Disaster Response Immediate Notification Process

The Department of Revenue’s disaster response process provides assessors with a contact who is available at all times to respond to calls from assessors impacted by significant severe weather damage. The initial Department of Revenue contacts are Bill Sparks and Eben Johnson.

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<tr>
<th>Person:</th>
<th>Bill Sparks</th>
<th>Eben Johnson</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phone #s available:</td>
<td>651-556-6095</td>
<td>651-556-6107</td>
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Disaster Response Assistance Introduction
The Department of Revenue’s Property Tax Division is available to assist you with the recent disaster impacting your jurisdiction. A representative of the division is available to provide any assistance related to the reassessment work, as well as answering any questions that may arise during the process. Please route any needs, concerns, or questions through this person. Other representatives are also available if additional assistance is necessary.

The division’s representative has provided you with our disaster response guide which has been designed to include information to help you respond to this event. The guide includes three packets of information, to be used during different phases of your disaster response:

- **PACKET 1 – Immediate Response.** Use this packet first prior to initiating your reassessment work. It will provide you with helpful information to assist you in planning and preparing for the reassessment. It includes the following topics:
  - Tips regarding disasters
  - The disaster response
  - What DOR and others offer for assistance
  - Listing of people, phone numbers, and websites
  - Checklist of “What to Do Now and How”

- **PACKET 2 – The Reassessment.** Once the reassessment process has started, this packet of information will provide you with helpful information to make this process as safe, efficient, and effective as possible. See the introductory letter in that packet when ready.

- **PACKET 3 – Disaster Credits and Follow Up.** After the reassessment work is completed, this packet of information will provide you with helpful information regarding the property tax relief available at the state level and how to initiate it. It includes other reporting information, as well. See the introductory letter in that packet when ready.
Local Leaders in the Disaster Response
Every disaster response will have a designated coordinator/leader. This person is likely the appropriate individual within the jurisdiction’s Emergency Management Office or Public Safety Department. This person will lead and coordinate all efforts.

You, as the leader of the assessor’s office response, should immediately identify this person and understand the reporting processes for the overall response. You may be involved in planning meetings and other events. Be sure you have identified your role in the response to the appropriate leaders so they are aware of the activities you can and/or must complete as part of your job and response to the disaster.

Remember, a representative from the division is also available. This person can be an additional disaster response leader you should consult and include as appropriate.

Other Local Leaders
The designated coordinator/leader will likely include other highly-trained and experienced leaders for various functions of the response. This will likely include Public Safety, Public Health, Social/Human Services, Public Works, and other offices. Also, volunteer agencies such as The Red Cross and The Salvation Army will likely have leaders available. Utilize any and all of these resources as necessary.

Minnesota Duty Officer Program
The Minnesota Duty Officer Program provides a single answering point for local and state agencies to report state-level incidents, or for reporting hazardous materials and petroleum spills. The duty officer is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week and is located in the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Operations Center in Saint Paul.

IMPORTANT – Unless your position as assessor includes other managerial job functions, you will NOT likely be the initiator of the Minnesota Duty Officer. By this point, the duty officer has likely already been notified. Information on the duty officer is being provided here for informational purposes only.

Examples of incidents the duty officer can assist with include (but are not limited to):

- Natural disasters (tornadoes, floods, fires, etc.)
- Requests for National Guard
- Hazardous materials incidents
- Search and rescue assistance
- AMBER Alerts
- Requests for Civil Air Patrol
- Radiological incidents
- Aircraft accidents/incidents
- Pipeline leaks or breaks
- Substances released into the air

Be sure to utilize and consult any and all leaders to ensure you are fully and effectively responding to the disaster.
Flood and Tornado Tips

- Be sure all utilities have been turned off at the main switches or valves before entering damaged properties and that you have been given the “all clear” to begin reviewing properties.
- Similarly, be sure all power has been appropriately shut off. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk through water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. You and the vehicle can be quickly swept away.
  - Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling. A foot of water will float many vehicles. Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles.

After a Flood or Tornado

- **Enter areas only when authorities indicate it is safe.**
- Listen for reports from the disaster response leadership to learn whether the community’s water supply is safe to drink.
- Be aware of severely-damaged structures. They may have weakened and could collapse.
- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Stay away from downed power lines, and report them to the power company.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.
- Use extreme caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.
- Clean and disinfect hands, tools, and clothing that get wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.
Property Tax Division Assistance
The Property Tax Division will provide you with substantial information and resources. We can offer the assistance of a division employee, most likely your area’s Property Tax Compliance Officer.

Division Representative
The division’s representative is willing to assist with:
- Guidance and assistance with implementing your office’s disaster response
- Physical assistance with the reassessment, if necessary
- Responding to taxpayer questions
- Organizing any volunteer reassessment efforts
- Communicating with other division staff to fully leverage available resources
- Guidance with disaster credit calculation
- Assisting with any follow up activities

The division’s representative will be available, if needed, as soon as it is safe and practical to arrive immediately following the disaster. That person can stay at least one day and possibly longer if necessary. After that time, the representative and other members of the division will be able to assist for as long as necessary.

Follow Up Assistance
After the initial work of the disaster response (clean up, reassessment, etc.) is complete, your work will still not be done. Even though the division will no longer have an individual physically present in your office, we will still be available for any questions and concerns. You will also be working on any property tax relief measures that may be available for your jurisdiction and taxpayers. We will work with you to provide guidance and assistance in these matters.

Remember our Property Tax Administrator’s Manual is available on our website. It has some detailed disaster information in Module 2.
General Assistance
Throughout the response and recovery periods, it is important to communicate with the local emergency management team and monitor local radio or television reports and other media sources for information about what assistance is available.

Local Assistance Resources
First, take some time to find the disaster response leaders/coordinators for your jurisdiction. This information is likely available in your jurisdiction’s disaster response plan. You may also list it below:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Primary Phone</th>
<th>Secondary Phone</th>
<th>Other</th>
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Other Assistance Resources
There are many resources available that may be able to provide assistance. This includes:

- Minnesota’s Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office
  - (651) 201-7400 or (651) 296-0466 or https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem
  - Minnesota Duty Officer: (800) 422-0798 or (651) 649-5451
    (but this call will likely be initiated by your Emergency Management Officer)

- FEMA. In the most severe disasters, the federal government is also called in to help once the President of the United States declares a “Major Disaster” for the affected area at the request of a state governor.
  - (800) 621-3362 or www.fema.gov
  - Region V Regional Office (312) 408-5500

- DisasterAssistance.gov. This website provides access to disaster help and resources and offers many online tools to help with disaster preparedness and management for both individuals and local governments.

- American Red Cross
  - www.redcross.org

- Salvation Army
  - (651) 746-3400 or www.salvationarmyusa.org
The Reassessment

Once the immediate safety issues are resolved and you are permitted to enter the affected areas, you will need to begin the reassessment process. You will need to very carefully balance collecting information regarding the level of damage with safety. It is understandable that affected taxpayers will wish to begin the recovery/rebuilding process as soon as possible, and your office will need to collect pertinent information regarding the damage before this work begins. However, **it cannot be emphasized enough that you should not begin the reassessment work until given clearance by the disaster response leader**. Safety of all involved is paramount, so be sure to notify the disaster response leader of your responsibilities regarding the reassessment so she/he can notify when you are permitted to begin this work.

Reassessment Considerations

Familiarize yourself with the resources your office has available to conduct the reassessment work. This includes human resources (staff) and other physical resources (technology, etc.). Identify these resources and make a preliminary determination if they will be sufficient to handle the demands of the reassessment considering the preliminary reports you have heard. This is your “needs assessment.” Be sure you have the resources you need to complete the task you will soon be undertaking.

The disaster reassessment does not take nearly as much time as a full quintile review, but depending on the magnitude of damage, assistance from other assessors may be necessary. Please discuss your plans and your needs assessment with the division’s representative who has been made available to assist you. If it appears that additional assessment personnel will be necessary to complete the disaster reassessment, the division will coordinate with the MAAO network to find qualified assessors who are willing to provide assistance.

Importance of Reassessment

The calculation of disaster credits and abatements will be based upon the reassessment. Furthermore, it may be utilized to fully leverage federal, state, and other local resources. Therefore it is essential that the reassessment follow acceptable practices and be completed in a uniform way.

Next Step – Packet 2

Packet 2 will be a resource for you as you move into this active phase of reassessing damaged properties. Be very thorough in your preparations so that the reassessment can be completed as efficiently and effectively as possible. Also, be sure to take the time necessary to fully plan your reassessment activities. Do not begin the reassessment until granted clearance to do so. Consult with the division’s representative to help with this preparation. Remember, the disaster response leadership should notify you when the impacted areas are deemed safe for re-entry.
# What to Do: Now and How

Use this checklist to help you organize what you need to get done now so that you can effectively and efficiently respond to the disaster.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority (A, B, or C)</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Comments or Notes</th>
<th>Assigned to or Assistance from</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review your jurisdiction’s disaster response plan</td>
<td>Be familiar with your role in the overall response</td>
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<td>Identify disaster response leadership</td>
<td>Notify leadership of your position and what you will need to do and receive any initial instruction</td>
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<td>Review disaster packet information provided by the division</td>
<td>Review all parts PACKET 1 for now, to identify resources available</td>
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<td>Conduct preliminary review to identify damage areas</td>
<td>If allowed, conduct very quick review of damage to understand magnitude (or review media reports)</td>
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<td>Speak with division’s representative to initially plan reassessment work</td>
<td>Start considering how your reassessment activities will be completed and determine if additional reassessment assistance is needed or desired</td>
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<td>Start preparing your staff for upcoming activities</td>
<td>Possibly conduct a staff meeting to educate your staff of the next steps</td>
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<td>Compile a listing of names and contact information</td>
<td>Have a readily available listing of individuals who are connected to the disaster response and recovery</td>
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