

ESF 14 Appendix 1– Requesting Presidential Emergency or Major Disaster Declaration

**ESF Coordinating Agency: Washington Military Department,
Emergency Management Division (EMD)**

Primary Agencies:

- Department of Commerce
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Health
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Department of Archeology and Historical Preservation
- Department of Ecology

Support Agencies:

- Office of the Attorney General
- Conservation Commission
- Employment Security Department
- Department of Enterprise Services
- Office of Financial Management
- Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Office of the Governor
- Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs
- Office of the Insurance Commissioner
- Department of Labor and Industries
- Department of Licensing
- Office of the Lieutenant Governor
- Military Department
- Washington National Guard
- Department of Natural Resources
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Department of Revenue
- Office of the Secretary of State
- Washington State Patrol
- Department of Transportation
- Office of the State Treasurer
- Utilities and Transportation Commission
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Energy
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Small Business Administration

Support Organizations:

- Washington State Legislature
- Local Jurisdictions
- Tribal Governments
- American Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Washington Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (WAVOAD)

Emergency or disaster proclamations and declarations are the way that a government notifies the next level of government that there is a state of emergency that exceeds local ability to cope and that exceeds local resource capacity.

During disaster response and coordinating with the planning section chief, one of the most important roles of the EMD Recovery Coordinator under ESF 14 is the collection of information from all sources including planning documents, field reports, news media, and social media. These photos, statistics, analyses, and stories contribute to not only creating a common operating picture for agency partners, but also can help build the narrative for a Presidential Emergency or Major Disaster Declaration (PDD) request and ensure that any damage assessments that are performed have real stories to support them – and are not just reduced to numbers.

In addition to familiarity with the Stafford Act and the requirements of a PDD request, the EMD Recovery Coordinator should also be familiar with the process of developing a successful PDD letter. Even if a PDD is not expected to be requested, tracking this information can be important in case of cascading events or to support reimbursement requests from some agencies.

Local Emergency Proclamations or Declarations of Emergency

Local and tribal emergency or disaster proclamations or declarations are usually prepared by the local or tribal emergency manager and implemented by the executive head of the political subdivision or tribal government. The exact process will depend upon specific local and tribal requirements.

State Emergency Proclamation

The Governor may proclaim a state of emergency when a public disorder, disaster, energy emergency or riot exists in the state that affects life, health, property, or public peace pursuant to RCW 43.06.010. This state of emergency is proclaimed for and is only effective within the affected area, which may be all or part of the state. The governor's proclamation is developed by the planning section in the SEOC with guidance from superiors and legal counsel, signed by the governor and filed with the secretary of state pursuant to RCW 43.06.210.

Damage Assessments

A Damage Assessment is required as part of the governor's request for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. These assessments have two major steps:

1. Initial Damage Assessment (IDA): Local jurisdictions and tribal governments are responsible for conducting the Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) and then providing

their assessment data to their county emergency management office. The emergency management agency then analyzes the data and forwards it to the SEOC.

2. Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA): A joint state, FEMA, Small Business Administration (SBA), and county/tribal team will conduct a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) when the impacts identified in the IDA are severe enough to warrant further action. The PDA not only validates the damage but also assesses the need for various forms of federal assistance, i.e., crisis counseling, disaster unemployment, legal services, etc.

The Governor will request an Emergency Declaration or a Major Disaster Declaration from the President when the potential, eligible damages identified during the PDA are sufficient to meet federal requirements.

Federal Definition of a Major Disaster

A major disaster, according to the Stafford Act, is “any natural catastrophe (including any hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, wind driven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm or drought) or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood or explosion in any part of the United States which in the determination of the President causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance in accordance with this chapter [the Stafford Act] to supplement the efforts and available resources of states, local governments and disaster relief organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or suffering caused thereby.”

Major Disaster requests must establish:

- The situation is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capability of the state and the affected local governments, and
- Federal assistance under the Stafford Act is necessary to supplement the efforts and available resources of the state, local governments and disaster relief organizations and any compensation by insurance for disaster-related losses.

Request for a Presidential Disaster Declaration

The governor submits a request for a PDD within 30-days after the end of the incident (as stipulated under federal statute). The governor may request an extension through FEMA Region X within the 30-day period, if needed. The request is prepared by the EMD Recovery Coordinator (or designee), utilizing the standard FEMA request forms, and transmitted to the Governor’s Office. The governor requests a PDD only when the disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local

governments. The requested federal assistance is intended to supplement state and local efforts and capabilities.

The request for a PDD identifies which federal disaster assistance programs the state wishes to receive. Not all programs will be needed for all disasters and the request will include a justification for each program requested.

A Major Disaster Declaration will authorize the Individuals and Households Program (IHP) and/or the Public Assistance Program (PA). The state must qualify for one or both of these programs to obtain a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. Other assistance programs can also be requested depending upon the situation. For example, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is automatically authorized when IHP and/or PA are authorized. The Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Loan Program is also automatically activated to provide low interest loans to impacted individuals and businesses when IHP is authorized.

The governor can also request an SBA declaration and/or one of three USDA disaster declarations. EMD is the lead for requesting an SBA declaration and the Washington State Department of Agriculture is the lead for USDA requests (see ESF-11 for details).