

Michigan, FEMA to Start Damage Assessments This Week

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CHICAGO – Beginning July 8, the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD), FEMA, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and local officials in Wayne County will be conducting joint preliminary damage assessments due to the flooding that occurred in late June. These assessments are the result of the state’s June 30 request, and is one of the initial steps in the federal disaster declaration process. Other counties may be added to the assessments as identified and requested by the state.

Five teams will be canvassing Wayne County to assess and validate home damage and disaster impacts against federal assistance eligibility criteria. MSP/EMHSD, FEMA and SBA team members will be wearing shirts with agency names and logos prominently displayed. Personnel will also have their credentials visible and be following state and local COVID-19 safety protocols.

Assessment teams will be collecting disaster impact information, including total number of homes affected and degree of damage incurred, extent of insurance coverage, cause and concentration of damage, and homeownership rates of impacted homes. Since disasters affect communities differently, teams will also document specific characteristics of each that may impact their ability to recover. In addition, teams will document disaster-related casualties, resources already available from other sources, and critical infrastructure that may be unavailable for an extended time—i.e. hospitals, schools, utilities and nursing homes—as this could also significantly affect a community’s ability to recover. Teams will collect this data by talking to as many local officials, renters, homeowners and business owners as possible, but it is not necessary to visit every home to complete the assessment.

These assessments are part of a process that **could lead** to the state asking for a declaration. FEMA works with the state to verify damage, but it is up to the state to determine if that damage is beyond state and local resources and whether to



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submit a declaration request. Federal assistance would only be made available after the state formally requests a presidential disaster declaration and it is approved.

Assessments for public assistance—or federal grant funding to local government jurisdictions and eligible private non-profits for the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged infrastructure and costs incurred for emergency actions taken to protect lives or property—will also start this week using imagery and photos, and phone interviews and virtual meetings. Some site inspections may also be conducted if necessary.

For more information about FEMA’s declaration process or disaster assistance programs, visit www.fema.gov/disaster-declaration-process.

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