to request outside inspection assistance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A copy of Minnesota Building Officials Disaster Mitigation Manual.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A list of staff's home phone numbers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number for Construction Codes & Licensing Division and regional staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copies of any mutual aid agreements.

## FORMS

### On hand to be copied. Examples contained in the appendix.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Damage Assessment Inspection Form.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Placards
  - **Unaffected Habitable** No Damage Observed – blue
  - **Habitable** Repairs Required – green
  - **Uninhabitable** Limited Entry Enter at Your Own Risk – yellow
  - **Unsafe Structure Keep Out** – orange
  - **Dangerous Keep Out Uninhabitable** – red
  - **Sorry We Missed You** – white
- \_\_\_\_\_ Deputizing Form- for assisting staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction maps - copy size.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Map of the jurisdiction which includes individual addresses (invaluable).
- \_\_\_\_\_ See appendix for additional forms.

## EQUIPMENT TO BE AVAILABLE TO EACH INSPECTOR/TEAM:

### To be purchased once an event occurs.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Large flashlights.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Extra batteries.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rolls of duct tape.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clip-on name tags.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black markers, pens.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clipboards/notebooks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Polaroid camera and film and/or digital camera.
- \_\_\_\_\_ First aid kit (small).

### Request assisting staff to bring.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hard sole waterproof boots.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identification as building inspector.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Code books
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone (if available).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rain gear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hard hat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gloves.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Tape measure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bright vest – (e.g.) as used by road maintenance crews.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Insect repellent, if applicable.

**MISCELLANEOUS-RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend educational opportunities about disaster mitigation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide staff training by assisting other jurisdictions struck by disasters (both field and office staff).
- \_\_\_\_\_ In city ordinance require a demolished building to have its foundation removed vs. buried. This will allow reimbursement funding to pay for foundation removal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Educate city management on the potential problems associated with waiving permit fees in a disaster event.

**F.E.M.A ./H.S.E.M. vs. Building Damage Assessment Inspections/Reports:**

**The building official should be aware that the Minnesota Department of Public Safety – Homeland Security and Emergency Management puts out a lengthy damage and impact assessment form as a tool to be used by a local emergency manager to determine the extent of damages so that a decision can be made on whether or not to request federal and state financial assistance. This form reports damage on many more listings than just buildings (bridges and roads for example). It should be noted that the inspection criteria and classifications listed on these forms are similar to forms shown elsewhere in this manual. Red Cross criteria, however, is slightly different with fewer levels of damage listed.**

**Conclusion:**

The Damage Assessment Phase is understandably intense. It is better to be prepared and act, rather than simply react to events. Also, it must be understood that the Recovery Phase begins almost immediately – during the Damage Assessment Phase! Both phases must be dealt with simultaneously.



## CHAPTER 3

### PHASE III – RECOVERY/ RECONSTRUCTION

The Recovery Phase, as it relates to the building department, is when a community repairs and reoccupies damaged structures following a disaster event. This phase will begin almost immediately (before the damage assessment phase is completed) and must be dealt with in tandem with Phase II - Damage Assessment. Recovery, however, will often last for up to a year or more as the community rebuilds. The building department will likely be faced with a significant work load increase during this period, and, if state and/or federal disaster declarations have occurred, additional work in the form of reinspections and providing documentation will be necessary. Also, as volunteer assisting inspectors leave, paid assistance often becomes necessary. Therefore, although it is very difficult, decisions affecting the Recovery phase should be made relatively quickly and in conjunction with the Damage Assessment phase as both phases overlap.

#### **Setting goals and objectives:**

In order to provide guidance to both staff and the public it is useful to establish goals and objectives (with approval from your supervisor).

#### **Sample goals may include:**

- Issuing permits, performing inspections and documenting work without delays to the public. This can be more difficult than it first appears due to the significant work load increase.
- Assist the affected public through effective communications. The rebuilding process will be at best confusing to the public (and contractors). Effective communications can greatly speed the recovery process.

#### **Sample objectives may include:**

- Obtain adequate staffing. Volunteer and mutual aid inspectors are often only available for about a week (longer for major events such as the tornado damage in St. Peter or floods such as East Grand Forks). By the third day following an event the building official should be considering the necessity of and obtaining approval for additional paid office and field staff. This additional staffing is often necessary for up to a year. Therefore, careful consideration should be given before following any practices of eliminating permit fees for damage repair work.
- Provide written policies to guide staff. Office and field staff will be inundated with questions and work load. The department should be giving out and operating under consistent and accurate information. Some policies and procedures will have been previously decided in the Damage Assessment phase (e.g.) what work will require a work permit, when will a plan review be required, how will contractor licensing be enforced, etc.

Additional policies may include:

- Will certain permits be issued in the field by inspectors such as reroofing or residing?

- How will zoning and engineering issues such as non-conforming uses or utility repairs be verified and coordinated into the permit process?
  - Under what conditions must a structure be demolished and by whose authority?
  - Under what conditions and time frame must damaged buildings be boarded up?
  - Will office hours be extended during the recovery phase (usually a longer period of time)?
  - How will the reconnection of utilities be coordinated and communicated to building inspectors, property owners, contractors, etc?
  - Many other decisions regarding policy issues will be necessary as each event and jurisdiction is unique. It is critical to document decisions and distribute information to minimize confusion and frustration.
- Communicating with the public. People’s emotions will be charged and with each perceived delay, confusion and frustration will result.
  - In the information given out during the Damage Assessment phase, include:
    - What restrictions the placard places on their structures.
    - The purpose of the damage assessment report and what it says about their structure.
    - What steps must be taken to begin repairs on their structures and reoccupy (see sample in appendix for the above).

The following additional information may prove useful to property owners of damaged property:

- Precautions to take down a damaged home (see sample in appendix).
- An inspection checklist for the property owner’s follow-up (see sample in appendix).
- Recommendations such as contacting insurance agents before signing contracts.
- Lists of local licensed contractor phone numbers made available.
- The utility reconnection process for gas/water/electrical explained.
- Procedures listed for demolition of structures if insurance companies declare structures destroyed (costing more to repair than replace).
- How to identify reputable contractors for permanent repairs (see appendix).
- How to avoid scam artists.

Communicating information to affected property owners and contractors is a critical function for the recovery process to be successful (also see Chapter 8).

- Communicating with supervisor and the disaster coordinator. Following disaster events one of the biggest complaints from building officials is that during the initial stages of the event they were not kept informed of decisions directly affecting their role and responsibilities. Decisions made by local officials, required documentation due to state or federal declarations or coordination decisions by the disaster coordinator often are not relayed to the building official who sometimes has primary responsibility for implementation. The building official must impress on his/her supervisor that he/she be informed of decisions affecting the recovery process.

**Some additional issues a building official may face during this phase include:**

- If building permits are issued for emergency repairs to allow habitability, it should be identified that separate permits for permanent repairs are required. This is to avoid homes being occupied but not repaired. A time frame should be stipulated.
- Pressure will often be placed on the building official to forgo the requirements of some permits and many types of plan reviews in order to expedite the repair process and get residents back into their homes. This has merit, however, a balance should be reached so that building code, engineering department, and zoning ordinance issues can be adequately addressed. If plan reviews are not required, some property owners may obtain permits to repair or expand a non-conforming structure or use that should be denied. No building official wants to be forced to stop a job that was previously issued a permit.
- Residents will often want to incorporate expansions, additions and further remodeling as long as they are hiring contractors to perform repairs. Again, if plan reviews are not required, this complicates the field inspection process.
- Contractor licensing laws can be difficult to enforce by an overworked staff in the rush to rebuild. Unfortunately, this is precisely the time a few contractors will try to take advantage of desperate property owners.
- Will repair work be allowed to begin immediately with a permit obtained later? Issuing stop work orders in these situations will not be well received.
- The Pollution Control Agency may request the jurisdiction's inspectors verify hazardous materials have been removed from structures prior to demolition. An affected jurisdiction may not have adequate staffing to perform this function.

**Conclusion**

It must be understood that the Recovery phase begins immediately and must be dealt with in tandem with the Damage Assessment phase. The most important aspect of the recovery phase is communications. Communication with staff, communication with the disaster coordinator, and communication with the public. This phase will last up to a year, and adequate staffing levels are critical.



## CHAPTER 4

### PHASE IV - MITIGATION

*Disaster Mitigation* is the fourth phase of a disaster experience; it is when a community evaluates the natural disaster experience and initiates changes or improvements (physical or procedural) so that less damage or a more effective response will result in a future occurrence.

Many of the mitigation efforts a community will undertake will be beyond the scope and involvement of the building official. Improvements of this nature typically include enhancements to the public infrastructure to ensure continued public services during an emergency. However, mitigation efforts by the building department after an occurrence can have a significant impact. Mitigation efforts of this type may include:

- Discussions among inspectors and support staff as to what worked, what did not, and then revising procedures, policies, handouts and forms.
- Discussions with citizens impacted by the disaster occurrence in order to better understand the problems and difficulties they faced (both immediately after the occurrence and in the longer recovery phase) so that the public's interaction with the building department can be improved.
- Discussions with other area building departments to compare and share knowledge, experiences and other mitigation efforts.
- Meetings with other area Building Officials to discuss assistance prior to occurrences.
- Sending staff to educational opportunities on the subject of natural disasters. Also allowing staff to assist other jurisdictions struck by natural disasters is an excellent, low cost, educational tool.
- More vigorous plan review and inspection of those structural aspects of construction that experienced damage during the occurrence (i.e. component failures).
- Developing a disaster response plan for the building staff, tailored to the community, to function in tandem with the community's Emergency Management Plan.



## CHAPTER 5

### FLOOD TYPE EVENTS

The Disaster Preparedness Manual is designed around a tornado event which is the most common type of disaster in Minnesota. Of equal importance, however, are flood events. Flood events typically are not the immediate devastation that tornadoes are; however, they can be just as devastating to structures and the lives of inhabitants. This chapter discusses the four phases of a flood disaster and, while the bulk and principals of this entire manual still apply, highlights those aspects which are unique to floods. However, the reader should become familiar with all chapters as other information, such as state legislation, applies to floods as well.

Floods, as do tornadoes, come in all shapes and sizes. A flood event can be extensive such as the 1998 statewide spring flooding of numerous rivers which caused millions of dollars in structure damage. Flood response principles apply even to a single home which has had its basement flooded. Flood damage to a structure, the assessment of damage incurred and recommended repair methods, are similar regardless of the size of the event.

As in any other disaster event, there are four phases to a flood disaster;

- Preparation
- Damage Assessment
- Reconstruction/Recovery
- Mitigation

#### **Preparation**

The preparations taken before a flood occurs will provide the most benefit to both the building department and the public. While in a tornado the damage is immediate and any preparation a definite forethought, often (but not always) flood events develop over a longer period, allowing more time to prepare.

First and foremost, preparation includes attending training on the subject of disaster response. Many classes and seminars are available as well as what is truly some of the most effective training – volunteering and assisting another jurisdiction’s building department struggling through a flood event. Nothing nails home the issues and obstacles that must be overcome like first hand experience conducting inspections of flooded homes and observing another department struggle with the difficult issues that have no easy, apparent answers. Preparation also includes gathering supplies for the anticipated work.

Assisting inspectors can be asked to bring:

- Tape measure
- Identification
- Gloves
- Flashlight
- Hard hat
- Boots
- Rain gear

Supplies a jurisdiction may be expected to provide each team include:

- Large flashlights
- Ring binder notebook
- Fluorescent vests
- Maps
- Mosquito repellent
- Duct tape
- Local Identification badges
- Informational Handouts

Office preparations may include:

- Creating a crib sheet for inspectors identifying what to inspect and document, and, at what point does a structure become uninhabitable (sewage in basement, leaking fuel oil tanks, sprinkler system not functioning, etc.). This is discussed in more detail later.
- Making copies of the Damage Assessment Inspection form (see Appendix).
- Making copies of the six Placards (see Appendix).
- Making copies of building permit applications.
- Modifying and making copies of handouts describing, for the public, the damage assessment process - also including helpful phone numbers (see Appendix).
- Making copies of handouts relating to flood damage and clean-up (see Appendix).
- Crib sheets so that all staff are aware of policies and procedures, and, are giving out accurate information and consistent answers.
- Possibly adding and training additional office staff for the anticipated work load increase.
- Creating a command structure diagram (with names) so that staff will know who to direct questions to.
- Creating or copying maps of the jurisdiction – with individual property addresses.
- Timecards and sign-up sheets for assisting volunteers (see Appendix).
- Creating a map which will visually record the placard and level of damage each structure has been classified. Copies of this map will be in great demand by the other agencies (see Appendix for sample).
- Creating a spread sheet which will visually convey the progression of individual property structures through the Assessment/Recovery processes (very good for staying informed on the situation as a whole).

Some miscellaneous preparations may include:

- Reading your jurisdiction's Emergency Management Plan to verify the building department's role and responsibilities.
- Informing your supervisor of the building department's proposed actions, anticipated additional expenses, additional personnel requests, potential problems and confrontations, and, explaining your response in enough detail to keep your supervisor well informed.
- Meeting with the local disaster coordinator to verify the department's role and responsibilities so that there are no unfulfilled expectations by others (first get approval from supervisor).
- Meeting with Dept. of Natural Resources representatives to discuss flood plain issues such as identifying (and potentially limiting the rebuilding of) homes within the flood plain with more than 50% of the home damaged. Also, procedures and responsibility for determining the per cent of damage incurred.

- Meeting with Pollution Control Agency representatives to discuss possible inspections, prior to demolitions, to verify the removal of hazardous household debris (fluorescent light bulbs, mercury in thermostats, etc.).
- Locating the property owners of vacant structures so that inspections after the flood can be easily arranged.
- Creating notebooks for each inspection team:
  - Sign-in sheet.
  - Time cards.
  - Map – with individual property addresses.
  - Damage Assessment Inspection forms (and instructions for use).
  - Placard copies in colors (and instructions for use).
  - Any handouts deemed beneficial such as: explaining the damage assessment process, storm damage clean-up, etc. (found in Appendix).
- Informing the public, before a flood occurs, on how best to prepare a structure for anticipated flooding:
  - Keeping a basement pumped dry may lead to its collapse due to hydrostatic pressure.
  - The wave action of driving past flooded mobile homes can significantly weaken foundations. Signs should be posted to minimize this from occurring.
  - Secure fuel oil tanks so that they will not tip over or float. If possible have fuel removed from tanks located in the basements of homes (because fuel oil is lighter than water, even full tanks will float). This will reduce the likelihood of a fuel oil spill within a home which can be very difficult and expensive to repair. If fuel oil does spill inside homes, have the homeowners contact the MPCA Customer Assistance Center at 1-800-657-3864. Underground fuel oil tanks, on the other hand, are less likely to pop out of the ground if they are full.
  - Identifying and marking high water elevation level on trees or poles around the structure (after floodwaters have subsided) for future reference.

Preparations will directly impact the success of both the Damage Assessment and Recovery Phases for both the building department and the affected the public.

### **Damage Assessment**

Damage assessment in a flood event is when building inspectors physically inspect the exterior and the interior of a flood affected structure, complete a Damage Assessment Report and then Placard the structure for habitability. This information is then documented and mapped by office staff. These inspections should occur as soon as possible after flood waters have subsided (and basements are emptied). As in a tornado event, a windshield survey is first conducted to identify the scope and boundary of those flooded structures requiring inspection. Also of note:

- Assisting inspectors should be organized in teams of 2 (for safety).
- Each team should be given supplies (see Preparation) and assigned a specific territory which is recorded (for safety purposes).
- Assisting inspectors should be given an orientation when they arrive and then be deputized. The orientation should include those issues listed in Chapter 8, but to also include:
- Specifics for how to inspect flood damage (discussed later) and how to complete the damage assessment report (see sample in Appendix).

- Instructions on how to placard a structure and just what constitutes an uninhabitable structure (see Placarding – Floods in Appendix).
- An explanation of why the D.N.R. wants specific structures identified on damage report forms (if over 50% of market value is damaged and within the 100 year flood plain).
- Informational handouts to be given out (by inspectors) to the affected public at inspections.
- Sanitation warnings and guidelines as some inspectors will inevitably come in contact with sewage in basements or other contaminants.
- Documentation requirements for volunteers (such as; name, jurisdiction, home phone number, days/hours worked, when deputized etc.).
- Assisting permit technicians should be given the same orientation when they arrive so that they also understand the role of the inspector. Additionally, permit technicians should be instructed on:
  - The local permitting process.
  - Documentation procedures.
  - Creating maps from damage/placard reports.
  - Files storage.
  - Informational handouts to include with issued permits.
  - Phone numbers of various agencies and utility companies.
  - The expectation of dealing with residents under significant stress.

### **Inspecting Flood Damaged Structures**

#### Damage Assessment Report

A Damage Assessment Report (see Appendix) is required for each damaged structure if damage to the structure is based primarily on the water level reached within the structure (which should be recorded on the form). However, additional information should also be documented. Specific items that should be inspected and recorded include (if possible):

- Again, the specific height the flood water reached on the structure.
- Evidence of any sewage within the structure.
- If water flooded mechanical portions of the electrical service, furnace, water heater and/or appliances.
- If the basement walls were finished or unfinished.
- Presence of fuel oil tanks and/or fuel oil smell/spillage.
- Which utilities are functioning and which are not.
- Any observed cracks in basement walls (particularly low horizontal cracks which indicate potential wall failure).
- Debris in basements (such as an accumulation of mud).

#### Placarding for Habitability

Placarding a structure identifies its habitability to the public. In the Appendix section are placard templates and also the field handout ‘Placarding – Floods’ which recommends specific criteria to assist inspectors make consistent judgment calls when placarding flood damaged structures. This is suggested criteria only and may be adjusted by the building official as situations warrant.

Inspectors should be instructed that if other than single family structures are classified as ‘Uninhabitable’ any persons encountered should be ‘instructed’ to vacate, however,

enforcement is left to others (i.e. police – if deemed necessary by the local Building Official). The same applies to single family structures classified as ‘Unsafe’ and ‘Dangerous’, however, with single family structures classified as ‘Limited Entry - Uninhabitable’ or “Affected – Uninhabitable” it is not always appropriate to instruct residents to vacate. This decision should be made by the local building official following consultation with the disaster coordinator. These structures may be technically uninhabitable from a building code standpoint but if they are not dangerous, residents may not have optional housing available and may choose to stay in these structures.

### Damage Specific to Manufactured Homes

A separate chapter addresses some of the specific issue inspectors may encounter when inspecting manufactured homes for flood damage. See Chapter 6

### Miscellaneous Information Regarding Flood Inspections:

- Beware of unexpected dangers such as rodents and snakes.
- Beware of contact with sewage on hands, clothing or boots; the possibility of disease; and the necessity for cleanliness.
- Empty fuel oil tanks often float resulting in bent and leaking fuel of lines.
- Look closely for plumbing breaks, as wet ground in crawl spaces can settle and waste and vent lines then snap off.
- Sight down basement walls looking for bowing of walls.
- While single family homes without electricity may not cause classification to be Uninhabitable, lack of electricity will result in an Uninhabitable classification for businesses, restaurants, churches, etc.
- Safety; do not enter structurally unsafe areas or areas where hazardous material may be present.

### Recovery

Recovery in a flood event is when the community repairs and rebuilds from damages caused by a disaster (flood). This stage usually begins right after flood waters subside, before the Damage Assessment Phase ends, and it can last for upwards of a year or more. Often additional office and field assistance (paid) is necessary due to the sheer volume of work. Without adequate staffing, the local building department will likely be viewed by the public as (and actually may be) a drag or bottleneck slowing the recovery effort!

As mentioned, the recovery effort will begin sooner than expected and preparation for the Recovery Phase should be completed before the flood and during the Preparation Phase. Additional staffing for permit technicians, plan review and for inspections will likely be necessary (volunteer assisting inspectors will usually remain for the Damage Assessment Phase but not for the Recovery Phase). Written guidelines should be in place as well as decisions made regarding permit fees, office hours, time frames for plan review, etc (see Chapter 4). Handouts for the public should also be in place ready for distribution (see samples in Appendix). Staff should be reminded that they are not there just to regulate the public, but also to assist the public recover.

Permits should not just immediately be issued over the counter. When an application is received it should be reviewed against the Damage Assessment Report to determine if it is for full or partial repair, and, the field permit card should document the scope of the permitted repair so to keep field inspectors properly informed. When issuing permits additional information can be

given the public to inform, educate and protect them. Information and/or handouts to possibly attach to permits include:

- Advising them to come to a resolution with their insurance company before beginning repairs.
- Documenting damages with photographs.
- Contactor licensing requirements and the protections afforded them.
- Providing the Attorney General's handout regarding hiring a contractor.
- Storm Damage Cleanup (a handout in the manual Appendix).

Additional considerations when issuing permits:

- If structures are located within the 100 year flood plain and damaged over 50% it should first be discussed with D.N.R. representatives as rebuilding may not be allowed. DNR staff should be contacted to determine if the relocation or reconstruction of the building is permitted.
- Will a structural engineer's review of flood damaged basement walls be required (often required based on inspector's evaluation – low horizontal cracks, bowed-in walls or vertical cracks that go through blocks indicate potential wall failure whereas stepped cracks in mortar joints often indicates just settlement).
- Any structure damaged over 50% should be reviewed as a possible non-conforming use whereas rebuilding might not be allowed per the local zoning ordinance.
- Hold meetings with local building, plumbing and hvac contractors and instruct them on requirements and expectations regarding permits and inspections.

Repairs to structures impacted by flood waters should address the following potential damage:

### **Electrical systems**

- Although electrical inspectors inspect electrical wiring, it is important that building inspectors understand circumstances wherein the integrity of electrical materials and equipment is affected by flood water. In many instances deterioration that affects insulation, current carrying capability and mechanical operation may not develop immediately. In most instances the integrity of electrical equipment and devices is severely impaired by corrosive contaminants and sediments found in or left behind by floodwaters. Equipment and devices may operate in an unattended or unmonitored state, however, the operational failure of these devices or equipment exposes occupants and property to possible electrical shock and fire hazard.
- All panel board interiors, circuit breakers, fuse blocks, disconnect switches, controllers and similar devices that have been submerged must be replaced.
- All lighting switches and receptacle outlets that have been submerged must be replaced.
- All electrical equipment or components that have been submerged must be replaced. This includes, but is not limited to lighting fixtures, furnaces, baseboard heaters, space heaters, water heaters, pumps, washing machines, clothes dryers, ovens, ranges, cooktops, dishwashers, air conditioning condensing units and other appliances and equipment.

- All electrical wiring, including service conductors, feeder cables or conductors, and branch circuit cables or conductors, must be replaced where they have been either partially or completely submerged.
- For questions concerning electrical work and repairs to be completed, contact the local jurisdiction's electrical inspector or the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Construction Codes and Licensing division Electrical Inspection Unit State Board of Electricity at (651) 284-5026, or at <http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Electrical.asp>

### **Plumbing systems**

- If water lines have been partially or fully submerged they should be tested for leaks.
- After water lines have passed the working pressure test they should be flushed with water and chlorine mixture (200 parts per million for 3 hours or 50 parts per million for 24 hours).
- If tank insulation on the water heater storage tank has been partially or fully submerged in floodwater, the water heater may require replacement.
- For questions concerning inspection, testing, and corrections of the plumbing system, contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Construction Codes and Licensing, Plumbing Plan Review and Inspections at (651) 284-5063 or at [www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Plumbing.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Plumbing.asp)

### **Mechanical systems**

- Metal ductwork that has been partially or fully submerged may have to be removed and cleaned. If ductwork is fiberglass board type it shall be removed and replaced with new ductwork. Appropriate ductwork insulation shall be replaced or installed.
- Gas lines and connections may require testing for leakage.
- If furnace insulation has been partially or fully submerged, replace the insulation in accordance with the manufacturer recommendations. See electrical section for actions if furnace electrical equipment or components have been partially or fully submerged.

### **Main structure**

- Remove and replace all insulation in the floor or walls of a home that has been subjected to flood water.
- Inspect all floor decking that was submerged in floodwaters. If necessary, replace with materials rated to be used as floor sheathing for the joist spans of the floor.
- Loosen or remove siding and sheathing allowing drying of construction materials.
- Treat flood water soaked construction elements for bacteria and potential mold and mildew growth (contact the Minnesota Department of Health for suggested treatment).
- Allow areas to dry thoroughly prior to replacement of components such as insulation, vapor barriers or drywall (gypsum board).
- Note: Flood water will wick through construction elements, extending the damage beyond the benchmark of the actual floodwater.

### **Wells**

- Water from wells can not be regarded as safe for drinking or food preparation until the well and plumbing system have been flushed and disinfected, and, a water test shows that it is safe.
- A well should be considered contaminated any time the floodwater comes in contact with the well casing.
- The Minnesota Department of Health's web page [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells) contains a brochure titled Disinfecting Flooded Wells which explains how homeowners can disinfect their own wells (a copy is in the Appendix).

### **Septic Systems**

- If a septic system has been flooded, chances are the septic tank has collected silt. Owners should have flooded tanks pumped out as soon as possible taking care that ground water pressure does not damage the tank.
- Septic systems should not be driven over when they are saturated, this will reduce the ability of the drain-field to treat wastewater.
- The Minnesota Department of Health's web page (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/emergency/natural/floods/sewage/index.html>) contains additional information regarding septic systems Minnesota Pollution Control may also prove useful information to homeowners. <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/waste/waste-and-cleanup/cleanup-programs-and-topics/cleanup-programs/emergency-response/floods-minimizing-pollution-and-health-risks.html>

### **Other Agencies Involved**

Other agencies involved in flood events are largely the same agencies involved in tornado events (see Chapter 9). Some agencies, however, do play larger roles in flood events as opposed to tornado events, these include:

#### ***Department of Natural Resources***

The D.N.R. will likely ask the building department to identify those structures both located within the 100 year flood elevation and that have received damages in excess of 50% . The D.N.R. uses specific criteria to establish this benchmark. The problem may arise where the building official does not have adequate staffing to perform inspections on these structures to the level of detail requested (as damage assessment inspections and placarding are the department's top priorities). Some jurisdictions have in the past instructed inspectors to highlight those structures inspected which they feel are possible candidates for follow-up inspections to later determine applicability. These properties are not issued building permits pending further inspections. Just who performs these subsequent inspections is the decision of the local building official. They could be performed by the local building department or by an independent inspection firm - paid for by the property owner. Decisions and interpretations regarding the law's applicability are best referred to both the local city attorney and the D.N.R.

#### ***Army Corps of Engineers***

This agency will typically have a larger presence in a flood event however, its direct interaction with the local building department will be minimal as it deals more with infrastructure and the local engineering/public works departments.

***MN Department of Health***

This agency will also have a large role (if not an actual presence) in flood events. The health dangers in a flood are very high for both victims of floods and those working in and around flooded areas (including inspectors) due mainly to the presence of sewage. This agency also deals with food establishments, wells, and septic systems, and, it is a very good source of information for identifying and relaying proper sanitation precautions in and around floods (and for flood clean-up).

It is recommended to attach their flood clean-up handouts from the Department of Health and Pollution Control Agency (in Appendix) to issued permits.



## CHAPTER 6

### MANUFACTURED (MOBILE) HOME FLOOD DAMAGE ASSESSMENT and MITIGATION

Flood damage to manufactured homes in recent years has presented the need for the Construction Codes and Licensing Division to review the handling of flood damaged manufactured homes within Minnesota. The following are items this division encourages municipalities that have manufactured homes installed in parks and on private property, within their jurisdiction, to use to inform manufactured home residents of possible damages and hazards caused by flooding. These items may also be used by the authority having jurisdiction in determining corrections that may be required to the manufactured homes and the home installation or if the manufactured home should be tagged as uninhabitable.

The three types of pressures associated with flooding are hydrostatic, hydrodynamic, and debris impact. Damages associated with flood water that will affect manufactured homes are;

- Saturation of soils causing footings, piers, and foundations to become unstable or fail,
- Floatation may cause support and anchoring systems to become unstable or fail,
- Lateral displacement of the homes ceilings, walls and floors,
- Cracking of wall and ceiling finishes,
- Saturation of insulation materials in floors and walls,
- Saturation of floor framing and decking materials (floor decking is typically structural particle board and is adversely affected by water),
- Siding, wall sheathing and interior wall finishes.
- Mechanical duct work located in belly (floor) area of home (metal or fiberglass or flexible connector),
- Gas and oil lines and connections in and under the home,
- Plumbing systems of the home (drain/waste/vent and water),
- Electrical systems of the home in floors and walls,
- Furnace and water heater,
- Mold from water damage or sustained high humidity levels.

The following should be evaluated and corrective action taken as deemed necessary.

#### Support system and anchoring

1. Remove skirting to allow drying under the home.
2. Remove any vapor barriers on the ground under the home to allow drying of soils (replace vapor barrier when soils are dry).
3. Check soils in areas of footings/piers for undermining.
4. Check anchors for damage to anchor, strapping, or strapping connectors.
5. Check anchors to verify that they are solidly in the soil.
6. Check pier supports and blocks to verify they are not loose or damaged and verify that shims between pier and home frame are secure.
7. If soil erosion has occurred or if lack of soil exists to create positive drainage away from home have it reworked.

Note: All manufactured home installations or re-installations are to be completed by a Minnesota licensed/registered installer in Minnesota. Effective on June 26, 2000, all HUD labeled manufactured homes installed or re-installed in Minnesota are required to be anchored.

### Electrical systems

It is important that property owners recognize circumstances wherein the integrity of electrical materials and equipment is affected. In many instances deterioration that affects insulation, current carrying capability and mechanical operation may not develop immediately. In most instances the integrity of electrical equipment and devices is severely impaired by corrosive contaminants and sediments found in or left behind by floodwaters. This equipment and the devices may operate in an unattended or unmonitored state. The operational failure of these devices or equipment exposes occupants and property to possible electrical shock and fire hazard.

1. All panel-board interiors, circuit breakers, fuse blocks, disconnect switches, controllers, and similar devices that have been submerged must be replaced.
2. All lighting switches and receptacle outlets that have been submerged must be replaced.
3. All electrical equipment or components that have been submerged must be replaced. This includes, but is not limited to lighting fixtures, furnaces, baseboard heaters, space heaters, water heaters, pumps, washing machines, clothes dryers, ovens, ranges, cook-tops, dishwashers, air conditioning condensing units and other appliances and equipment.
4. All electrical wiring, including service conductors, feeder cables or conductors, and branch circuit cables or conductors, must be replaced where they have been either partially or completely submerged.
5. A licensed Minnesota Electrical Contractor must complete all electrical repairs or electrical work on manufactured homes located in a manufactured home park.
6. Have a licensed electrical contractor test all circuits and equipment after repairs/replacements have been completed.
7. For questions concerning electrical work and repairs to be completed, please contact the D Department of Labor and Industry Construction Codes and Licensing division Electrical Inspection Unit State Board of Electricity at (651) 284-5026, or at <http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Electrical.asp>

### Plumbing systems

1. Check drain/waste lines and connections under the home for leaks, proper slope, and support to the home.
2. Waste and vent lines should be air tested and able to hold a one-inch water column.
3. If water lines have been partially or fully submerged they must be tested (air test to maximum working pressure 80psi, MSPC 4715.1740) for leaks.
4. After water lines have passed the working pressure test they are to be flushed with water and chlorine mixture.
5. If the tank insulation on the water heater storage tank has been partially or fully submerged in floodwater, the water heater requires replacement.
6. If you have questions concerning inspection, testing, and corrections for the plumbing system, please contact Construction Codes and Licensing, Plumbing Plan Review and Inspections at (651) 284-5063, or at [www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Plumbing.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Plumbing.asp)

### Mechanical systems

1. Metal ductwork that has been partially or fully submerged may have to be removed and cleaned. If ductwork is fiberglass board type it shall be removed and replaced with new ductwork. Appropriate duct insulation shall be replaced or installed (CFR 3280.715 requires R-4 minimum).
2. Have gas lines and connections tested for leakage (test as per MSBC 1350.3400).
3. Have fuel oil lines tested for leakage.
4. If furnace insulation has been partially or fully submerged, replace the insulation in accordance with the manufacturer recommendations. See electrical section for actions if furnace electrical equipment or components have been partially or fully submerged.

### Main structure

1. Remove bottom board (belly paper) if area was partially or fully submerged to allow inspection and corrections to electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems/materials located in this area.
2. Remove and replace all insulation in the belly (floor) area or walls of the home that was subjected to flood water.
3. Remove and replace all floor decking that was submerged in floodwaters with materials rated to be used as floor sheathing for joist spans of floor.
4. Loosen or remove siding and sheathing allowing drying of construction materials.
5. Treatment of flood water soaked construction elements for bacteria and potential mold and mildew growth (contact the Minnesota Department of Health for suggested treatment). Allow areas to dry thoroughly prior to replacement of components such as insulation, vapor barriers, drywall, and decking.
6. Remove and replace all drywall (gypsum board) products that have been subjected to floodwaters. A vapor barrier is required to be replaced to the warm side of exterior walls and ceilings.
7. When replacing floor decking, no interior walls of the manufactured home may be removed or relocated because of shear wall designs of the manufactured home. Removal or relocating the walls constitutes an alteration and is a violation of MSBC 1350.3800.

Note; Flood water will wick through construction elements, extending the damage beyond the benchmark of the actual floodwater.

Repairs or corrections to the construction elements of the home by other than the titled owner are required to be completed by a Minnesota license contractor or remodeler as required by Minnesota Statutes 326.83 through 326.991. For information concerning licensed contractors or remodelers, please contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Contractor Licensing Section at (651) 284-5034

Minnesota Building Code 1350.3800, Alterations; Any alteration of the construction, plumbing, heating, cooling, or fuel burning system, electrical equipment, or installations which bears a seal or label (State seal on homes manufactured from 7/1/72 through 6/14/76 or HUD label on homes manufactured after 6/14/76) shall void the approval, and the seal or label shall be returned to the commissioner.

The authority having jurisdiction, local building officials or Construction Code and Licensing Division personnel may inspect the manufactured home and consider it beyond repair and not fit for habitation based on the amount of flood damage or that repairs would constitute re-manufacturing of the manufactured home. The local building official will inform you what permits are needed for repairs to ensure that all work is properly completed and inspected. If you have questions concerning the corrections required please contact the local Building Official having jurisdiction or the Construction Code and Licensing Division at (651) 284-5012 or [www.dli.mn.gov](http://www.dli.mn.gov)

If the authority having jurisdiction, local building officials or Construction Code and Licensing Division personnel, determine that the home is beyond repair and not fit for habitation the following procedures are to be use to salvage/scrap the manufactured home.

1. State construction seals (July 1, 1972 – June 14, 1976) or HUD construction labels (June 14, 1976 to the present) are to be removed and returned to the commissioner (Department of Labor and Industry, Construction Codes and Licensing Division).
2. Homeowner or owner of title is to return the manufactured homes original Minnesota title to the Construction Code and Licensing Division along with a letter indicating why the title is being surrendered. Surrendered titles will be forwarded to the Department of Public Safety for recording.
3. Letter indicating the final disposition of the manufactured home, salvaged, destroyed, sold as salvage (include buyers name and address).

## CHAPTER 7

### OBTAINING DAMAGE ASSESSMENT INSPECTION ASSISTANCE

Commonly the local jurisdiction's building staff will be overwhelmed by the amount of work and effort required both during and following a disaster event. There can be more structures to inspect, permits to issue, plans to review, phone questions to answer and decisions to make, than existing personnel can effectively handle. Putting in extra hours may not be enough. In these cases, a building department may need immediate and on going assistance in the form of additional qualified building inspectors to conduct damage assessment inspections, and qualified clerical staff to process permit applications.

Building officials often obtain additional inspection personnel (after receiving approval from a supervisor) by the following methods:

- Contacting the State Duty Officer for them to notify the Construction Codes and Licensing Division, State Building Official for assistance with the disaster. In greater Minnesota only (800) 422-0798) Twin Cities metro and outside Minnesota (651) 649-5751  
[http://www.hsem.state.mn.us/HSem\\_view\\_Article.asp?docid=172&catid=5](http://www.hsem.state.mn.us/HSem_view_Article.asp?docid=172&catid=5)
- CCLD Contacts
  - Doug Nord (651) 284-5838
  - Mike Fricke (651) 284-5841
  - Chris Meier (651) 284-5865
  - Scott Wheeler (651) 284-5876
  - Jerry Jasmer (651) 284-5871
- Contacting the Association of Minnesota Building Officials (AMBO) Disaster Preparedness Committee.
  - Dale Schoepner (651) 675-5675
  - Scott Safe (651) 380-8676
  - Mike Thedens (507) 328-2626
- Directly contacting other area building inspectors they know and requesting assistance.
- Contacting certain building officials with wide contacts that can put out the word of needed assistance.
- Contacting local building official chapter groups and other similar organizations to spread the word.
- Requesting the assistance of city or other local engineers.

*Note: Obtaining assistance from other Minnesota governmental jurisdictions allows legal and insurance issues (and reimbursements) to be relatively straight forward along legislated guidelines. Often, inspectors currently working for one jurisdiction and volunteering to assist another jurisdiction do not anticipate reimbursement to their jurisdiction, however, if state/federal disaster declarations occur, this may result in reimbursement being offered and accepted.*

Prior to making requests for inspection assistance, the following issues should be considered and decided:

- Approximately how many buildings must be inspected? Often the number will be more than originally estimated.
- How quickly must the initial inspection of all damaged buildings be completed?
- Will inspectors be working alone or in pairs? Typical wisdom is that 2 inspectors working together as a team is best.
- How many additional inspectors per day will be needed to have all damaged sites inspected?
- Should a separate 'coordinator' be utilized? If supervising 'volunteer' inspection teams, this is recommended.
- Will assisting inspectors be available for 1 day – 1 week? You may need to schedule and stagger volunteers.
- For how long will voluntary assistance be available? This varies significantly on the type, size and location of the event. One week to ten days is average unless it is a major event.

The following should be communicated to assisting inspectors prior to their departure:

- Where the building division offices are located.
- Who the inspector is to initially contact at the city.
- What equipment the assisting inspector should bring and what will be provided.
- Anticipated use of their vehicle.
- Time frame of assistance and expectations of reimbursement.
- Bring photo and inspector identification.

When assisting inspectors arrive an orientation should be conducted (preferably as a group) and to include:

- Staff introductions.
- Sign in sheet
- Any initial documentation required of the assisting inspector (i.e. deputizing, entry passes, etc.).
- Goals and objectives of the effort.
- Timecard use.
- Damage assessment forms and how to complete.
- Placards, definition and use of each.
- Right of entry issues.
- How to conduct inspections, what to look for, what to document, how to document, and how long an average inspection should take.
- Handouts and information sheets on city policies and procedures.

- Who has demolition order authority
- What to say if contacted by the media.
- What to say to homeowners – anticipated/typical questions.
- Any handouts intended for residents.
  
- Who to call if a dispute erupts with a resident.
- City maps (identifying damaged areas, closed roads and individual addresses).
- Phone numbers (office, police, fire etc.).
- City’s extended hours of operation.
- Minimum equipment supplies each inspector to have.
- Information sheet identifying restaurants, local housing – clinics.

At the end of each morning and at the end of each day the coordinator should:

- Verify all inspectors return safely.
- Collect all inspection results.
- Verify time sheet submittals.
- Verify inspector teams for the following day.
- Answer policy and interpretation issues that may have come up
- End of day sign out sheet.

Assisting another city will undoubtedly be a burden on the jurisdiction providing assistance and, except in extreme cases, help is offered for the damage assessment phase only. The affected city will typically be responsible for hiring additional personnel for the recovery stage (if additional personnel are needed). Obtaining this type of short term, temporary inspection help for the recovery stage can be difficult.

It is recommended that assisting cities view offering assistance as valuable training for both office and field staff, which it is. Further, it is also suggested that assistance be offered in the second or third week, instead of the traditional first week, thereby providing additional assistance and allowing staff to receive valuable training at a minimal cost. (Note: assisting personnel are usually offered for one or two days on an individual basis unless it is a major event and specific arrangements are agreed to).



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **COMMUNICATIONS DURING AN EMERGENCY**

Communications, as might well be imagined, will be critical and will have a significant impact on the success of building division efforts. The building official must not forget that just as important as communicating with staff, will be communicating information to citizens whose homes or businesses have been damaged. Some recommendations regarding communications include:

#### **Communicating with staff:**

- Conduct orientations (including both office and field staff) prior to beginning each day (group sessions if possible).
- Conduct debriefings at the close of each day (group discussions of work status).
- Provide policy handouts both to office and field personnel to ensure accuracy and consistency of information being given out.
- Each field inspector (or pair) should have a cell phone or radio for communications. If not possible, field personnel should check in with the office every 4 hours (for both safety and communication reasons).
- Building official to keep supervisor updated frequently.
- Building official must be aware of any disaster declarations which would necessitate additional responsibilities in report/documentation.

#### **Communicating with the public:**

- Most property owners impacted by a disaster will be unfamiliar with the recovery process. This will also be a highly emotional time for them. It is recommended that patience, tolerance and compassion be emphasized to all staff when dealing with individuals struggling to recover from a disaster event.
- It is recommended to have policy handouts written and available to give to the public regarding building department activities (example in Appendix). Including:
  - The purpose and process of damage assessment inspections.
  - What the different placards mean, what restrictions they impose and what actions are necessary to change those classifications.
  - Phone numbers of agencies the public may need to contact when dealing with repairs to structures, such as: building department, utility companies, fire and police departments, public works department, Department of Commerce, Minnesota Homeland Security Emergency Management, F.E.M.A., Red Cross and volunteer center.

Information regarding obtaining building permits:

1. When permits are required.
2. How to obtain permits.
3. When plans and/or reviews are required.
4. How long it takes to obtain permits.
5. Contractor licensing requirements and benefits.

6. Steps necessary prior to utility re-hookups.
7. Steps necessary to obtain an occupancy certificate on a structure placarded as uninhabitable.
8. Building department hours of operation and phone numbers.

**How to communicate with the public:**

- Through office staff – over the counter and on phones.
- Inspection staff – flyers/handouts given to the public or posted when inspecting.
- Flyers/handouts given out by volunteers.
- Flyers/handouts posted on telephone poles or portable kiosks.
- News media (through your city's communication person).
  - TV
  - Cable
  - Radio
  - Newspapers
  - Town meetings

**Communicating with the media:**

- View as an asset, which can pass information to the public.
- Pass information through the city's communication representative.
- Instruct inspectors/office staff on what to say if contacted by news crews. (Typically to contact city's communication representative for information on the extent of damage).
- Learn dos and don'ts of talking to the media - attend classes before an emergency strikes.

**Typical communications problems:**

- Phone lines may be down (possibly the citizen's or the jurisdictions) or may be overloaded and difficult to get through.
- Cell phones may not work (towers may be down) or they could also be overloaded and slow.
- Citizen may be without electricity for radios and TV - no way of receiving communications.
- Some homeowners not allowed back into damaged homes and not knowing what to do next. Angry, confused and frustrated.
- Citizens will typically not be familiar finding contractors for either emergency or permanent repairs and often will request advice and assistance from building staff. Even if names can't be given, methods of finding contractors can be communicated. A list of licensed contractors from the Department of labor and Industry Licensing Division, or a list of local contractors could be made available.

## CHAPTER 9

### OTHER AGENCIES

Listed here are some of other agencies often involved in natural disaster response efforts along with a brief description of their typical response activities.

This list is for information only – it is typically not the building official’s responsibility to contact these agencies directly (consult your jurisdiction’s Emergency Management Plan for your assigned responsibility). However, the *building department’s role is significant* and the building official will be more effective if he/she is knowledgeable of the overall effort, the responsibilities of other agencies, and how and where the building official’s role fits and interacts.

Each agency that provides disaster recovery assistance establishes its own criteria as to if and when its assistance will be provided. Also, each agency's role can vary from one disaster to the next depending on the area of the state affected, the degree and scope of the damage inflicted, and the capabilities of the local jurisdiction. This should result in a fluid condition, and any attempt to describe these roles must be limited to generalities.

#### **Local Jurisdiction:**

- This is the affected area’s political subdivision – typically a city, township or county from which the immediate and primary response effort is launched and coordinated. Generally the local jurisdiction has authority for the response effort.
- The role of various departments within different jurisdictions will vary significantly depending on size and makeup. There may be an Emergency Management Plan in effect that outlines the general responsibilities of the various municipal departments and it will typically include any responsibilities assigned to the building official. In non-code enforcement areas the local authority must decide the extent of this role (building official) with regards to damaged buildings (except for state-regulated buildings), and, who is to perform it.

#### **County:**

- County government involvement will vary depending on the specific county involved, the extent and magnitude of damage, and the capabilities of the local jurisdiction. The more involvement a county has in the building permit and inspection process, the more directly it will be involved in this aspect of the response and recovery phases. Also, counties may act as a higher level of coordination between affected local jurisdictions.
- Each county has designated a County Disaster Coordinator for relief efforts. The building official should be aware of who fills this role and have the phone number.

## State of Minnesota:

State involvement/assistance is offered in two ways:

- Assistance from state agencies.
- Disaster relief funding may be possible. (if a state declaration is called).

Following are some state agencies and a description of their typical involvement.

- Department of Public Safety – Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.). This division coordinates the activities of state agencies during a disaster and is typically involved in disasters large and small. It offers assistance to the local jurisdiction and helps guide events rather than control them. It mainly operates at a higher level of coordination than the building official who would typically have more direct involvement with the other agencies it coordinates (such as the Construction Codes and Licensing Division or Pollution Control Agency). Homeland Security and Emergency Management does act as a regulator of state assistance funding and the building official's damage assessment inspection reports may be used to qualify for some state and national assistance and reimbursement funding. If a local jurisdiction requests state assistance, the building official often becomes involved by providing documentation of structure damage (possibly with dollar loss estimates).

The Homeland Security and Emergency Management Duty Officer System helps to ensure the proper receipt and dissemination of emergency notifications to state and local government agencies. Hazardous materials accidents and radiological incidents discovered by building officials should be reported to the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Duty Officer (1-800-422-0798/24 hours) in addition to the local jurisdiction.

- Construction Codes and Licensing Division.

This division's role will vary, primarily depending on the level of local code enforcement in an affected area. If requested by the local jurisdiction, this role can include:

- In outstate areas the division's Code administration services representative may act as a coordinator between the local jurisdictions or actively assist the local building official.
  - Perform damage assessment inspections of state-funded buildings, hospitals, and schools.
  - Offer advice and interpretation to local building officials and the public.
- Construction Codes and Licensing Division, Electrical Section.
    - May coordinate efforts of local inspectors and utilities, if requested.
    - Typically will not initiate inspections of damaged buildings.
    - Will provide additional inspection personnel when recovery has begun if inspection requests increase.
    - Possibly may send a representative to assist local officials with contractor licensing laws and enforcement. This can prove to be very valuable assistance.
  - Health Departments (city/county/state).

- Typically will not initiate inspections in an affected area.
- Once notified a use (i.e. restaurant, food warehouse, etc.) has been damaged or affected in some way, it would conduct inspections regarding health issues.
- Department of Natural Resources.
  - In flood events this agency will work closely with the local building official regarding structures damaged over 50% which may not be allowed to be repaired.
- Commerce Department.
  - The Commerce Department regulates the insurance industry and can assist homeowners in dealing with the complex and often confusing questions arising from filling out insurance claims.
- Pollution Control Agency.
  - Becoming more involved with demolitions and required hazardous material removals from structure debris along with inspections to verify compliance. Typically will send a representative but not inspectors. Local jurisdiction may not have staffing to assist.
- National Guard.
  - The National Guard may be called in to provide security to a damaged area. Inspectors may need authorization badges in order to enter these damaged areas. The potential exists for delays in beginning damage assessment inspections in a secured area if authority is not arranged immediately (see Appendix for a sample authorized pass).

**Public Utilities:**

- Public utilities (such as gas, electric, and phone) will send crews into a damaged area immediately. Little interaction occurs here with the building official unless dangerous conditions are observed during the course of an inspection and notification is necessary. However, what must be coordinated are any required inspections and signoffs prior to reconnecting individual structures to gas and electric lines. Procedures will vary significantly. Building inspectors should be aware of procedures so they can answer questions from property owners.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):**

- This federal agency coordinates the delivery of federal disaster recovery assistance in the event of a presidential declaration of a natural disaster. Its main effort is to help re-establish local government and infrastructure; however it also distributes emergency funds to citizens.
- Local officials anticipating a presidential declaration are encouraged to take pictures of damaged sites soon after the event and to keep records of any restoration work. Additional inspections of damaged buildings and providing damage assessment documentation required by FEMA will be the building official's main interaction with FEMA.

- FEMA also is involved in the demolition of structures by way of reimbursing disposal costs. This will directly tie into building staff work of damage assessment inspection/documentation and permit issuance on buildings set for demolition – here, proper documentation is vital.

### **Minnesota Historical Society**

- In communities with historic buildings, contact the Historical Society for a copy of their pamphlet – Disaster Plan for Historic Buildings.

### **Minnesota Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (MNVOAD):**

- Many volunteer organizations are active in Minnesota. MNVOAD was formed in order to ensure an efficient and effective response by these organizations. They can mobilize very quickly and begin to meet basic human needs almost immediately, and often they become the only disaster assistance provider in the small disasters. The following are active in Minnesota: <http://www.mnvoad.org/>
  - American Red Cross – Note: the St. Paul Chapter of the American Red Cross serves as the overall coordinator of disaster recovery assistance provided by MNVOAD. The American Red Cross will do an assessment of damage to residences in the disaster area as a part of their disaster relief operations. You can make arrangements to obtain copies of their damage assessment reports by contacting their “Job Director”. Their procedures closely mirror those of FEMA inspectors, but FEMA and Red Cross damage assessment categories differ slightly.
  - Catholic Charities.
  - Civic Air Patrol.
  - Mennonite Disaster Services.
  - R.E.A.C.T.
  - Salvation Army.
  - Seventh-Day Adventists Disaster Services.
  - United Methodist Church.
  - U.S. Army MARS.
  - American Radio Relay League.
  - Christian Reform World Relief Committee.
  - Minnesota Search and Rescue Dog Association.
  - Church of the Latter Day Saints.
  - Minnesota Southern Baptist Convention.
  - Lutheran Disaster Relief.

Building officials typically will not make nor have much interaction with these organizations, however, some of the services they have provided in the past, such as distributing informational flyers that contain information about government services, have proven very beneficial to building departments in getting information out to the public.

It is very difficult for the local disaster relief coordinator to effectively organize all these parties. Typically as a disaster event unfolds and progresses, the relationship and interactions between these agencies change. To expect numerous agencies to perform harmoniously without prearranged guidance and streamlined systems in a disaster event is unrealistic. The old adage

that “one hand doesn’t know what the other is doing” will seem to be an understatement at times. The building official and staff should be aware of this and not contribute to it or aggravate it. Therefore, the building official must be keep aware of changing conditions, duties and responsibilities expected of his/her staff.

## CHAPTER 10

### LEGISLATION CONCERNING DISASTER ASSISTANCE

**Minnesota Statute 12.331** is an inter-local emergency assistance statute that applies to jurisdictions providing and/or receiving emergency assistance *when there is not a mutual aid agreement between them*. This statute provides specifics regarding responsibility for use of personnel, equipment and supplies when political subdivisions send or receive assistance (such as building inspectors or permit technicians) in an emergency. A copy of the statute may be obtained from the State of Minnesota Revisor's website [www.revisor.mn.gov](http://www.revisor.mn.gov).

**Providing Assistance in Emergencies (Coverage and Liability Issues)** is provided with permission from the League of Minnesota Cities. Please visit their website

(<http://www.lmc.org/page/1/WC-Coverages.jsp>)

**National Incident Management Systems (NIMS)**

<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/>

Access the latest information.

**For more information or training go to the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Website: [www.hsem.state.mn.us](http://www.hsem.state.mn.us)**



# APPENDIX

**City of \_\_\_\_\_**  
**PUBLIC INFORMATION HANDOUT**  
**Date \_\_\_\_\_**

This handout is intended to inform property owners of what your building department will be doing to help make damaged homes and businesses functional again.

Damage assessment inspections:

- The building department will be sending out inspectors to inspect each home/structure suspected to have been damaged during the recent event.
- The purpose of these inspections is to identify which homes and businesses are safe to continue to occupy and to identify those structures which are unsafe. Inspectors will use a standard damage assessment inspection report form to identify the degree of damage to each structure. A copy of the report will be left at the building. The inspectors will also be ‘placarding’ each damaged structure to identify its occupancy worthiness. ‘Placards’ identify occupancy restrictions for the protection of the public and are posted on the front of each inspected building. It is anticipated all structures will be inspected by \_\_\_\_\_.
- If utilities (gas, water and electric) are not functional in your home or business and need to be reestablished:
  - If the structure has been placarded as ‘uninhabitable’ utilities will not be reestablished immediately.
  - If the structure has been placarded as ‘habitable’ utility companies must gain access to the structure in order to reestablish service. Please contact utility companies directly to coordinate. See phone numbers attached.
  - For reestablishing water/sewer service (if non-functional) please call \_\_\_\_\_.
- Structure repairs:
  - Closing in a structure to protect it from the elements does not require a building permit. Examples include minor roof or shingle repair, covering a building with a tarp, window/glass repair and garage door repair/replacement.
  - Permanent repairs and/or alterations in conjunction with repairs will require the issuance of a building permit. Examples include:
    - Roof replacement
    - Residing
    - Any structural repairs
    - Drywall replacement
    - Foundation repairs
    - Electrical work
    - Plumbing work
    - Mechanical work
    - Fire sprinkler/alarm work (on commercial buildings)

For questions as to if a permit is required for proposed work, please contact the building department at \_\_\_\_\_.

### How to obtain a permit:

- To obtain a building/mechanical permit an application must be submitted to the building department at City Hall. Some permits can be issued immediately to homeowners and contractors while others may require a plan review. No permit will be issued on a structure until it has received the initial damage assessment inspection and it has been recorded. Permits will be issued ‘over the counter’ for reroofs, residing, window replacements and other minor repairs. Not issued immediately will be permits for structural repairs, alterations, additions, demolitions, commercial work and other significant work. These will require a plan review – ask the permits clerk for an estimated time frame. There is a fee for most permits to cover inspection services, however, most permit fees are included in insurance company reimbursements.
- Beware - following disaster events the desire for immediate repairs should be tempered by a few precautions so that you do not fall victim to unscrupulous practices or scam artists.
  - Do not sign a contract until you have spoken with your insurance company.
  - Get contracts in writing.
  - Always use licensed contractors.
  - Exorbitant prices and some repairs may not be fully covered by insurance in spite of what some contractors may say. Show your estimate to your insurance agent before you sign a contract.
  - Watch for notifications and postings put out by the building department as frequent informational updates.
  - Obtaining building permits and using licensed contractors will provide the property owner additional protections and, is required by law.

### Reoccupying your home/business:

- If your home or business has been placard as ‘uninhabitable’ it means the structure can no longer be occupied for human habitation. In order for the home/business to be reclassified as ‘habitable’ the following steps are necessary:
  1. If repairs are not to be made by the property owner, any estimates or bid proposals should first be reviewed by your insurance agent to verify coverage.
  2. Obtain a building permit to repair those items listed on the Damage Assessment Report. Not all items in the report will affect habitability. Ask the building department which items must be repaired to gain occupancy. Note: some repairs, particularly to business properties will require architectural/engineering plans prior to permit issuance.
  3. Complete at least those repairs which affect habitability (if not by the property owner, by a licensed contractor).
  4. Schedule any necessary inspections listed on the permit(s) of the work in progress or completed work.
  5. Once that portion of the work affecting habitability has been approved by the building department, request they issue a conditional or temporary occupancy certificate which allows occupancy of the structure while other repairs are completed.

Miscellaneous:

- For information on inspections, placards, building permits, utility reconnections and other structure related issues please contact the building department at \_\_\_\_\_.  
Office hours are \_\_\_\_\_ Monday through Friday and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ on the weekends.
- For other assistance issues information is available at \_\_\_\_\_ or please call  
the following:

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Administration      | _____ |
| Public works        | _____ |
| Finance             | _____ |
| Gas service         | _____ |
| Electrical service  | _____ |
| Phone service       | _____ |
| American Red Cross  | _____ |
| Salvation Army      | _____ |
| Commerce Department | _____ |
| Other               | _____ |
|                     | _____ |
|                     | _____ |
|                     | _____ |
|                     | _____ |
|                     | _____ |

Disaster Mitigation Committee  
AMBO/DLI

Damage Assessment Checklists

**The following (attached) checklists are intended for use by building departments when responding to disaster events requiring the inspection of damaged structures. They are intended to help speed the building department's response efforts and to ensure critical aspects of the response are not omitted. The checklists have been designed in conjunction with the MN Building Official's Disaster Preparedness Manual. They are basic and may not include all work required of the department if it's role and responsibilities are more inclusive than would be typical.**

**Document No. 1 - Setup and Preparation for the Response Phase:**

**Assists with identifying the role and responsibilities of the building department in the Damage Assessment Phase and also with designing how the response effort is intended to proceed. It will offer example goals and objectives based upon the past experience of other building departments.**

**Document No. 2 – Implementing and Monitoring the Response:**

**Assists with implementing goals and objectives in the Damage Assessment Phase and, by ensuring required work and reporting is being completed.**

**Document No. 3 – Preparation and Monitoring the Recovery Phase:**

**Assists by identifying critical building department functions of the Recovery Phase that will help assist the community quickly rebuild.**

**A much more thorough explanation of a building department's role and responsibilities in a disaster event is found in the MN Building Official's Disaster Preparedness Manual which is available on-line at [www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Disaster.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Disaster.asp) . It may be read on-line and/or downloaded at no charge.**

# Damage Assessment Checklist #1

For use by building departments initiating a disaster response following an event

Date:

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Jurisdiction:

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Building Official:

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## Set-up and Preparation

- Determine the Building Department's role and responsibilities:
  - **Review the local jurisdictions Emergency Management Plan and then identify the building department's role and responsibilities. Typically this will involve; completing a damage assessment report and placarding each damaged structure, creating a map of the damaged area, and then, reporting this information to the building official's supervisor and/or local emergency coordinator.**
  - **Verify the department's role and responsibilities with both the building official's supervisor and the local emergency coordinator.**
- Determine Scope of Damage:
  - **Conduct a quick 'windshield survey' – identify areas with damage to structures and determine which areas and which structures will require damage assessment inspections (include some structures beyond the area of obvious damage).**
  - **Estimate the number of damaged structures requiring inspection.**
  - **Identify if there are any high priority structures requiring inspection (those in danger of collapse, utilities, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, etc). Note: The state will inspect state funded facilities.**
- Design the Response:
  - Set goals for the department: (suggestions)
    1. **Complete a Damage Assessment Report and Placard each damaged structure within three days (one day is preferred, three days is typical, more if a large event).**
    2. **Compile and maintain a color coded map of all damaged structures (based upon the placarded color).**
    3. **Daily submit documentation of damage to supervisor and/or emergency coordinator.**
    4. **Maintain communications with emergency coordinator (through supervisor) to verify any potential additional responsibilities.**

5. **Open communications channels with the public regarding placarding, inspections and permits (provide the public with informational handouts when inspectors are conducting damage assessment inspections – samples in manual). Coordinate this with the local communications person.**

6. **Other:**

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- **Set Objectives: (these are suggestions for accomplishing each goal)**
  1. **Decide if outside assistance will be required to inspect/document damaged structures within specified time period (for both field inspections and office functions):**
    - **Identify number of volunteers needed in office. There will be an increase in phone calls, permits, documentation, etc.**
    - **Identify number of volunteers needed for field inspections (typically two inspectors per team and 30 minutes per inspection).**
  2. **Decide on files to be created in-order to document, monitor and report on activities:**
    - **A file for each damaged structure/property.**
    - **A file for volunteer documentation (to include: sign-in information, deputizing form, timecards and inspection slips – sample forms in manual).**
    - **A file for departmental expenses.**
    - **A file for the different forms to be created/utilized (see sample forms in manual appendix).**
    - **A file for the different handouts to be created/utilized (see sample handouts in manual appendix).**
    - **A file to document policies created (see #5 below).**
    - **Other** \_\_\_\_\_
  3. **Decide on maps to create, such as:**
    - **Create small maps displaying street names and individual addresses – for field inspection personnel.**
    - **Create a map (with address numbers) of the overall damage area, where the individual properties can be color coded, based upon the placard posted.**
    - **Other** \_\_\_\_\_
  4. **Decide on methods of delivering reports/documentation and maintaining upward communications, such as:**
    - **Daily - deliver a revised color-coded map and a summary report of damaged structures to supervisor and/or emergency coordinator.**
    - **Create a spreadsheet to document damaged structures and their progression through the permit process (sample in manual - disk available from DOLI).**

- Daily discuss progress, problems, decisions, staffing, and direction with staff and also with supervisor (morning briefings, evening de-briefings).
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Decide policy issues, such as:**

- Will extended office hours be implemented?
- Will building permits for repairs require be fee based or will they be issued at no charge?
- For what work will a permit be required (also: will these permits be issued over the counter or will a plan review be required – if so, specify a timeframe):
  - Roof repair.
  - Siding repair.
  - Electrical repair.
  - Mechanical systems repair.
  - Plumbing systems repair.
  - Fire sprinkler/alarm repair.
  - Structure repair.
  - Structure demolition.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

- How will contractor licensing be enforced (possibly the Commerce Division can assist with enforcement).
- Will dollar valuation of damage (per structure) be determined by the building inspector or will a percentage multiplier (per placard category) be used? The more common method is the percentage method (see manual for explanation) but building departments usually do not perform this task.
- What authority will be restricted from volunteer inspectors and/or office staff and be retained by the Building Official, such as:
  - Issuing a Stop Work order.
  - Ordering non-licensed contractors off a job.
  - Issuing Demolition Permits.
  - Issuing permits on non-conforming uses/buildings.
- Research and document (for inspectors and the public) the utility reconnection processes for:
  - Damaged/disconnected electrical service.
  - Damaged/disconnected gas/propane/oil service.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Damage Assessment Checklist #2

For use by building departments initiating a disaster response following an event

Date:

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Jurisdiction:

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Building Official:

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## Implementing the Response

- Obtain Approval for Goals and Objectives:
  - **Discuss the overall response effort design (goals, objectives, policies, reporting, etc.) with the Building Official's supervisor (and possibly the Emergency Coordinator) and obtain approval.**
  - **Specifically discuss if volunteer assistance will be necessary for inspections and/or office functions, and, obtain approval (information regarding liability and insurance is in the manual).**
- Initiate the Damage Assessment response:
  - Obtaining volunteer assistance if necessary **(for both office and field functions):**
    - **Contact Regional Representative, DOLI, local Chapters, and/or AMBO Disaster Mitigation Committee to request volunteer inspectors and permit technicians.**
    - **Identify: numbers of inspectors and office staff required (in total as well as numbers required per day), when to arrive, where to arrive, who to see and what to bring (see manual for guidance).**
    - **If a very large event: assign assistants to coordinate/oversee; 1) assisting volunteers, 2) office functions and staff, 3) field inspections and staff, 4) supplies.**
  - Office functions to be completed **(assign an office coordinator if possible):**
    - **Create all files previously decided upon.**
    - **Find/modify/create all maps previously decided upon.**
    - **Create documents of each/all policies previously decided upon (distribute to all staff).**
    - **Create and post an organizational chart (sample in manual):**
      - **Identify on the chart who each position reports to, and, which positions are responsible for which tasks/responsibilities.**

- **Create a Public Informational Handout (see sample in the manual appendix).**
- **Create local identification badges for assisting volunteers if necessary (see sample in the manual appendix).**
- **Make enough copies of:**
  - **Damage Assessment Report forms (or obtain carbon-copy forms from the state).**
  - **Placards (of each color).**
  - **Structure damage/placarding guidelines.**
  - **Public Informational Handouts (to be distributed by inspectors).**
  - **Other forms and handouts:**
    - **Look through Manual Appendix for any other forms and handouts (such as Demolition Permit requirements or Property Owners Inspection Checklist) that may be useful or applicable, then modify for use.**
  
- **Obtain supplies for each inspection team, typically including:**
  - **Large flashlight, duct tape, permanent markers, pens, small first-aid kits.**
  - **Notebook or folder for each inspection team, including:**
    - ✓ **Damage Assessment Report forms (25), Placards (25 of each color/type), structure damage classification guidelines (1), address map of inspection area (1), any handouts intended to be given property owners (25), departmental policies governing the event (1), timecards (2).**
- **Assign a staff member the responsibility for submitting Damage Assessment Reports, spreadsheets and color-coded maps to supervisor and/or emergency coordinator.**
- **Field functions to initiate (assign a coordinator if possible):**
  - **Create a daily schedule for all staff and volunteer positions (for all days it is anticipated assistance will be needed).**
  - **Communicate with volunteers (inspectors and permit technicians) and inform them of which day(s) they are assigned and of what to bring (see list in manual).**
  - **Gather and prepare necessary information, equipment and supplies for inspection teams.**
  - **Give an orientation to all newly arrived volunteers (for suggestions see manual).**
  - **Assign inspection teams (2 inspectors on each team) to specific areas so as to complete all damage assessment inspections and placarding within a specified time frame. Document each team's assignment and inspection area.**
  - **Require/verify inspection teams check-in at noon (safety check).**
  - **At end of day verify all inspectors return, are debriefed, and that both reports and timecards are submitted. Pass reports and timecards on for processing.**





# Damage Assessment Checklist #3

For use by building departments initiating a disaster response following an event

Date:

---

Jurisdiction:

---

Building Official:

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## Preparing for and Monitoring the Recovery Phase

- The Recovery Phase (as it relates to the building departments role) is when a community repairs, rebuilds and reoccupies damaged structures following a disaster event. This phase will begin almost immediately after the event happens and must be dealt with in tandem with the Damage Assessment Phase. The Recovery Phase will often last for up to a year or more. The building department will likely be faced with a significant workload increase during this period, and, if a state or federal emergency is declared, additional work in the form of re-inspections and documentation. Also, as volunteer assistance leaves, paid assistance often becomes necessary. Therefore, decisions affecting the Recovery Phase should be made relatively quickly following an event and in conjunction with the Damage Assessment Phase.
- Set Goals and Objectives:
  - **Sample Goals (note: have goals approved by supervisor):**
    - Issue repair permits, perform inspections and complete repair documentation without delays to the public or the recovery process.
    - Assist the public through effective communication, handouts and publications.
    - Required records documentation.
  - **Sample Objectives:**
    - Obtain adequate paid staffing to achieve goals:
      - Inspectors.
      - Permit Technicians.
    - Create written policies to guide staff, such as:
      - What work will or will not require the issuance of a permit.
      - What work will require a plan review before issuance.
      - Under what conditions and timeframes must damaged buildings be boarded.



# Minnesota State Contractor License Law

## Notice to Homeowners: Be Sure Your Contractor is Licensed

### Know Your Rights

Minnesota recently adopted a statewide "*Contractor and Remodeler License Law*." This law is designed to protect the consumer by requiring that contractors be licensed. Contractors must apply for a license, post a bond, and show proof of insurance and competency. The law gives homeowners reasonable assurance that they are dealing with a reputable, professional contractor, and a place they can call to get general contractor information.

### Getting Information on a Contractor

Contractors, with a few exceptions, who contract with a homeowner to perform home construction, remodeling, or repair, must be licensed with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. Homeowners can call DLI's Licensing Division at 1-800-DIAL-DLI, (651) 284-5069 or visit <http://www.dli.mn.gov> to obtain information on a specific contractor. Contractors must display their license number on their advertising and they must make it available to consumers. Building permits cannot be granted to contractors who are not properly licensed by the state.

### Exceptions to Being Licensed

State law exempts contractors who have gross annual receipts from the construction business of less than \$15,000. Also exempt are specialty contractors who perform only one specialty skill.

### Homeowner Rights if a Contractor is Not Licensed

If your contractor is required to be licensed and you find that he/she is not, you may still have recourse under the law. Generally, the law provides that a contractor who is working in violation of the Minnesota State License Law has no lien rights and may not be able to enforce a contract signed with a homeowner. If you find yourself in this situation, you should consult with an attorney to obtain legal advice. You should never knowingly hire someone who is deliberately violating the State License Law.

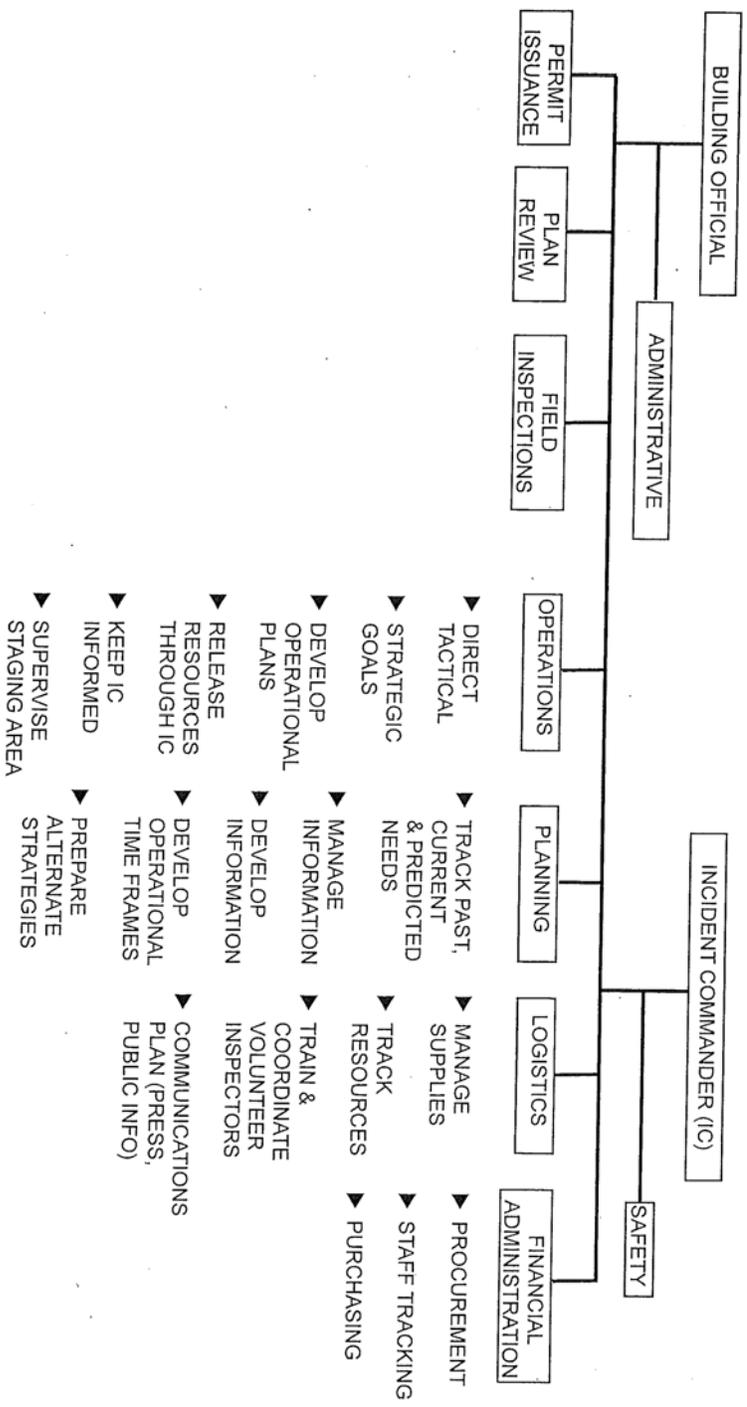
### Working on Your Own Home

You can obtain permits to do work on your own home. The License Law was written to ensure a reasonable degree of protection for you as the consumer of construction services, not to discourage homeowners from doing work on their own property. For your safety, building permits are required for most construction projects.

For more information on State Licensing, contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry at 800-DIAL-DLI or (651) 284-5069

**SAMPLE**

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT  
DISASTER ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



# Authorization for appointment of a Deputy Building Inspector in the Municipality of

---

(Municipality)

## Authority:

The following is authorized by Minnesota Statute Sections 16B.59 through 16B.75, incorporated by reference in Minnesota Rule Part 1300.0110 subp. 2:

## 1300.0110 DUTIES AND POWERS OF BUILDING OFFICIALS

Subpart 2. Deputies. According to the prescribed procedures of the municipality and with the concurrence of the appointing authority, the building official may designate a deputy building official and related technical officers, inspectors, plan examiners, and other employees. The employees have the powers delegated by the building official.

## Purpose:

In order to assist the building official of this community in carrying out the functions of the code enforcement agency including administering the Minnesota State Building Code, the undersigned is hereby appointed as a Deputy Building Inspector.

## Responsibilities:

The Deputy Building Inspector shall take all work direction from the Building Official or their designee. The Deputy Building Inspector shall have the authority to perform their assigned duties as granted by the Building Official of this municipality.

## Termination:

This appointment may be terminated at any time without advance notice by the Building Official of this municipality.

## Appointment:

\_\_\_\_\_ is hereby appointed as a Deputy Building Inspector for this municipality and agrees to serve at the will of the municipality as stated herein.

## Acknowledgements:

Deputy Building Inspector \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Building Official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

City Administrator / City Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## LOCAL IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Assisting inspectors should be given local identification cards authorizing their involvement. These should be worn visibly on their clothing. Below is a sample:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>AUTHORIZED PASS</b><br>Damage Assessment Inspector                             |  |
| Name _____  |  |
| Address _____   |  |
| Driver's License No. _____  |  |
| Bearer has permission to enter restricted area to perform inspections. Including: |  |
| _____   |  |
| (Area, Zone, or Street Location)  |  |
| Effective:  |  |
| From _____  |  |
| Date      Hour  |  |
| To _____  |  |
| Date              Hour  |  |
| Bearer must wear tag at all times when in restricted area.                        |  |
| _____   |  |
| Date of Issuance  |  |
| _____   |  |
| Issuing Authority   |  |

BCSD GI011

Note: In some disaster events an area may be closed by the National Guard and entry restricted to authorized personnel. To avoid delays getting inspections started, inspectors may need authorization cards similar to these to pass checkpoints. The local building official should obtain numerous passes immediately (for disbursement to assisting staff) to avoid inspectors having to wait in line with other volunteer workers to obtain passes.

# ASSISTING INSPECTION STAFF DAILY SIGN-IN AND TIME LOG

MUNICIPALITY: \_\_\_\_\_

|                              |            |              |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| NAME                         | TITLE      | REPRESENTING |
| CELL PHONE                   | WORK PHONE | HOME PHONE   |
| IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CONTACT | PHONE      | RELATIONSHIP |

| DATE      | START CHECK-IN TIME | NOON CHECK-IN TIME | CHECK-OUT TIME |
|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
|           |                     |                    |                |
| COMMENTS: |                     |                    |                |

|                              |            |              |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| NAME                         | TITLE      | REPRESENTING |
| CELL PHONE                   | WORK PHONE | HOME PHONE   |
| IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CONTACT | PHONE      | RELATIONSHIP |

| DATE      | START CHECK-IN TIME | NOON CHECK-IN TIME | CHECK-OUT TIME |
|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
|           |                     |                    |                |
| COMMENTS: |                     |                    |                |

|                              |            |              |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| NAME                         | TITLE      | REPRESENTING |
| CELL PHONE                   | WORK PHONE | HOME PHONE   |
| IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CONTACT | PHONE      | RELATIONSHIP |

| DATE      | START CHECK-IN TIME | NOON CHECK-IN TIME | CHECK-OUT TIME |
|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
|           |                     |                    |                |
| COMMENTS: |                     |                    |                |

FORM MUST BE TURNED IN TO: \_\_\_\_\_ AT THE END OF THE DAY.

\* This form is a sample only – intended to be modified to specific circumstances.

## DAMAGE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

When assessing structural damage, it is important to evaluate every structure within the affected area, even if the structure is unaffected. This ensures that isolated undamaged homes are identified and recorded and that the damage assessment is thorough.

### EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE

The list below identifies each type of damage according to common observable evidence. This is not a comprehensive list; various kinds of evidence of damage can indicate that a dwelling is destroyed or has sustained major or minor damage.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Unaffected (blue)</b>   | <b>No damage observed</b>  |
| <b>Affected, habitable, needs repairs (green)</b><br>A structure which received damage, but it useable for its intended purpose.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure may have intermittent shingle damage, broken windows, loose, missing, or damaged siding.</li> <li>• Water damage -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ single/multi-family: less than 1 foot in basement, minor access problem.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <b>Moderate damage, uninhabitable (yellow)</b><br>A structure which received such damage that it is no longer usable for its basic purpose, but can easily be repaired and made useable in a short time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure may have one wall or section of roof damaged, missing windows, doors, or shingles that allow water penetration.</li> <li>• Structure may have broken waste lines, spilled fuel oil, etc.</li> <li>• Properties without life safety provisions (exiting obstructions, electricity, sprinklers, water, HVAC, etc.)</li> <li>• Water damage -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ single/multi family: less than 1 foot on first floor; no basement, or 1-8 feet in basement.</li> <li>➢ Mobile/manufactured home: utilities flooded, piers shifted/washed out.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                |
| <b>Major damage, uninhabitable (orange)</b><br><b>Unsafe structure, keep out</b><br>Structure has received substantial damage and will require considerable time to repair.                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not in immediate danger of collapse.</li> <li>• 2+ walls and roof substantially damaged.</li> <li>• Portion of roof missing; twisted, bowed, or cracked walls; forceful penetration of the structure by a large object such as a car or tree; foundation damage.</li> <li>• Utilities not functioning, i.e. electricity, gas, water.</li> <li>• Water damage -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ single/multi family: 1 foot or more on first floor; structural damage; collapsed basement walls.</li> <li>➢ Mobile/manufactured home: water-soaked bottom board, shifted on piers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Destroyed, permanently uninhabitable (red)</b><br><b>Dangerous, keep out</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure totally gone, only the foundation remains.</li> <li>• Major section of exterior walls missing or collapsed; structure shifted off foundation.</li> <li>• Utilities not functioning, i.e. electricity, gas, water.</li> <li>• Water damage -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ single/multi family: not economical to repair; home pushed off its foundation.</li> <li>➢ Mobile/manufactured home: water above floor level or unit off foundation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <b>Sorry we missed you (white)</b>   | Used when interior inspection is necessary, but access is not achieved.  |

Many inspectors are concerned about their ability to make judgments about damage categories. Such workers should be advised to: 1) refer frequently to stated guidelines; 2) be consistent in assessments; 3) choose the more serious damage category in the structure appears to border between two categories; 4) always supplement their evaluation with comments, and 5) trust their judgment.

## DAMAGE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

When assessing structural damage, it is important to evaluate every structure within the affected area, even if the structure is unaffected. This ensures that isolated undamaged homes are identified and recorded and that the damage assessment is thorough.

### EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE

The list below identifies each type of damage according to common observable evidence. This is not a comprehensive list; various kinds of evidence of damage can indicate that a dwelling is destroyed or has sustained major or minor damage.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Unaffected</b><br/><b>BLUE</b></p>   | <p><b>No damage observed</b></p>   |
| <p><b><u>Affected, habitable, needs repairs</u></b><br/><b>GREEN</b><br/>A structure which received damage, but it useable for its intended purpose.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure may have intermittent shingle damage, broken windows, loose, missing, or damaged siding.</li> <li>• Water damage -             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ single/multi-family: less than 1 foot in basement, minor access problem.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p><b><u>Moderate damage, uninhabitable</u></b><br/><b>YELLOW</b><br/>A structure which received such damage that it is no longer usable for its basic purpose, but can easily be repaired and made useable in a short time.</p>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure may have one wall or section of roof damaged, missing windows, doors, or shingles that allow water penetration.</li> <li>• Structure may have broken waste lines, spilled fuel oil, etc.</li> <li>• Properties without life safety provisions (exiting obstructions, electricity, sprinklers, water, HVAC, etc.)</li> <li>• Water damage -             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ single/multi family: less than 1 foot on first floor; no basement, or 1-8 feet in basement.</li> <li>➢ Mobile/manufactured home: utilities flooded, piers shifted/washed out.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                |
| <p><b>Major damage, uninhabitable</b><br/><b>ORANGE</b><br/><b><u>Unsafe structure, keep out</u></b><br/>Structure has received substantial damage and will require considerable time to repair, but is economically feasible to repair.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not in immediate danger of collapse.</li> <li>• 2+ walls and roof substantially damaged.</li> <li>• Portion of roof missing; twisted, bowed, or cracked walls; forceful penetration of the structure by a large object such as a car or tree; foundation damage.</li> <li>• Utilities not functioning, i.e. electricity, gas, water.</li> <li>• Water damage -             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ single/multi family: 1 foot or more on first floor; structural damage; collapsed basement walls.</li> <li>➢ Mobile/manufactured home: water-soaked bottom board, shifted on piers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Destroyed, permanently uninhabitable</b>     <b>RED</b><br/><b><u>Dangerous, keep out</u></b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure totally gone, only the foundation remains.</li> <li>• Major section of exterior walls missing or collapsed; structure shifted off foundation.</li> <li>• Repair not technically or economically feasible.</li> <li>• Utilities not functioning, i.e. electricity, gas, water.</li> <li>• Water damage -             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ single/multi family: not economical to repair; home pushed off its foundation.</li> <li>➢ Mobile/manufactured home: water above floor level or unit off foundation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p><b><u>Sorry we missed you</u></b><br/><b>WHITE</b></p>  | <p><b>Used when interior inspection is necessary, but access is not achieved.</b></p>  |

Many inspectors are concerned about their ability to make judgments about damage categories. Such workers should be advised to: 1) refer frequently to stated guidelines; 2) be consistent in assessments; 3) choose the more serious damage category in the structure appears to border between two categories; 4) always supplement their evaluation with comments, and 5) trust their judgment.

# DAMAGE REPORT

## (Initial Damage Assessment Only)

SITE ADDRESS / DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

P.I.N. \_\_\_\_\_

OWNER/OCCUPANT \_\_\_\_\_

OWNER/OCCUPANT ON-SITE?  YES  NO      PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

INSURED:  YES  NO  UNKNOWN      STRUCTURAL EVALUATION REQUIRED:  YES  NO

TYPE OF BUILDING:     APARTMENT  DWELLING  MANUFACTURED HOME  SHED

ATTACHED GARAGE  DETACHED GARAGE  COMMERCIAL  INDUSTRIAL

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIFIED ITEMS:  Inspected Interior and Exterior     Inspected Exterior Only     Interior Inspection Not Required

| EXTERIOR:      | UN<br>A<br>P<br>P<br>A<br>F<br>F<br>E<br>C<br>T<br>E<br>D | R<br>E<br>P<br>A<br>I<br>R | R<br>E<br>P<br>L<br>A<br>C<br>E | INTERIOR:         | UN<br>A<br>P<br>P<br>A<br>F<br>F<br>E<br>C<br>T<br>E<br>D | R<br>E<br>P<br>A<br>I<br>R | R<br>E<br>P<br>L<br>A<br>C<br>E | UTILITIES:       | UN<br>A<br>P<br>P<br>A<br>F<br>F<br>E<br>C<br>T<br>E<br>D | R<br>E<br>P<br>A<br>I<br>R | R<br>E<br>P<br>L<br>A<br>C<br>E |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ROOFING        |   |                            |                                 | CEILING STRUCTURE |   |                            |                                 | PLUMBING         |   |                            |                                 |
| ROOF STRUCTURE |   |                            |                                 | INTERIOR          |   |                            |                                 | HEATING SYSTEM   |   |                            |                                 |
| CHIMNEY        |   |                            |                                 | STAIRWAYS         |   |                            |                                 | WATER HEATER     |   |                            |                                 |
| SIDING & TRIM  |   |                            |                                 | FLOOR SYSTEM      |   |                            |                                 | GAS SERVICE      |   |                            |                                 |
| WALL STRUCTURE |   |                            |                                 | BASEMENT          |   |                            |                                 | GAS PIPING       |   |                            |                                 |
| WINDOWS        |   |                            |                                 | FOUNDATION        |   |                            |                                 | WIRING           |   |                            |                                 |
| DOORS          |   |                            |                                 | ATTIC             |   |                            |                                 | ELECTRIC SERVICE |   |                            |                                 |
|                |   |                            |                                 |                   |   |                            |                                 | WATER SERVICE    |   |                            |                                 |
|                |   |                            |                                 |                   |   |                            |                                 | SPRINKLER SYSTEM |   |                            |                                 |
|                |   |                            |                                 |                   |   |                            |                                 | ELEVATOR         |   |                            |                                 |

Barricades may be needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PLACARDED FOR HABITABILITY**

Blue     Unaffected - No Damage Observed

Green    Habitable - Repairs Required

Yellow    Uninhabitable - Limited Entry

Orange    Unsafe Structure - Keep Out

Red     Dangerous Keep Out - Uninhabitable

White    Sorry - We Missed You, Contact Us

INSPECTOR \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PICTURES TAKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

MARKET VALUE \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ESTIMATED LOSS \$ \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE**

# DAMAGE REPORT

(Initial Damage Assessment Only)

SITE ADDRESS / DESCRIPTION 121 MUNSON AVE.

P.I.N. \_\_\_\_\_

OWNER/OCCUPANT SCHOEPPNER, DICK + JANE

OWNER/OCCUPANT ON-SITE?  YES  NO PHONE 333-3300

INSURED:  YES  NO  UNKNOWN STRUCTURAL EVALUATION REQUIRED:  YES  NO

TYPE OF BUILDING:  APARTMENT  DWELLING  MANUFACTURED HOME  SHED

ATTACHED GARAGE  DETACHED GARAGE  COMMERCIAL  INDUSTRIAL

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIFIED ITEMS:  Inspected Interior and Exterior  Inspected Exterior Only  Interior Inspection Not Required

| EXTERIOR:      | UN<br>AFFECTED | RE<br>PAIR | RE<br>PLACE | INTERIOR:         | UN<br>AFFECTED | RE<br>PAIR | RE<br>PLACE | UTILITIES:       | UN<br>AFFECTED | RE<br>PAIR | RE<br>PLACE |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| ROOFING        |                | X          |             | CEILING STRUCTURE | X              |            |             | PLUMBING         | X              |            |             |
| ROOF STRUCTURE |                | X          |             | INTERIOR          | X              |            |             | HEATING SYSTEM   |                | X          |             |
| CHIMNEY        |                | X          |             | STAIRWAYS         | X              |            |             | WATER HEATER     |                | X          |             |
| SIDING & TRIM  |                | X          |             | FLOOR SYSTEM      | X              |            |             | GAS SERVICE      | X              |            |             |
| WALL STRUCTURE | X              |            |             | BASEMENT          | X              |            |             | GAS PIPING       | X              |            |             |
| WINDOWS        |                | X          |             | FOUNDATION        | X              |            |             | WIRING           | X              |            |             |
| DOORS          | X              |            |             | ATTIC             |                | X          |             | ELECTRIC SERVICE |                | X          |             |
|                |                |            |             |                   |                |            |             | WATER SERVICE    | X              |            |             |
|                |                |            |             |                   |                |            |             | SPRINKLER SYSTEM |                |            |             |
|                |                |            |             |                   |                |            |             | ELEVATOR         |                |            |             |

Barricades may be needed: N/A

Comments: NORTH END OF ROOF DAMAGED, SHEATHING, SHINGLES AND ATTIC INSULATION DAMAGED. FOUR WINDOWS BROKEN, FLUES FOR W/HEATER AND FURNACE DISLODGED. ELECTRIC SERVICE MOST DAMAGED.

PLACARDED FOR HABITABILITY

Blue  Unaffected - No Damage Observed

Green  Habitable - Repairs Required

Yellow  Uninhabitable - Limited Entry

Orange  Unsafe Structure - Keep Out

Red  Dangerous Keep Out - Uninhabitable

White  Sorry - We Missed You, Contact Us

INSPECTOR WHITE DEAN  
DATE 3/12/04

PICTURES TAKEN: TWO

MARKET VALUE \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ESTIMATED LOSS \$ \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_



## **Guidelines for Disposal of Private Property Pending Demolition of a Structure**

**MPCA/City of \_\_\_\_\_**

- Demolition permits must be obtained from city hall prior to removal of buildings.
- White goods or household appliances should be removed and kept separate at the curb.
- Food waste and other garbage must be removed prior to demolition.
- Other garbage, food, paper, clothing, dishes, TV's, radios, toys, plastics, etc. should be removed and placed in dumpsters or roll-off containers when available (these will be located at each intersection).
- Household hazardous waste includes thermostats, cleaners, paints, poisons, fuels, lawn and garden chemicals, batteries, smoke detectors, etc. These materials must be placed in white plastic pails marked "HHW" and left at the curb.
- Trees and brush should be kept separate and left at the curb.

**Structures that can be entered safely  
must be inspected by a city building  
inspector prior to demolition!**

\* This form is a sample only – intended to be modified to specific circumstances following consultation with jurisdiction's Emergency Management Coordinator.

# DEMOLITION COMPLETION REPORT

Date Demo Performed: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcontractor: \_\_\_\_\_

Begin Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Completion Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Truck Information:**

Truck #: \_\_\_\_\_ Driver: \_\_\_\_\_

Load Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Loads: \_\_\_\_\_

Truck #: \_\_\_\_\_ Driver: \_\_\_\_\_

Load Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Loads: \_\_\_\_\_

Truck #: \_\_\_\_\_ Driver: \_\_\_\_\_

Load Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Loads: \_\_\_\_\_

Truck #: \_\_\_\_\_ Driver: \_\_\_\_\_

Load Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Loads: \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL LOADS FOR SITE: \_\_\_\_\_**

Comments/Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# **FEMA INFO for the**

## **Minnesota Building Official Disaster Preparedness Manual**

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FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (FEMA)  
Disaster Process and Disaster Aid Programs  
(The Robert T. Stafford **Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act**, Public Law 93-288)  
<http://www.fema.gov/rrr/>

### [Response and Recovery](#)

First **Response** to a disaster is the job of local government's emergency services with help from nearby municipalities, the state and volunteer agencies. In a catastrophic disaster, and if the governor requests, federal resources can be mobilized through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for search and rescue, electrical power, food, water, shelter and other basic human needs.

It is the long-term **Recovery** phase of disaster which places the most severe financial strain on a local or state government. Damage to public facilities and infrastructure, often not insured, can overwhelm even a large city.

A governor's request for a major disaster declaration could mean an infusion of federal funds, but the governor must also commit significant state funds and resources for recovery efforts.

**A Major Disaster** could result from a hurricane, earthquake, flood, tornado or major fire which the President determines warrants supplemental federal aid. The event must be clearly more than state or local governments can handle alone. If declared, funding comes from the President's Disaster Relief Fund, which is managed by FEMA, and disaster aid programs of other participating federal agencies.

**A Presidential Major Disaster Declaration** puts into motion long-term federal recovery programs, some of which are matched by state programs, and designed to help disaster victims, businesses and public entities.

**An Emergency Declaration** is more limited in scope and without the long-term federal recovery programs of a Major Disaster Declaration. Generally, federal assistance and funding are provided to meet a specific emergency need or to help prevent a major disaster from occurring.

### [The Major Disaster Process](#)

A Major Disaster Declaration usually follows these steps:

- **Local Government Responds**, supplemented by neighboring communities and volunteer agencies. If overwhelmed, turn to the state for assistance;
- **The State Responds** with state resources, such as the National Guard and state agencies;
- **Damage Assessment** by local, state, federal, and volunteer organizations determines losses and recovery needs;
- **A Major Disaster Declaration** is requested by the governor, based on the damage assessment, and an agreement to commit state funds and resources to the long-term recovery;
- **FEMA Evaluates** the request and recommends action to the White House based on the disaster, the local community and the state's ability to recover;
- **The President approves** the request or FEMA informs the governor it has been denied. This decision process could take a few hours or several weeks depending on the nature of the disaster.

## **Disaster Aid Programs**

There are two major categories of disaster aid:

- [Individual Assistance](#) - for damage to residences and businesses or personal property losses, and
- [Public Assistance](#) - for repair of infrastructure, public facilities and debris removal.

### **Individual Assistance**

Immediately after the declaration, disaster workers arrive and set up a central field office to coordinate the recovery effort. A toll-free telephone number is published for use by affected residents and business owners in registering for assistance. Disaster Recovery Centers also are opened where disaster victims can meet with program representatives and obtain information about available aid and the recovery process. Disaster aid to individuals generally falls into the following categories:

**Disaster Housing** may be available for up to 18 months, using local resources, for displaced persons whose residences were heavily damaged or destroyed. Funding also can be provided for housing repairs and replacement of damaged items to make homes habitable.

**Disaster Grants**, are available to help meet other serious disaster related needs and necessary expenses not covered by insurance and other aid programs. These may include replacement of personal property, and transportation, medical, dental and funeral expenses.

**Low-Interest Disaster Loans** are available after a disaster for homeowners and renters from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to cover uninsured property losses. Loans may be for repair or replacement of homes, automobiles, clothing or other damaged personal property. Loans are also available to businesses for property loss and economic injury.

**Other Disaster Aid Programs** include crisis counseling, disaster-related unemployment assistance, legal aid and assistance with income tax, Social Security and Veteran's benefits. Other state or local help may also be available.

**Assistance Process** -- After the application is taken, the damaged property is inspected to verify the loss. If approved, an applicant will soon receive a check for rental assistance or a grant. Loan applications require more information and approval may take several weeks after application. The deadline for most individual assistance programs is 60 days following the President's major disaster declaration.

Audits are done later to ensure that aid went to only those who were eligible and that disaster aid funds were used only for their intended purposes. These federal program funds cannot duplicate assistance provided by other sources such as insurance.

After a major disaster, FEMA tries to notify all disaster victims about the available aid programs and urge them to apply. The news media are encouraged to visit a Disaster Recovery Center, meet with disaster officials, and help publicize the disaster aid programs and the toll-free teleregistration number.

### **Public Assistance**

Public Assistance is aid to state or local governments to pay part of the costs of rebuilding a community's damaged infrastructure. Generally, public assistance programs pay for 75 per cent of the approved project costs. Public Assistance may include debris removal, emergency protective measures and public services, repair of damaged public property, loans needed by communities for essential government functions and grants for public schools.

### **Mandatory Purchase Of Flood Insurance Guidelines**

Title V of the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994 (the Reform Act) substantially amends the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 and the Flood Disaster Protection Act

of 1973. The Reform Act tightens the mandatory purchase provisions that originated with the Flood

Disaster Protection Act of 1973. Specifically, the Act imposes significant new obligations on lenders and their servicers.

### **Hazard Mitigation**

Disaster victims and public entities are encouraged to avoid the life and property risks of future disasters. Examples include the elevation or relocation of chronically flood-damaged homes away from flood hazard areas, retrofitting buildings to make them resistant to earthquakes or strong winds, and adoption and enforcement of adequate codes and standards by local, state and federal government. FEMA encourages and helps fund damage mitigation measures when repairing disaster damaged structures.

Mitigation is the cornerstone of emergency management. It's the ongoing effort to lessen the impact disasters have on people's lives and property through damage prevention and flood insurance. Through measures such as, building safely within the floodplain or removing homes altogether; engineering buildings and infrastructures to withstand earthquakes; and creating and enforcing effective building codes to protect property from floods, hurricanes and other natural hazards, the impact on lives and communities is lessened.

The following flood cleanup information is from the State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. If you have access to the Internet access, we suggest you use the links below to go to their website, just in case they have added or updated information. We have provided the following information from their website as a resource during a disaster when Internet access is not possible.

The following flood cleanup information is from the  
State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources:  
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/floodsafety/index.html>

## Flood cleanup

The flood waters have receded and it's time to get things cleaned up and back to normal. The first thing to do is establish your priorities for the required repair work. Your priorities list will generally depend on the seriousness and extent of the damages. Here are some suggested steps you can follow.

1. **Look at the structure of the building.** Check the foundations for settling, cracking or undermining. Look at the walls, floors, doors and windows to determine what repairs are necessary. Before entering the structure, make sure that all electric, gas and oil valves are turned off.
2. **If the basement is flooded, begin pumping the water in stages** -- about 1/3 of the water per day. Make sure that the level of the flood waters is below the level of the basement floor. If not, do not pump the basement all at once because the saturated soil could cause the basement walls to collapse.
3. **Get the electrical system back in operation.** Have the system checked by a qualified electrician. Take your electrical appliances to a serviceman before using.
4. **If the furnace was inundated by flood waters have inspected by qualified serviceperson.** Before operating, the system may need to be cleaned, dried and reconditioned. Make sure the chimney is cleaned of debris before using.
5. **Start up the heating system, if possible.** This can help in the drying process.
6. **Get the water system back in operation.** Clean drains, pipes, etc. Disinfect wells and the water system. A qualified plumber can provide the "how to" and methods to use.
7. **Shovel the mud and silt out before it dries.** Before the walls and floors dry, wash down with a hose, starting at the top of the wall and then working down. Scrub and disinfect walls and floors. Leave windows and doors open to speed up drying. A complete drying may take as long as a few months. Repair walls and floors that have buckled. Make sure that the underlying material is dry before installing new materials.
8. **Throw out all food which has spoiled or has been touched by flood-waters.** Do not refreeze any vegetables, fruits or meats which have thawed completely. If there is any question, throw it away.
9. **Clean and dry all household items which were affected by the flood waters.** This includes all furniture, carpets, clothing, dishes and bedding. Disinfect, if necessary. Treat household items for mildew, if necessary. Before you begin to salvage damaged items, you must decide which pieces are worth restoring. These decisions should be based on:
  - the extent of the damage
  - the cost of the article
  - the sentimental value
  - the cost of restoration

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Remember, consider each item individually.

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10. **Clean up the yard.** Trim and care for damaged trees and shrubs. Rake and possibly reseed the lawn.

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**Some basic cleaning supplies and equipment that you may need for home cleanup:**

**Cleaning supplies:**

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- low sudsing detergents
  - bleaches
  - disinfectants
  - ammonia
  - scouring powder
  - rubber gloves
- 

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**Equipment:**

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- buckets
  - small tools, (crowbar, hammer, screwdriver)
  - sponges and wiping cloths
  - scrub brush
  - broom or shovel
  - a mop that is easily squeezed out
  - throw away containers for garbage
  - water or garden hose
- 

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Cleaning and disinfectant products

Mildew-removing products

Other equipment to use with larger jobs may include wheelbarrows, dollies, wash tubs, etc.

Most common household cleaners will do the trick with clean-up. Powder or liquid cleaners are more economical to use than aerosol sprays. Household cleaners help remove the dirt and disinfectants will help stop the growth of disease-causing organisms carried in the floodwaters. All products are not suited for all uses. Remember, read the label for specific directions and precautions. Certain products may be harsh on your skin and may burn your eyes. Protect your hands and eyes with protective gear. Wash your skin immediately if you splash or spill any cleaner on yourself.

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**The following flood cleanup information is from the State of Minnesota Department of Health. If you have access to the Internet access, we suggest you use the links below to go to their website, just in case they have added or updated information. We have provided the following information from their website as a resource to use during a disaster when Internet access is not possible.**

**<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/emergency/natural/floods/index.html>**

**If this link does not work, it may have changed. Go to their home page:**

**<http://www.health.state.mn.us>**

**Natural Disasters — Floods**

**Protecting Your Health During A Flood**

A few simple precautions can help you avoid possible health risks during a flood. This information answers some of the most important questions about floods and your health.

### ***Is my drinking water safe?***

Contaminated drinking water can be a significant health concern during a flood, but it depends on your situation.

If you use a community water supply:

If you use "city water," the risk of contamination is very low. City wells are generally well protected from flood water. All community water systems are also carefully monitored, by the water supply operator and the state. If your water supply does become contaminated, you will be notified promptly.

If you use a private well

You should assume your private well is contaminated if the well casing was submerged or the flood water came within 50 feet of the well. Water from the well should not be used for drinking or cooking until the well and distribution system have been flushed out, disinfected, and tested for contamination.

- Use bottled water for drinking and cooking until your well is safe to use again.
- For detailed instructions on disinfecting and testing your well, contact the nearest Minnesota Department of Health District Office.

### ***How can I protect my children?***

A few simple precautions will help keep your children safe.

- Don't let children play in or near flood water, or in areas that have been recently flooded.
- Wash your child's hands frequently, especially before meals.
- Disinfect toys that may be contaminated, using a solution of two ounces of bleach in one gallon of water.
- Discard any soft toys that may be contaminated with sewage. Young children may put these items into their mouths.

### ***Can contact with sewage or flood water make me sick?***

You should always assume that disease organisms may be present in flood water or backed-up sewage. But common sense, combined with basic hygiene, can help you keep the risk low. Skin contact with flood water, by itself, does not pose a health threat unless you have an open wound. The fecal material in sewage contains disease organisms, but it does not pose any risk unless you take it into your mouth. Follow these tips to keep your risks low.

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after working in a contaminated area.
- Always wear rubber gloves and boots to protect your hand and feet.
- Always take a shower after working in a contaminated area.
- Always assume that anything touched by flood water is contaminated.

### ***Do we need to get any shots?***

There is usually no increased risk of getting vaccine-preventable diseases - like diphtheria or tetanus - during a flood. However, you should always try to keep your immunizations up-to-date, as a matter of routine. A basic series of immunizations against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis is recommended for all children. Adolescents should get a booster for tetanus and diphtheria (Td) at the age of 11 or 12, and adults should get a Td booster every 10 years, throughout life.

If you get a puncture wound, and you haven't had a Td booster within the last five years, ask your doctor whether you should get a tetanus shot.

### ***What about private sewage treatment systems?***

If the top of your sewage treatment tank was under water, it must be pumped out - to remove all solids and liquids - before you can run sewage into it again. Pumping stations and drop boxes should also be pumped out.

### ***When can I move back in?***

After a flood, there may be structural, electrical, or other hazards in your home. Before moving back in check with local authorities for any special guidance, and survey the property for hazards such as those listed below.

- Check for loose power lines and gas leaks.
- Check for obvious structural damage.
- Turn off the gas and electricity.
- Turn off fuel valves for fuel oil or propane.

### ***What can I keep - and what should I throw away?***

As a general rule, anything you can't wash and disinfect should be thrown away. Although you may need to use special cleaning methods for items like carpeting and upholstered furniture, it may be possible to salvage them.

### ***What about garbage?***

Garbage attracts animals and insects, and rodent activity may increase in flooded areas as these animals seek food and shelter. Don't let garbage pile up. Dispose of all discarded items properly. There will usually be more frequent pick-ups after a flood.

### ***Is my food safe?***

Food is generally safe unless it has been in direct contact with flood water, or it hasn't been properly refrigerated, because of power failure. Here are a few simple food safety guidelines.

Clean any canned goods you intend to keep

- Commercially canned foods can be kept if you wash the can first with warm water and detergent, then disinfect the outside of the can, using a solution of two ounces of bleach in one gallon of water. Remove labels when cleaning the cans.

Discard foods that may be contaminated

- Items pre-packed in paper, boxes, glass jars, or other non-waterproof packages that may have been in contact with flood water.
- Frozen food that was thawed, and held at room temperature for more than two hours should be discarded.
- Any items with unusual color or odor.

Keep refrigerated food cold

- If your power goes off, your refrigerator will keep food cool for 4-6 hours if left unopened. Try to keep foods as close to 41° F. as possible.

Keep frozen food from thawing

- If your power goes off, your freezer will keep food frozen for one day if the freezer is half full. Up to two days, if the freezer is full and left unopened.

***And always remember -  
If in doubt, throw it out!***

For questions about this information, please contact the Department of Health,  
Environmental Health Division:  
e-mail address: [ehweb@health.state.mn.us](mailto:ehweb@health.state.mn.us) or website: [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

The following flood cleanup information is from the State of Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. If you have access to the Internet access, we suggest you use the links below to go to their website, just in case they have added or updated information. We have provided the following information from their website as a resource to use during a disaster when Internet access is not possible.

State of Minnesota Pollution Control Agency:

Three links have been listed here in this manual. However, because links change, if a link isn't working go to: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us>

A. Information posted at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/cleanup/index.html>

## **Cleanup**

Sometimes accidents happen, and spills occur. Or we learn that commonly used materials are hazardous, such as asbestos. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) identifies, regulates and cleans up spills, leaks and other hazardous materials that can affect our health and our environment.

## **Cleanup Topics**

- [Asbestos Program](#)
- [Brownfields](#)
- [Contaminated Sediments](#)
- [Emergency Response](#)
- [Karst in Minnesota](#)
- [Landfills/Dumps](#)
- [Natural Attenuation of Ground Water](#)
- [RCRA Corrective Action](#)
- [Remediation Sites](#)
- [Storage Tanks:](#)
  - [Aboveground Storage Tanks](#)
  - [Leaking Underground Storage Tanks](#)
  - [Storage Tank Compliance and Assistance Program](#)
  - [Underground Storage Tanks](#)
- [Superfund Program](#)
- [Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup \(VIC\) Program](#)
- [Voluntary Petroleum Investigation and Cleanup \(VPIC\) Program](#)
- [What's in My Neighborhood](#)

## **General Information**

- [Publications](#)
- [Public Involvement with Cleanup Programs](#)

## **Regulations**

## **Assistance**

B. Information posted at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/cleanup/ert.html>

### Emergency Response

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The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Emergency Response Team (ERT) members are responsible for organizing the MPCA's efforts for oil and hazardous material emergencies. Chemical fires, train derailments, pipeline breaks, tanker truck accidents and petroleum vapors in a sewer are examples of environmental and public health emergencies that the MPCA's ERT members respond to.

To request state assistance or to report a petroleum or hazardous materials spill, contact the Minnesota Duty Officer at:

- (800) 422-0798 or
- (651) 649-5451

These are 24-hours emergency response phone numbers.

The ERT works closely with local, county, state and federal public safety and environmental officials. On-call staff field over 2,000 spill calls annually for the entire state--24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Internal and external spill prevention and preparedness is an important part of the ERT's strategic plan and is carried-out through: pro-active community planning, fire department training, exercises and drills, and enforcement.

C. Information posted at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/hot/floods.html>

### Floods: Minimizing Pollution and Health Risks

#### **For citizens:**

- [Hazardous household materials](#)
- [Preparing heating oil tanks for flooding](#)
- [Drinking water well contamination](#)
- [Asbestos](#)
- [Cleaning up after a flood](#)

#### **For farms and businesses:**

- [Manure storage facilities](#)
- [Underground and above ground storage tanks](#)
- [Industrial hazardous wastes](#)
- [Wastewater treatment plants](#)

Floods can create environmental problems if precautions are not taken to minimize pollution and health risks. Use the links to the right to get information on what Minnesota residents can do to protect their businesses, homes and families from environmental problems caused by floods

If your home or business is flooded this year, be sure to read the recommendations for cleaning up after a flood.

Homeowners and businesses with other questions about preparing for floods or cleaning up afterward should contact the nearest MPCA office at the numbers listed below.

Detroit Lakes Office....218-847-1519  
Duluth Office.....218-723-4660  
Brainerd Office.....218-828-2492  
Mankato Office.....507-389-5235  
Marshall Office.....507-537-7146  
Rochester Office.....507-285-7343  
Saint Paul Office.....651-296-6300  
Willmar Office.....320-214-3786  
Toll-free.....1-800-657-3864

### ***Hazardous Household Materials***

Homeowners in areas that are likely to flood should move hazardous household materials to a safe area that is likely to remain dry throughout the flooding.

Hazardous household materials include such items as:

- drain cleaner
- furniture stripper
- motor-vehicle oil
- toilet-bowl cleaner
- antifreeze
- pesticides
- fertilizers

Items such as vehicle batteries and propane tanks should also be moved to higher ground because they pose a danger if their contents are released to the environment.

For more information on hazardous household products and wastes, call your county environmental offices or the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance at 651-296-3417 or toll free 800-657-3843 (in Minnesota only) and ask for the Household Hazardous Waste Program staff.

Read the "[Cleaning up after a flood](#)" section for information on disposing of household chemicals that have been damaged during flooding.

Visit the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance [household hazardous waste](#) page for more information about chemicals in the home.

### ***Cleaning Up After a Flood***

If your home falls victim to flooding this year, here are some recommendations to consider once waters recede and you begin cleanup. Because there may be large volumes of solid waste generated during flooding, the MPCA sometimes arranges for temporary, alternative disposal options. These disposal options differ from those normally available to you. Please read the fact sheet below for more details. Additional information about flood cleanup activities may be available from the [MPCA office nearest you](#).

### **Basement Cleaning**

Ventilate your basement before and during cleaning with chemical solutions, and if oil is present. When basements flood, there is usually some sewer backup as well. Therefore, after the water and/or sewage has been removed, it is important to disinfect the surfaces to eliminate odors and bacteria.

If your basement had oil spilled in it, use a detergent to clean oil off the surfaces. Sheetrock and paneling should be removed and properly disposed at a transfer facility, incinerator or sanitary landfill. Concrete walls, wood supports, ceiling structures, and beams will soak up oil like a sponge. Therefore, those surfaces will need to be sealed with an epoxy paint sealer once they have dried out.

### **Household Chemicals**

If you have chemicals that end up being flooded, keep all damaged household chemicals separate for later disposal. Place them in plastic bags and keep the product label with each bag. Call your County Solid Waste Officer for collection dates. Also, remember to keep chemicals out of reach of children and pets at all times.

Visit the website for additional information regarding:

Asbestos

Oil Cleanup

Oil or Sewage-soaked Debris

Fuel Oil Tanks

Septic Systems

Manure Storage Facilities

Underground and Above Ground Storage Tanks

Industrial hazardous Wastes

Wastewater Treatment Facilities



## Memorandum

To: All Building Officials and Interested Parties

From: Stephen P. Hernick, State Building Official

Subject: Disaster Assistance Volunteers

As we approach another severe weather season it's important to be prepared for the possibility of a weather-related event anywhere in our state. With this goal in mind, the Construction Codes and Licensing Division is again asking all interested code professionals and qualified assistants to consider participating as a Disaster Assistance Volunteer.

The list of Disaster Assistance Volunteers is used to link code officials and qualified assistants with state and county Emergency Management Officials and affected regional code officials. As a Disaster Assistance Volunteer, you will be asked to provide assistance with building evaluations and life safety habitability for structures affected by a disaster.

Others who have participated as a volunteer or received assistance from this program have found the experience to be very rewarding, both personally and professionally. As a volunteer, you will gain the very valuable, firsthand experience in what it takes to participate in an event as well as be a valued participant in assisting with the overwhelming needs following a disaster.

The Construction Codes and Licensing Division, Department of Labor and Industry continues to work cooperatively with the Association of Minnesota Building Officials to develop and improve the "Disaster Preparedness Manual for Building Officials." The Association of Minnesota Building Officials Disaster Mitigation Committee and building code representatives from CCLD meet regularly to review and evaluate the manual and strive to provide current guidance information for your disaster preparation. To view the manual, visit [www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Disaster.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Disaster.asp)

We are requesting code officials, inspectors and permit technicians to consider providing volunteer assistance to Minnesota communities affected by a disaster. There is a need for volunteers to participate in all regions of the state.

Please visit the Department of Labor and Industry's disaster preparedness Web site at [www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Disaster.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Disaster.asp) to obtain a "Disaster Assistance Volunteer Form."

In the case of a disaster, a list of regional code officials, inspectors and permit technicians will be made available to the municipality requesting assistance. To view other disaster preparedness documents, visit [www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Disaster.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Disaster.asp)

If you have any questions, need additional information or need assistance with an event, contact:

- Doug Nord, Supervisor, Regional Services, (651) 284-5838, [doug.nord@state.mn.us](mailto:doug.nord@state.mn.us)  
Mike Fricke, Construction Code Inspector, (651) 284-5841 [mike.fricke@state.mn.us](mailto:mike.fricke@state.mn.us)  
Chris Meier, Construction Code Inspector, (651) 284-5865 [chris.meier@state.mn.us](mailto:chris.meier@state.mn.us)  
Scott Wheeler, Construction Code Inspector, (651) 284-5876 [scott.wheeler@state.mn.us](mailto:scott.wheeler@state.mn.us)  
Jerry Jasmer, Construction Code Inspector, (651) 284-5871 [jerry.jasmer@state.mn.us](mailto:jerry.jasmer@state.mn.us)

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry  
 Construction Codes and Licensing Division  
 Building Codes and Standards  
 443 Lafayette Road North  
 St. Paul, MN 55155  
 Phone: (651) 284-5068 Fax: (651) 284-5749  
 www.doli.state.mn.us/buildingcodes  
 TTY: (651) 297-4198



## Disaster Assistance Volunteer Form

PRINT IN INK or TYPE your responses.

The purpose of this form is to expedite volunteer inspection assistance available following a disaster.  
 NOTE: Submittal of this document does not obligate anyone to participate if contacted.

THE INDIVIDUALS LISTED BELOW HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO REPRESENT:

NAME OF ORGANIZATION/COMPANY

ORGANIZATION/COMPANY MAIN PHONE

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

SUBMITTED BY (PRINT NAME AND TITLE)

SIGNATURE

PHONE

E-MAIL



The organization/company is responsible for notifying each individual included on this list and providing appropriate information regarding their organization authorization policies and procedures. Please include this information in your Disaster Plan. Remember – the best way to prepare and train for a disaster is to assist with the aftermath of a disaster in another municipality.

| NAME and EMAIL ADDRESS<br>PRINT CLEARLY | PHONE WORK | PHONE HOME (optional) | PHONE MOBILE | AVAILABLE FOR THESE REGIONS (SEE MAP): | BUILDING OFFICIAL NO. | ELECT                    | PLUMB                    | HVAC                     | BLDG                     | CLERICAL                 |
|---|------------|-----------------------|--------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|   |            |                       |              |  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   |            |                       |              |  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   |            |                       |              |  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   |            |                       |              |  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   |            |                       |              |  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   |            |                       |              |  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   |            |                       |              |  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   |            |                       |              |  |                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Mail to: Department of Labor and Industry, Construction Codes and Licensing Division, 443 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul, MN 55155.

This material can be made available in different forms, such as large print, Braille or on a tape. To request, call 1-800-342-5354 (DIAL-DLI) Voice or TDD (651) 297-4198.



# Building Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
JURISDICTION

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE

## **SORRY WE MISSED YOU**

**A damage assessment inspection is required –  
including the structure's interior.**

**Please contact the Building Department  
to arrange for an inspection.**

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

INSPECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

BUILDING OCCUPANCY CLASS AND DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT BUILDING DEPARTMENT BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH ANY WORK  
(SEE INSPECTION REPORT)**

**DO NOT REMOVE THIS PLACARD UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

WHITE

# Building Department

JURISDICTION \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**Unaffected**  
**NO DAMAGE OBSERVED**  
THIS STRUCTURE IS  
**HABITABLE**

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

INSPECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

BUILDING OCCUPANCY CLASS AND DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT BUILDING DEPARTMENT BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH ANY WORK  
(SEE INSPECTION REPORT)**

**DO NOT REMOVE THIS PLACARD UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

**BLUE**

# Building Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
JURISDICTION

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE

**LIMITED ENTRY**  
**ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK**  
**THIS STRUCTURE IS**  
**UNINHABITABLE**

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

INSPECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

BUILDING OCCUPANCY CLASS AND DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CONTACT BUILDING DEPARTMENT BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH ANY WORK**  
**(SEE INSPECTION REPORT)**

**DO NOT REMOVE THIS PLACARD UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

**YELLOW**

# Building Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
JURISDICTION

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE

THIS STRUCTURE IS

**HABITABLE**  
**REPAIRS REQUIRED**

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

INSPECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

BUILDING OCCUPANCY CLASS AND DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CONTACT BUILDING DEPARTMENT BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH ANY WORK  
(SEE INSPECTION REPORT)**

**DO NOT REMOVE THIS PLACARD UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

**GREEN**

Building Department

JURISDICTION

PHONE

**UNSAFE  
STRUCTURE  
KEEP OUT**

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

INSPECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

BUILDING OCCUPANCY CLASS AND DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT BUILDING DEPARTMENT BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH ANY WORK  
(SEE INSPECTION REPORT)**

**DO NOT REMOVE THIS PLACARD UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

**ORANGE**

Building Department

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JURISDICTION

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PHONE

**DANGEROUS  
KEEP OUT**

THIS STRUCTURE IS

**UNINHABITABLE**

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

INSPECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

BUILDING OCCUPANCY CLASS AND DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT BUILDING DEPARTMENT BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH ANY WORK  
(SEE INSPECTION REPORT)**

**DO NOT REMOVE THIS PLACARD UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

RED

# Building Department

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JURISDICTION

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PHONE

# APPROVED TO CONNECT

**Water**     No     Yes    **By:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Electric**     No     Yes    **By:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gas**     No     Yes    **By:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_