

# POST-DISASTER BUILDING PERMIT PROCEDURES

## **PURPOSE**

After a disaster event the initial responsibility of the Building and Development Review Services Department (BDRS) will be Damage Assessment. The Damage Assessment and Recovery Teams (DART) will be directed by the department Damage Assessment Coordinators with instructions from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Infrastructure Group. The BDRS EOC position representative is a member of the Infrastructure Group and will communicate with the Damage Assessment Coordinators.

The second post-disaster responsibility of BDRS will be determining the habitability and placarding of damaged structures. Where possible, the DART teams will make habitability determinations and placard buildings during the damage assessment phase.

These procedures are to satisfy federal, state and local government post-disaster requirements while maintaining a focus on providing the earliest possible clearance to citizens for safe access to damaged properties.

## **RESOURCES**

BDRS currently consists of the Building Division and the Development Review Division. Staffing presently is 57 of which 26 are certified inspectors in the building, plumbing, electrical, or mechanical trades. The certified inspectors will be utilized in the primary role on the DART teams with technical or administrative staff member assigned to each team in a support role. Some DART teams will be comprised of two inspectors when required due to being assigned to commercial/public building damage assessment, or response phase assignment. See also B.(1) Temporary employees.

The EOC Infrastructure Group also has the Property Appraisers Office, and Environmental Management providing DART teams. Their teams will provide for damage assessment only and will not be making habitability determinations.

Each DART Team will be provided with a county vehicle, 800MHz radio, cellular telephone with GETS/WPS (Government Emergency Telecommunications Service/Wireless Priority Service) access, a portable tablet computer with ARC Pad damage assessment software and GPS locator, oversized map, and an Emergency Kit with supplies and equipment to perform damage assessment, habitability determinations and placarding.

All BDRS staff members will receive periodic training and BDRS EOC members will participate in all exercises.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **I. Damage Assessment Phase**

When notified by the EOC to begin damage assessment operations, the BDRS DART teams will be notified when and where to report. The primary meeting location will be 310 Court Street Building and Development Review Services office and the alternate meeting location will be the Clearwater Mall 20505 US Highway 19 North,

Clearwater, FL 33764. The mall is located on the southeast corner of US Hwy 19 N. and Gulf to Bay Blvd. we will meet in the southwest corner of the parking lot.

Notification will be by one of the following methods: Telephone/Text message call-out, 800MHz radio, monitoring of TV/Radio, or BDRS information line telephone number. When advance notice of EOC activation is given, all inspectors will take their county vehicles home when within a 25 mile radius of 310 Court Street to reduce fleet damage exposure. The teams will also take home their county cell phones, 800MHz radios, and Dart Team Emergency Kit.

The DART teams (16 total) will assemble and receive instructions and assignments for Primary Damage Assessment. Each DART team has been given a predetermined area; however, the DART team coordinators will reposition them as directed by the EOC Infrastructure Group.

**A. Arc Pad Damage Assessment software**

The DART team inspector will check the structure and the second team member will locate the property with GPS and enter the finding into the software. The information entered into the software will populate on the FEMA Damage Assessment Form and will be downloaded to a memory stick which will be collected each afternoon by the DART Team Coordinators and delivered to the EOC for downloading into the Property Appraisers database.

**B. Damage Assessment Forms and Placards**

DART Teams will carry a supply of each form/placard and will be resupplied by the DART Team Coordinators. Public service announcements will be made and information posted on pinellascounty.org webpages informing the public on the meaning of the various placards and emergency repair and permit procedures.

**1. Inspected Placard (No Restrictions)**

When a Dart team inspector determines by cursory inspection that a building appears to be safe to occupy it will be posted with this placard. The Dart Team will submit a log of those structures determined to be habitable. These placards have green text and a white background.

**2. Limited Entry Placard**

When a Dart team inspector determines by cursory inspection that a building is structurally questionable it will be posted with this placard. Entry into the building is at the owner's discretion and final structural condition may need to be determined by a design professional. These placards are yellow text on a white background.

**3. Unsafe Placard**

When a Dart team inspector determines by cursory inspection that a building is structurally unsafe it will be posted with this placard. Entry into the building is prohibited and final structural condition shall be determined by a design professional. These placards are red text on a white background.

**4. Utility Service Connections Placard**

When a Dart team inspector determines by cursory inspection that a building appears to be safe to reconnect service and utility connections (Water, Sanitary, Electric, and/or Fuel gas) when they become available it will be posted with this placard. These placards are blue text on a white background.

**5. Habitable Repair Approval Placard**

When a Dart team inspector determines by cursory inspection that a building (residential only) appears to have minor (Less than 20%) structural damage which does not appear to affect the structural safety of the building, this placard will be posted.

This placard will serve as an emergency authorization to begin repairs which is intended to accomplish the following: Prevent further damage to the structure and/or make the structure safe and habitable. It authorizes only the specific work listed on the placard by the inspector.

This work shall only be performed by the property owner and/or properly licensed contractor(s). A permit and inspection will be required and must be obtained within 180 days of work completion. All work is required to comply with the current Florida Building Codes. Dart Teams will submit a log of those structures issued a temporary repair authorization. This placard has black text on white background.

## **II. Permitting Phase**

### **A. Building and Development Review Services Location**

When the EOC determines that it is appropriate to begin issuing permits, BDRS will begin processing and issuing permits at the normal office location at 310 Court Street in Clearwater or in the case of damage to that structure an alternate work location will be utilized. Dependant on the severity of the event and the volume of damage BDRS operational hours may be expanded. BDRS will also process permits at Disaster Recovery Center(s) when set up by FEMA. When connectivity is available to the database BDRS will have the ability to issue permits not requiring plan review wirelessly in the field.

### **B. Temporary Employees**

#### **1. Building Official Association of Florida (BOAF)**

When it is determined that BDRS requires assistance with habitability inspections, issuing building permits, plans examinations, and field inspections the Department director will request assistance through Pinellas County Emergency Management. Emergency Management will contact the State of Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) under the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement (SMAA). DCA will contact the BOAF Statewide Mutual Aid Coordinator whom will contact Emergency Management to determine the needs of BDRS. The SMA Coordinator will identify available personnel and coordinate, supervision, lodging and food availability, transportation to the area and for inspection purposes, communications, and paperwork/materials. The SMA Coordinator is responsible to put all information in writing for approval by DCA. When DCA approval is granted, the SMA Coordinator will confirm with Emergency Management the assistance requirements and dispatches the personnel. The SMA Coordinator is responsible for the relief coordination from start to finish which realistically could span weeks to months.

#### **2. Lodging**

The temporary personnel working in a declared disaster are functioning under the terms of the SMAA. Their employer is responsible for all of their expenses such as: payroll, overtime, transportation, food, lodging, and paperwork. The BOAF SMA Coordinator will help with the completion of required forms for reimbursement under the SMAA. Pinellas County will assist the personnel in locating accommodations.

#### **3. Food**

Same as #2. Pinellas County will assist the personnel with food arrangements.

#### **4. Fleet and Communications**

Pinellas County will provide fuel and repair services for the vehicles of SMAA workers and assist them with communications equipment.

#### **5. Private Providers**

BDRS will engage private provider companies in the case that long term assistance is required due to extensive reconstruction volumes. This will be

necessary until such time that staffing levels can be enhanced to equal workload requirements.

**C. Items Excluded From Permitting**

When the EOC Policy Group establishes that emergency measures are required, the following items will be excluded from required permitting:

1. General emergency repairs to prevent further structural damage.
2. Temporary Roof Repairs.
3. Temporary shoring.
4. Exterior siding.
5. Drywall damaged by water three feet or less.
6. Work on any county owned property.

**D. Permits**

During the recovery period after a declared emergency, the issuance of permits for rebuilding of substantially damaged structures (more than 50% damage) and for new construction will be temporarily suspended by the Building Official. Plans examinations in progress will likewise be temporarily suspended. Initially, the focus will be on repair and reconstruction projects with less than 50% damage. Those with more than greater than 50% damage and new construction projects will be triaged into the workload as conditions permit. Processing of permits, site plans, etc. for new development or construction not essential for the public's health, safety and welfare may be suspended for up to 90 days. The definitions of damage are as follows:

**1. Minor Damage (Up to 20%)**

Permits will be issued to repair structures categorized as having sustained minor damage, i.e. 20% or less than the market value before the damage was accrued and/or up to three feet of water from flooding. BDRS will use the Property Appraiser valuation times a factor of 1.2 to determine the fair market value of the structure. The amount of damage will be determined from the damage assessment forms, photographs, and/or contracts for repair/reconstruction. The permits may be issued without drawings and as-built drawings will be required as a part of final building inspection. All required inspections are mandatory.

**2. Major Damage (20 to 50%)**

Permits for major damage will be issued and inspected as permitting and inspection resources become available. BDRS will use the Property Appraiser valuation times a factor of 1.2 to determine the fair market value of the structure. The value of the work will be taken from the signed contract along with the contractor cost breakdown as required by FEMA regulations. Permits may be issued with only a plot plan indicating the area to be reconstructed, however, prior to any structural inspection drawings must be submitted. All required inspections are mandatory.

**3. Destroyed (Greater than 50%)**

Destroyed or new construction permits will be issued as the permitting and inspections resources become available. Plans will be required and permitting and inspections will be performed in the normal manner.

**E. Temporary Housing Permits**

Permits will be issued for up to 180 days for temporary housing (mobile homes, recreational vehicles, and tents) to be placed on property when the permanent structure is no longer habitable. The temporary unit may be placed in the setbacks. The utilities (electricity, water, sewer, fuel gas) to the temporary unit must be disconnected prior to the connection of utilities to the repaired or rebuilt structure. Temporary housing units must be removed or in compliance with county regulations within 30 days of Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.)

**F. Permitting Requirements**

1. All contractors must have a Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board (PCCLB) registration or certification in order to show proof of proper insurance and workers compensation coverages.
2. All permits for the repair, restoration, or reconstruction of commercial structures will be issued to properly licensed contractors only.
3. Permits may be issued to residential property owners of one and two family homes who provide all material supervision themselves.
4. Roofing repair permits may be issued to properly licensed general, building, or residential contractors providing such work is authorized by an emergency order or proclamation by the Governor of Florida or the Board of County Commissioners.
5. BDRS will provide disaster permitting and inspections for the municipalities under current Interlocal Agreements at the time of the disaster.

**III. Interlocal Agreement**

Pinellas County has signed an Interlocal agreement with the State of Florida for Statewide Mutual Aid Assistance. Requests for aid must be placed by Emergency Management and requests of aid will through from DCA. The statewide agreement number is 95 NF-99-99-99-014.