



Frequently Asked Questions

Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources Programs

www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/index.shtm

Q: How does FEMA assess damages to historical properties and cultural resources after disaster events?

A: Throughout the recovery, FEMA provides technical assistance to State and local governments to preserve historic, cultural and natural aspects of national heritage. FEMA organizes damage assessment teams to work with State and local historic preservation officers in affected areas to determine the extent of damage to cultural institutions. Also, as part of its responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, FEMA collaborates with Indian Tribes, and where appropriate, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to address their unique cultural concerns.

Q: How does FEMA oversee historic preservation activities in the disaster area?

A: FEMA deploys specialists in archaeology and historic preservation to affected areas to focus on the restoration and protection of historic and cultural resources. These specialists identify project-specific historic preservation concerns in the disaster area, provide technical assistance to response and recovery teams, and fulfill FEMA's legal responsibilities under various historic preservation laws, executive orders, and regulations.

Q: Is Public Assistance funding available to restore historical collections and records?

A: FEMA's Public Assistance program has a standard policy for the treatment of significant collections and records (http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/9524_6.shtm), making the restoration of some collections and individual objects eligible for funding. The policy refers to collections and items of "exceptionally significant cultural value" (located within or on public or private non-profit property). The Federal share is up to 75 percent of the cost. The State determines how the non-Federal share (up to 25 percent) is split with the applicants.

For information about funding assistance, see, "Before and After Disasters: Federal Funding for Cultural Institutions" (<http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PDFS/Disaster.pdf>). The National Trust for Historic Preservation is another resource (<http://www.nthp.org>).

Q: What other resources are available for restoring and protecting historical and cultural collections and items?

A: FEMA partners with the Heritage Emergency National Task Force to provide information and technical assistance on how to salvage and protect historical and cultural collections. The Task Force was formed in 1995 to help libraries and archives, museums, historical societies, and historic sites protect their collections and buildings from natural disasters. FEMA's Disaster Field Offices distribute Task Force materials on historic preservation.