

Individual and Households Program: Remote Inspections

Release Date: Dec 15, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 nationwide emergency declared by President Trump and the need to protect the safety and health of all Americans; FEMA will conduct remote home inspections for disaster survivors until further notice.

What to Expect After Applying for FEMA Assistance

- FEMA is fully committed to a whole of America response to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and protect the health and safety of the American people. Social distancing and eliminating unnecessary contact are key to help slow the virus' spread and keep our most high-risk populations safe.
- A remote inspection will be the primary form of inspection for applicants who reported that their home is not livable, sanitary and safe and require an inspection.
- Applicants who self-reported during registration that they received minimal damage and can live in their homes will not automatically be scheduled for a home inspection. Instead, they will receive a letter from FEMA explaining that they may call the FEMA Helpline to request an inspection if they find significant disaster-caused damage to their home after they applied.
- Remote inspections have no impact on eligibility for the types of Other Needs Assistance available that do not require an inspection. This includes childcare, transportation, medical and dental, funeral expenses, miscellaneous expenses, moving and storage, and Group Flood Insurance Policy Assistance.

Remote Inspection Process

- Disaster survivors who applied to FEMA and reported that they may not or cannot live at home due to damage will be contacted by FEMA to schedule a remote or an exterioronly inspection. In both instances, FEMA inspectors will complete an interview over the phone. Applicants will answer questions about the type and extent of damage sustained.
 - If you use a relay service such as a videophone, InnoCaption or CapTel, make sure FEMA has the specific number assigned to the service.
- The inspector will ask the applicant to verify the last four digits of their FEMA



registration ID; a 9-digit number generated at the completion of the application. The inspector will complete the verification process by providing the applicant with the first 4-digits of the registration ID.

- When an exterior inspection is scheduled, the applicant or co-applicant, will need to meet with an inspector to view the applicant or co-applicant's photo ID. The meeting will take place outdoors and the inspector will maintain a social distance of at least six feet Page 2 of 2 from the applicant or co-applicant. No additional in-person contact will occur once the inspector has viewed the photo ID.
- Reasonable accommodations, including translation and ASL interpreters will be available to ensure effective communication with applicants with limited English proficiency, applicants with disabilities, and other individuals with access and functional needs. This can be done by having the applicant provide a relay service number such as a videophone, InnoCaption or CapTel and make sure FEMA has that as your contact number in your application. If you are communicating through Zoom or FaceTime, you can request an interpreter through Facetime or an interpreter and captioning through Zoom.
- You may invite a designated party, such as a household member, relative or friend, to assist in communicating with the inspector.
- Based on responses from the applicant, the exterior-only inspection when applicable and existing eligibility criteria; awards may be generated for Rental Assistance, Home Repair Assistance and Replacement Assistance.
- Home Repair Assistance may be provided based on type of residence, the exterior-only inspection when applicable and the applicant's responses during the remote inspection to determine level of damage sustained.
- This interim policy will help protect the health and safety of the American people while also ensuring that eligible disaster survivors receive assistance from FEMA.

Video Inspection Process

- To help ensure applicants' needs are met while increasing FEMA's ability to record disaster-caused damage, FEMA implemented the use of video streaming to the remote inspection process in September 2020.
- The inspector will initiate the video inspection process by contacting the applicant via the telephone numbers listed in the application. The inspector will ask the applicant if they would like to perform the inspection via video streaming using Apple FaceTime or Zoom Video Communications. FEMA inspectors are trained to help the applicant with downloading and/or signing-up to Zoom Video if necessary. If the applicant needs an accommodation, please let the inspector know so it can be available for the inspection.
- The inspector will initiate the video streaming to the applicant's device and ask



questions about the type and extent of the damage sustained.

- During the video streaming, the applicant will have the opportunity to show the inspector their areas of concern such as roof, windows, floor, ceiling, basements, access points, habitability, rooms, furniture, appliances, Americans with Disabilities Act items (such as ramps and grab bars), etc.
- A video assessment can be combined with an exterior-only inspection when necessary.
- While video streaming inspections are being conducted in a limited capacity, applicants who do not have the ability to participate with video through Zoom or Facetime will speak with inspectors by phone.



FEMA