



FEMA

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# Recovery News

## **FEMA'S HOME INSPECTORS RECORDING DAMAGE TO SPEED ASSISTANCE TO MORE THAN 50,000 NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS**

**TRENTON, N.J.** – More than 50,000 New Jerseyans are expected to seek federal assistance for their losses from Hurricane Irene, according to disaster recovery officials.

Recording the damage at each individual household is the responsibility of the inspectors sent by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Identifying damage is an early step in determining the amount and types of assistance that may be provided.

“There are nearly 500 inspectors in the field,” said FEMA’s William L. Vogel, the federal coordinating officer. “Inspections are a key component in the recovery process.”

### **Being ready when the inspector visits can help speed assistance.**

Here’s what to expect: A FEMA inspector will contact you at the number you provided FEMA when you registered to schedule an appointment to inspect your damaged home. Provide the inspector with clear, accurate directions to the damaged property. Post office boxes do not show locations.

FEMA contracts for all inspections. The inspector is required to carry identification that includes his or her photo and ID number. When the inspector comes to your home, ask to see the identification.

Be prepared to provide written proof of ownership, such as a tax receipt, deed, mortgage payment book, or home insurance policy showing the damaged property’s address. Having the necessary documentation will help speed up the inspection process.

The inspector will not ask you for your Social Security number, your bank account or credit card account numbers or for medical information. If someone claiming to be with FEMA asks you to provide such information, call your local law enforcement immediately.

Whether you are an owner or a renter, you must show that the damaged property was your primary residence at the time of the disaster. Inspectors will accept a valid driver’s license or current utility bill (such as an electric, gas or water bill) as proof of occupancy.

The inspection is free. It usually takes between 45 minutes and an hour, and consists of measuring the real property, inspecting its contents, and recording the findings.

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Using a handheld electronic device, the inspector creates a digital “model” of the damaged home and uses it to indicate where damage occurred. The device — called an inspector’s pad —transmits information electronically to FEMA. This speeds up the process of providing assistance.

The inspector will ask to see damage to both real property and personal property in all areas of your home. This is to inventory both the type and extent of loss. For example, not all disaster damage results in a complete loss. The inspector’s report will show which items are total losses; which items can be repaired; and those that are not affected. FEMA will not replace damaged items that can be repaired with new items.

Finally, the inspector does not determine whether you are eligible for assistance, and should not tell you what you may or may not receive. Typically, in 10 days or less after the inspector’s visit, you will receive a letter from FEMA containing a decision.

Additional information on the process is available at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov).

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