



SOUTH DAKOTA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC SAFETY

prevention — protection — enforcement



FEMA

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# News Release

## Understanding FEMA Assistance Decisions and Your Right to Appeal

**SIOUX FALLS, SD**—If you received a letter from FEMA saying you are not eligible for federal disaster assistance, you may wonder what happened. The letter will explain why the decision was made. Missing documentation and not enough damage to essential living space are among the most common reasons one can initially be found ineligible.

Examples of missing documentation may include an insurance settlement letter, proof of residence, proof of ownership of the damaged property or proof that the damaged property was your primary residence at the time of the disaster.

The goal of FEMA housing assistance is to ensure people live in safe, sanitary and functional housing. FEMA assistance is not insurance. Your home may have suffered storm damage, but if it did not affect essential living space, you may not be determined eligible for assistance. FEMA considers the kitchen, bathrooms and occupied bedrooms as essential living spaces.

If you think an error was made regarding your case, you have the right to appeal. The appeal must be in writing and include new information or documentation. Start the process and get assistance with your appeal letter by calling the disaster assistance helpline at **800-621-3362** or TTY: **800-462-7585**. Lines are open daily from 7 a.m.-11 p.m. Help is available in most languages.

Mail your appeal letter to:

FEMA – Individuals & Households Program National Processing Service Center  
P.O. Box 10055  
Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055

Or you may fax it to:

800-827-8112

Attention: FEMA – Individuals & Households Program

FEMA will send a written response to your appeal within 90 days.

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*FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.*

*The U.S. Small Business Administration is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955. TTY users may also call 800-877-8339. Applicants may also email [DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov](mailto:DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov) or visit SBA at [www.SBA.gov/disaster](http://www.SBA.gov/disaster).*