

Helpful Info When Appealing a Decision from FEMA

Release Date: Sep 14, 2021

You applied to FEMA for disaster assistance after Hurricane Ida hit and you received a letter. You're not sure what it says, but you think it's not good.

Often, these letters are sent when your application is missing information. Maybe you didn't show proof you are who you say you are, proof you own your home, or proof you lived in your home for a major part of the year before Ida. Here are tips for writing a letter to appeal a FEMA decision.

You Have 60 Days to Send FEMA Your Appeal

The most important part of the appeal process is knowing how long you have to do something about it. Count 60 days from the date FEMA has on the determination letter. That's the date you'll circle on your calendar to remind you it's the last day to send FEMA your appeal. Keep in mind that after FEMA receives your letter, you may receive a phone call or a follow-up letter asking for more information.

Carefully Read FEMA's Letter Before Writing Your Appeal

You'll need to understand why FEMA said the application was "ineligible," or that assistance to you is denied, or that FEMA is holding off on making a decision. Often, the reason is as simple as missing documents or information. Read FEMA's letter from beginning to end to help you understand what the agency is asking you to do.

Include Evidence to Support Your Appeal Request

Your appeal letter is not enough to get FEMA to reconsider its decision. You need evidence to support what you are claiming in your appeal. It is important to include the documents or information FEMA requests. Here's what to include with your letter:

- A copy of the FEMA letter saying you're denied assistance, or that the agency didn't reach a decision.
- **Insurance letters:** Your insurance company might give you just a fraction of what



you need to repair your home, not enough to help you get into another place, or not enough to replace certain belongings. Keep in mind that FEMA cannot give you a grant for something your insurance company already paid you for.

- **Proof of occupancy:** A copy of a utility bill, a driver's license, a lease or bank statement, a local school document, motor vehicle registration or an employer's letter. All can be used to prove the damaged home or rental was your primary residence. Primary meaning you lived there during a major part of the year.
- **Proof of ownership:** Mortgage or insurance documents; tax receipts or a deed; receipts for major repairs or improvements dating as far back as 2016; a mobile home park letter or a court document. If your documents were lost or destroyed, click on www.usa.gov/replace-vital-documents for information on how to replace them.

Mail, Fax or Upload Your Appeal Letter, Don't Forget to Sign and Date It

- You have 60 days from the date on your FEMA determination letter to mail, fax or upload your appeal if you want FEMA to reconsider their first decision. Sign and date your appeal. And don't forget to include your nine-digit FEMA application number, your disaster number (DR-4611-LA), and documents you can show as proof.
 - Mail: FEMA National Processing Service Center, P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055
 - Fax: 800-827-8112, Attention: FEMA
 - To set up a FEMA online account or to upload documents online, go to www.DisasterAssistance.gov, click on "Check Status" and follow the directions

What You Can Expect After Submitting Your Appeal Letter

You've written your appeal and sent it to FEMA within 60 days after you received their determination letter. Now what? You may receive a call or letter from FEMA asking for more information. Or FEMA may schedule another inspection of your primary home. Whichever the case, once you've sent FEMA an appeal, you can expect a decision letter within 90 days after FEMA receives it.

Reminders:

- The deadline to apply for FEMA disaster assistance is **Thursday, Oct. 28**.
- For any questions, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 (TTY 800-462-7585) The lines are open 24 hours, 7 days a week. If you use a relay service such as a videophone, InnoCaption or CapTel, give FEMA your specific phone number



assigned to that service. Operators can also connect you to a specialist who speaks your language,

For the latest information on Hurricane Ida, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4611](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4611). Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/FEMARegion6 and like us on Facebook at facebook.com/FEMARegion6/.

