

Rapid Building and Site Condition Assessment Instructions

Introduction

This form was developed for use by FEMA by the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, an office of the National Park Service, in collaboration with the Heritage Emergency National Task Force. The form is intended to provide public officials with a tool to rapidly assess the condition of buildings and sites within a disaster area.

Several assumptions informed the design of this form:

- the built environment is the focus of the assessment effort;
- inspectors may have minimal preservation skills;
- teams will include a local building inspector;
- assessments may be conducted from the street, and access to interior inspection may be limited;
- a second tier of inspection may follow at a later date based upon the initial rapid inspection; and
- a second level review will be performed before the structure is destroyed or modified.

The ***Rapid Building and Site Condition Assessment*** was developed using Filemaker Pro database software version 6.0. The form is available as a database file or as an Adobe PDF file on-line at www.ncptt.nps.gov.

Step 1 -- Preparation:

Before using this condition assessment form, inspectors should gather existing data. A large amount of information exists that can be used to identify many historic properties and cultural resources before inspectors ever enter the field:

- State Historic Preservation Office maps:
 - National Historic Landmarks, National Register Individual Listings, National Register Districts, Eligible Properties, including:
 - historic buildings
 - archaeological sites
- Landmark/Historic Commission maps:
 - Locally regulated historic Properties and Districts

Inspectors should be briefed on each section of the Assessment Form and associated definitions (see attached Definitions Page). Safety issues must be addressed, including appropriate gear and supplies needed to ensure personal safety.

Step 2 -- How to use this form:

The condition assessment form is designed to be completed by inspectors with limited training in historic preservation. Ideally, an assessment team should draw on historical architects, conservators, archaeologists, engineers, and others. If a limited number of trained personnel is available, especially historical architects, their assessment efforts

should be targeted at the known historic resources. Inspectors should make every attempt to fill out the form in its entirety to the best of their ability. When in doubt, a second more detailed evaluation should be recommended.

The form is divided into seven major sections:

- **Inspection** – basic information about the inspection team, any attachments available, photographs, documents, sketches, etc.;
- **Property description** – basic information on location of the site, type of construction, primary occupancy, and ownership;
- **Characteristics** – information needed to assess the historic significance of the structure or site;
- **Flood data** – information specific to water or flood damage;
- **Evaluation** – information on the structural soundness of the structure or site;
- **Further actions** – recommendations on further actions including detailed evaluations, emergency stabilization, or barricades; and
- **Posting** – documentation and instructions for safety and further actions.

Step 3—Archive Data:

Data may be collected manually using printed versions of the form. Alternately, electronic data can be captured by installing Filemaker Pro ver. 6 or higher software on a PC-based device such as a tablet, laptop, or palmtop and using the programmed version of the form. If forms are completed manually, data should be inputted into a database file regularly for further analysis at a later date.

Step 4—Action Recommendations:

Inspectors will make strategic recommendations in the further actions section of the form. Issues of public health and safety are the first priority. Saving structures are a high, but second priority. Further recommendations may include stabilization. Simple tarps, shoring, and boarding up of the site might make the difference in saving a structure. Recovery and conservation of collections are a third priority. When possible to observe interior conditions, note any visible signs of collections.

Each site or structure should be posted upon completion of inspection. This posting serves as notice to the public regarding the safety of the structure or site. In addition, postings that reflect “historic designation” or “detailed evaluation needed” will assist in further inspection of the property by specialist teams including professionals with expertise in health and safety, structural engineering, archeology, historic preservation or collections care.

For More Information:

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