

Recommended Guidelines for Interaction with Structure Owners by SDE Inspectors

1. The objectives of the SDE inspections are to accurately collect the data required for the Substantial Damage determinations through rapid visual inspections and then move on to the next structure. The initial inspections may require more than 30 minutes for a residential structure. After the first 2 to 3 days of residential inspections, the inspection time should be 15 minutes or less per structure, as the inspectors gain experience and feel more comfortable with the inspections.
2. Remember that you are entering someone's property and structure, or place of business on official City business. Therefore, conduct yourself in a professional manner and be respectful of personal property. Many of these owners and occupants have suffered significant financial losses.
3. The inspections will be conducted between the hours of ____ AM and ____ PM, Monday through Friday (or Monday through Saturday), until all required structures have been inspected. This is in accordance with the inspection guidance provided in the community Letter of Introduction that you will be carrying during the inspection period.
4. Given the extensive damage, many of the homes and buildings may be unoccupied. Our community legal counsel has determined that we can enter open, unoccupied structures. The structure must be unlocked and open, without any signs or other visible postings forbidding trespassing on the property or within the structure. Therefore, you may have little or no contact with some of the occupants as you complete the inspections.
5. When approached by a structure owner or occupant, verify that the building being inspected is theirs and then hand them a community Letter of Introduction. In general, structure owners and occupants will be curious and possibly suspicious of the inspections. Explain that you are only there to inspect for damage and record the required data. The Letter of Introduction should be handed out to anyone who requests information about the inspections.
6. If you feel threatened in any manner, return to your vehicle and call the police and then the SDE Manager with the address and type of threat.
7. Structure owners and occupants with additional questions should be directed to call the point-of-contact identified in the Letter of Introduction. Try to avoid lengthy conversations as much as possible. Many of the conversations will become repetitive and will unnecessarily slow down the rate of inspections.
8. Unless specifically directed by the SDE Manager, do not try to explain the Substantial Damage determination process, what the results might mean for the structure owner, or any State or Federal buyout or other post-disaster grant or funding program.
9. Under the SDE Manager's direction, explain that building permits may be required for any reconstruction, repairs, or new construction in the aftermath of the disaster. Also, any reconstruction, repairs, or new construction conducted without a proper permit may be considered non-compliant construction and could result in daily fines, removal of the non-compliant construction, or other legal action.

10. For locked properties or properties where the owner or occupant is present but refuses to allow you inside, simply record the address, a name and telephone number (if available), the reason for the refusal, and then hand the owner or occupant the Letter of Introduction before moving on to the next structure.
11. Before entering a structure, verify that the floor is safe to walk on, and then enter carefully. Refrain from pulling pieces of plaster, tearing out drywall or ceilings, or tearing back wallpaper or drywall for the assessment of the damage on the percent breakdown section of the *Damage Inspection Worksheet* of the SDE tool.