



Red Cross Damage Assessment Guidelines for Home Fires and Other Local Disasters

Overview

As the Red Cross continues to adapt to numerous disasters and changing environments while continuing to focus on efficient and client-focused service delivery, Red Cross has begun to use Red Cross/FEMA Damage Assessment Guidelines for all disaster responses, including small, local disasters (like single- and multi-family fires).

What Stays the Same?	<p>The process of reporting a fire and gathering basic information remains the same. We still need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Event address,• Number of clients,• Name and phone number of the Incident Commander, and• If clients leave the scene, how best to reach them. <p>Red Cross still offers services, such as Disaster Health Services, Disaster Mental Health, Disaster Spiritual Care, and other resources, referrals and follow-up by Red Cross caseworkers, regardless of the amount of damage suffered by the client.</p>
What Has Changed?	<p>Because Red Cross Disaster Action Team (DAT) responders must inspect damage from the exterior of the residence and/or may respond virtually, the Red Cross may ask for your help in providing some additional details on the damage. To do this, a DAT worker asks some additional questions to help determine damage classification. The summary table below that outlines the classifications, followed by the questions.</p>

Detailed Damage Assessment Classification Summary

Classification	Description
DESTROYED - total loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damage to two or more major structural components. Ex: collapse of basement walls, foundation, walls, or roof, waterline at the roofline or higher• Only foundation or pad remains. Ex: mobile or manufactured home
MAJOR - significant damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Failure/partial failure of roof over essential living space*• Structural damage includes damage to rafters, ceiling joists, and structural elements of walls or framing• Fire damage to wall/roof/ceiling system in essential living spaces <i>impacted by ceilings pulled down or collapsed, walls burned and/or not intact</i>• Fire damage to the home's electrical/utilities systems that must be inspected and/or repaired prior to use. (Typically for single-family fires)• Significant damage to residence due to damage resulting from fire-fighting operations or over-haul.
MINOR	Home with repairable, non-structural damage; damage is contained to non-essential living spaces.
AFFECTED	Damage is considered mostly cosmetic
UNINHABITABLE	The client cannot reside in their home post-disaster within the next 48 hours due to unsafe infrastructure, lack of safe accessibility, or having been identified as not suitable or dangerous to live. <u>This determination should be made in coordination with local emergency officials.</u>

*An **essential living space** is a room within a home that serves the function of a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and/or living room that is regularly occupied or used by one or more members of the household and requires repair to bring its functionality back to the home. (For instance, kitchens are considered essential as long as there is not another undamaged kitchen in the home.)

Damage Assessment Questions

Question	Answer	Outcomes and Follow-up Questions
Is there significant structural damage?	YES	The structure will be considered Destroyed or Major . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it a total loss? Is there significant damage to an essential living space?
	NO	The structure will most likely be classified as Minor or Affected . We will ask the following question to determine which is applicable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the non-structural damage repairable and contained to non-essential living spaces or is it mostly cosmetic? <p>In some instances, as defined under Uninhabitable in the table above, there may be no significant structural damage, but the client cannot safely go back into the home for at least 48 hours. In these situations, Red Cross responders may ask for assistance in making the determination of Uninhabitable.</p>
Will clients be able to return safely to their home within the next 48 hours?	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the reason that the residents are not able to return? What needs to occur before residents may return? What is the expected return date?

WHEN IN DOUBT, CONTACT US!