

Appendix 5

Overview of Initial Federal Involvement Under the Stafford Act

This overview illustrates actions Federal agencies likely will take to assist State and local governments that are overwhelmed by a major disaster or emergency. Key operational components that could be activated include the Interagency Incident Management Group (IIMG), National Response Coordination Center (NRCC), Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC), Emergency Response Team—Advance Element (ERT-A), National Emergency Response Team (ERT-N), Joint Field Office (JFO), and Disaster Recovery Center (DRC).

1. The Department of Homeland Security Homeland Security Operations Center (DHS HSOC) continually monitors potential major disasters and emergencies. When advance warning is possible, DHS may deploy and may request other Federal agencies to deploy liaison officers and personnel to a State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to assess the emerging situation. An RRCC may be activated, fully or partially. Facilities, such as mobilization centers, may be established to accommodate personnel, equipment, and supplies.
2. Immediately after an incident, local jurisdictions respond using available resources and notify State response elements. As information emerges, they also assess the situation and the need for State assistance. The State reviews the situation, mobilizes State resources, and informs the DHS/EPR/FEMA Regional Office of actions taken. The Governor activates the State emergency operations plan, proclaims or declares a state of emergency, and requests a State/DHS joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) to determine if sufficient damage has occurred to justify a request for a Presidential declaration of a major disaster or emergency. Based upon the results of the PDA, the Governor may request a Presidential declaration and defines the kind of Federal assistance needed. At this point, an initial assessment is also conducted of losses avoided based on previous mitigation efforts.
3. After the major disaster or emergency declaration, an RRCC, staffed by regional personnel, coordinates initial regional and field activities such as deployment of an ERT-A. The ERT-A assesses the impact of the event, gauges immediate State needs, and makes preliminary arrangements to set up operational field facilities. (If regional resources appear to be overwhelmed or if the event has potentially significant consequences, DHS may deploy an ERT-N.)
4. Depending on the scope and impact of the event, the NRCC, comprised of Emergency Support Function (ESF) representatives and DHS/EPR/FEMA support staff, carries out initial activation and mission assignment operations and supports the RRCC from DHS/EPR/FEMA.
5. A Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), appointed by the Secretary of Homeland Security on behalf of the President, coordinates Federal support activities. The FCO works with the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) to identify requirements. A Principal Federal Official (PFO) also may be designated as the Secretary's representative to coordinate overall Federal interagency incident management efforts.
6. The ERT works with the affected State and conducts field operations from the JFO. ESF primary agencies assess the situation and identify requirements and help States respond effectively. Federal agencies provide resources under DHS/EPR/FEMA mission assignment or their own authority.
7. The IIMG convenes when needed to provide strategic-level coordination and frame courses of action regarding various operational and policy issues. The HSOC supports the IIMG and coordinates with the JFO.
8. Teleregistration activates a toll-free telephone number individuals can call to apply for disaster assistance. A toll-free disaster helpline is established to answer common questions. One or more DRCs may be opened where individuals can obtain information about disaster assistance, advice, and counsel. Individual applicants are processed at the DHS/EPR/FEMA National Processing Center. Inspectors verify losses and provide documentation used to determine the types of disaster assistance to be granted to individuals and families.

9. As immediate response priorities are met, recovery activities begin. Federal and State agencies assisting with recovery and mitigation activities convene to discuss State needs.
10. Public Assistance Applicant Briefings are conducted for local government officials and certain private nonprofit organizations to inform them of available assistance and how to apply. Applicants must first file a Request for Public Assistance. Eligible applicants will be notified and will define each project on a Project Worksheet, which details the scope of damage and a cost estimate for repair to a pre-disaster condition. The Project Worksheet is used as the basis for obligating funds to the State for eligible projects.
11. Throughout response and recovery, mitigation staff at the JFO examine ways to maximize mitigation measures in accordance with State hazard mitigation administrative plans. Grounded in the local risk, and with State priorities and mitigation plans in place, DHS/EPR/FEMA and State officials contact local officials to identify potential projects and suggest which ones should be included in an early implementation strategy. The strategy focuses on viable opportunities to provide funds, technical assistance, and staff support to incorporate mitigation into the overall community recovery, to include the repair and replacement of damaged or destroyed housing and infrastructure.
12. As the need for full-time interagency coordination at the JFO ceases, the ERT plans for selective release of Federal resources, demobilization, and closeout. Federal agencies then work directly with their grantees from their regional or HQ offices to administer and monitor individual recovery programs, support, and technical services.

FIGURE 11. Overview of initial Federal involvement under the Stafford Act

