

**Combined Glossary of Disaster Terms (FEMA)**

Assessment	The evaluation and interpretation of measurements and other information to provide a basis for decision-making. <small>(<a href="http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do">http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do</a> Updated: Tuesday, 02-Aug-2005 22:07:28 EDT)</small>
Coastal Barrier	A naturally occurring island, sandbar, or other strip of land, including coastal mainland, that protects the coast from severe wave wash. <small>(<a href="http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nfip/mpglssry.pdf">http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nfip/mpglssry.pdf</a>)</small>
Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS)	Undeveloped communities, coastal barriers, and other protected areas designated as subject to certain coverage restrictions. These areas were identified by the Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 1982 (CBRA) and the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990 and are shown on appropriate FIRM panels. <small>(<a href="http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nfip/mpglssry.pdf">http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nfip/mpglssry.pdf</a>)</small>
Damage Assessment	The process used to appraise or determine the number of injuries and deaths, damage to public and private property, and the status of key facilities and services such as hospitals and other health care facilities, fire and police stations, communications networks, water and sanitation systems, utilities, and transportation networks resulting from a man-made or natural disaster. <small>(SLG 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (9/96))</small>
Disaster	An occurrence of a natural catastrophe, technological accident, or human caused event that has resulted in severe property damage, deaths, and/or multiple injuries. As used in this Guide, a "large-scale disaster" is one that exceeds the response capability of the local jurisdiction and requires State, and potentially Federal, involvement. As used in the Stafford Act, a "major disaster" is "any natural catastrophe [...] or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood, or explosion, in any part of the United States, which in the determination of the President causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance under [the] Act to supplement the efforts and available resources or States, local governments, and disaster relief organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or suffering caused thereby." <small>(SLG 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (9/96))</small>
Hazard	Something that is potentially dangerous or harmful, often the root cause of an unwanted outcome. <small>(<a href="http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do">http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do</a> Updated: Tuesday, 02-Aug-2005 22:07:28 EDT)</small>
Hazardous Material	Any substance or material that when involved in an accident and released insufficient quantities, poses a risk to people's health, safety, and/or property. These substances and materials include explosives, radioactive materials, flammable liquids or solids, combustible liquids or solids, poisons, oxidizers, toxins, and corrosive materials. <small>(SLG 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (9/96))</small>
Hazard Mitigation	Any action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from hazards. The term is sometimes used in a stricter sense to mean cost-effective measures to reduce the potential for damage to a facility or facilities from a disaster event. <small>(SLG 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (9/96))</small>
Hazard Mitigation	Any action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to life and property from natural disasters. <small>(October 1998)</small>
Hazard Mitigation	Any cost-effective measure that will reduce the potential for damage to a facility from a disaster event. <small>(<a href="http://www.fema.gov/rrr/pa/glossary.shtm">http://www.fema.gov/rrr/pa/glossary.shtm</a>)</small>
High-Hazard Areas	Geographic locations that for planning purposes have been determined through historical experience and vulnerability analysis to be likely to experience the effects of a specific hazard (e.g., hurricane, earthquake, hazardous materials)

	<p>accident, etc.) resulting in vast property damage and loss of life. (SLG 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (9/96))</p>
Hurricane	<p>A tropical cyclone, formed in the atmosphere over warm ocean areas, in which wind speeds reach 74 miles per hour or more and blow in a large spiral around a relatively calm center or "eye". Circulation is counter-clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. (SLG 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (9/96))</p>
Incident	<p>An occurrence or event, natural or human-caused, that requires an emergency response to protect life or property. Incidents can, for example, include major disasters, emergencies, terrorist attacks, terrorist threats, wildland and urban fires, floods, hazardous materials spills, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tropical storms, war-related disasters, public health and medical emergencies, and other occurrences requiring an emergency response. (<a href="http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do">http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do</a> Updated: Tuesday, 02-Aug-2005 22:07:28 EDT)</p>
Incident Command System (ICS)	<p>A standardized on-scene emergency management system which provides for the adoption of an integrated organizational structure. ICS is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of resources during incidents. It is used for all kinds of emergencies, and is applicable to small as well as large and complex incidents. For additional information please refer to the NIMS document (<a href="http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims_doc_full.pdf">http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims_doc_full.pdf</a>). (<a href="http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do">http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do</a>)</p>
Mitigation	<p>All steps necessary to minimize the potentially adverse effects of the proposed action and to restore, preserve, and enhance natural values of wetlands; or long-term activities to minimize the potentially adverse effects of future disaster in affected areas. (FEMA 1996)</p>
Mitigation	<p>A sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from flood hazards and their effects. Mitigation distinguishes actions that have a long-term impact from those are more closely associated with preparedness for, immediate response to, and short-term recovery from specific events. (Guidelines and Specifications for Flood Hazard Mapping Partners February 2002)</p>
Mitigation	<p>The activities designed to reduce or eliminate risks to persons or property or to lessen the actual or potential effects or consequences of an incident. Mitigation measures may be implemented prior to, during, or after an incident. Mitigation measures are often informed by lessons learned from prior incidents. Mitigation involves ongoing actions to reduce exposure to, probability of, or potential loss from hazards. Measures may include zoning and building codes, floodplain buyouts, and analysis of hazard-related data to determine where it is safe to build or locate temporary facilities. Mitigation can include efforts to educate governments, businesses, and the public on measures they can take to reduce loss and injury. (<a href="http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do">http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do</a> Updated: Tuesday, 02-Aug-2005 22:07:28 EDT)</p>
Preliminary Damage Assessment	<p>A mechanism used to determine the impact and magnitude of damage and the resulting unmet needs of individuals, businesses, the public sector, and the community as a whole. Information collected is used by the State as a basis for the Governor's request for a Presidential declaration, and by FEMA to document the recommendation made to the President in response to the Governor's request. PDAs are made by at least one State and one Federal representative. A local government representative familiar with the extent and location of damage in the community often participates; other State and Federal agencies and</p>

voluntary relief organizations also may be asked to participate, as needed.  
(SLG 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (9/96))

Preliminary Damage  
Assessment (PDA)

A survey to determine the impact and magnitude of damage caused by the disaster and the resulting unmet needs of the public sector and community at large. The PDA is the basis for estimating total disaster-related damage and evaluating the need to request a Presidential declaration of disaster.  
(<http://www.fema.gov/rrt/pa/glossary.shtm>)

Preparedness

The range of deliberate, critical tasks and activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the operational capability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents. Preparedness is a continuous process. Preparedness involves efforts at all levels of government and between government and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations to identify threats, determine vulnerabilities, and identify required resources. Within the NIMS, preparedness is operationally focused on establishing guidelines, protocols, and standards for planning, training and exercises, personnel qualification and certification, equipment certification, and publication management.  
(<http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do> Updated: Tuesday, 02-Aug-2005 22:07:28 EDT)

Prevention

Actions to avoid an incident or to intervene to stop an incident from occurring. Prevention involves actions to protect lives and property. It involves applying intelligence and other information to a range of activities that may include such countermeasures as deterrence operations; heightened inspections; improved surveillance and security operations; investigations to determine the full nature and source of the threat; public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and, as appropriate, specific law enforcement operations aimed at deterring, preempting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity and apprehending potential perpetrators and bringing them to justice.  
(<http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do> Updated: Tuesday, 02-Aug-2005 22:07:28 EDT)

Recovery

The long-term activities beyond the initial crisis period and emergency response phase of disaster operations that focus on returning all systems in the community to a normal status or to reconstitute these systems to a new condition that is less vulnerable.  
(SLG 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (9/96))

Recovery

The development, coordination, and execution of service- and site-restoration plans; the reconstitution of government operations and services; individual, private-sector, nongovernmental, and public-assistance programs to provide housing and to promote restoration; long-term care and treatment of affected persons; additional measures for social, political, environmental, and economic restoration; evaluation of the incident to identify lessons learned; postincident reporting; and development of initiatives to mitigate the effects of future incidents.  
(<http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do> Updated: Tuesday, 02-Aug-2005 22:07:28 EDT)

Response

Activities to address the immediate and short-term effects of an emergency or disaster. (FEMA)

Response

Activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. Response includes immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. Response also includes the execution of emergency operations plans and of mitigation activities designed to limit the loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and other unfavorable outcomes. As indicated by the situation, response activities include applying intelligence and other information to lessen the effects or consequences of an incident; increased security operations; continuing investigations into nature and source of the threat; ongoing public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and specific law enforcement operations aimed at preempting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity, and apprehending actual perpetrators

and bringing them to justice.

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Risk

The probability of harmful consequences, or expected loss (of lives, people injured, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted or environment damaged) resulting from interactions between natural or human induced hazards and vulnerable/capable conditions. Conventionally risk is expressed by the equation Risk = Hazards x Vulnerability/Capacity.

(U.N. ISDR 2002, 24)

Threat

An indication of possible violence, harm, or danger.

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