

Remote FEMA Property Inspections

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. — FEMA requires a home inspection before it can make monetary awards to help survivors with costs to repair or replace their homes damaged during a major disaster declaration.

The 2020 California wildfires have received two major declarations:

- Declaration DR-4558-CA covers Aug. 14-Sept. 26 wildfire losses in 13 counties: Butte, Lake, Lassen, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, Trinity, Tulare and Yolo.
- Declaration DR-4569-CA covers wildfire losses that occurred Sept. 4 or after in seven counties: Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Mendocino, San Bernardino, San Diego and Siskiyou.

FEMA is always concerned about the welfare of disaster survivors. Until recently, its inspectors conducted in-person inspections of properties. FEMA is currently conducting them by phone due to COVID-19 and the need to protect the health of survivors and agency personnel. These remote inspections are comparable to traditional, in-person assessments that advance the safe delivery of recovery assistance to eligible survivors.

Here's the process to follow:

- If you reported major damage at the time you registered for aid, a FEMA inspector will telephone you to conduct or schedule a remote damage inspection. The call will take about 30 minutes.
- Inspectors call you using the telephone number you provided when registering for assistance. Aid for which you're eligible could be delayed when an inspector can't reach you using the phone number you originally supplied. You should immediately tell FEMA if there is a change in your telephone contact number so the inspector can reach you.
- To confirm identity, the inspector will ask for the last four digits of your FEMA registration number, then tell you the first four digits of your registration ID.



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- Reasonable accommodations, including translation and American Sign Language interpreters via Video Relay Service, are available if you have limited English proficiency, a disability, or access and functional needs. If you use a relay service such as a videophone, Innocaption or CapTel, provide FEMA the specific number assigned to that service when you register.
- Based on your responses during the call, FEMA determines awards for rental assistance and home repair/replacement. The amount depends on residence type and level of damage.
- Inspectors record damage. They do not determine your eligibility for assistance or the amount or type of assistance that FEMA can offer you.
- If you reported when registering that your home was damaged but that you could continue to live there, it will not be automatically scheduled for a home inspection. If you later discover more damage than you originally were aware of, you may file an appeal to FEMA requesting additional assistance. You may also then request an inspection.
- You can appeal a decision using your personal online disaster assistance account or by phoning the FEMA Helpline at 800-331-3362 (TTY 800-462-7585) between 7 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. PDT. If you use a relay service such as a videophone, Innocaption or CapTel, provide FEMA the specific number assigned to that service when you register.

FEMA also offers eligible survivors awards that aren't dependent on a property inspection. These may help with such disaster-related expenses as personal property replacement, childcare, transportation, medical, dental, funeral, moving and storage, or other serious disaster-related needs.

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