
Effective Dates: 12/04/2023 - Present (Go to [History](#))

SENSITIVE - NOT TO BE SHARED WITH THE PUBLIC

TN 5 (12-23)

GN 00401.001 Disaster Management Procedures

A. Introduction

The instructions in this subchapter and in Disasters – Processing Claims and Payments [GN 00410.000](#), describe the policies and procedures to expedite the processing of SSA claims and reports in disaster situations in the United States and its territories.

Because current procedures expedite most claims, the use of these procedures should be limited to occasions when a considerable number of actual or potential claimants are affected. They are written with the assumption that team members know how to do their jobs and just need a guide to ensure nothing is omitted during the normal confusion that will occur in the situation.

B. Definitions

1. Disaster

A disaster is a serious disruption of the functioning of a community causing human, material, economic, or environmental losses that exceed the ability of the affected community to cope using its own resources.

We further define disaster into two categories: local or widespread.

A **local disaster** is limited in scope and generally affects a small number of people. Examples include (but are not limited to) plane crash, ship sinking, bus crash, or destruction of one field office (FO).

A **widespread disaster** is an incident that affects an entire city, state, or multiple states. Examples include (but are not limited to) hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, volcanoes, major fires, or explosions.

2. Affected areas

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates affected areas in a Federal Disaster Declaration. Zip codes identify the affected areas. Individuals in these areas are eligible for disaster aid programs. See FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/>.

C. Disaster authority

The Regional Commissioner (RC) or delegate has authority to invoke the disaster procedures and determine if the disaster is local or widespread.

If the RC invokes disaster procedures, send notification to the Office of Public Service and

Operations Support (OPSOS) at (b) (2), (b) (6) with the information in Exhibit 2 [GN 00410.050C](#). OPSOS reviews the data and sends it to PolicyNet for posting.

Once the RC invokes the disaster procedure, it is in effect for all related claims taken nationwide.

If the disaster involves more than one region, any one of the RCs or the COSS may invoke the procedure for those regions. If it is apparent that the event affects the entire country, the Commissioner (COSS), Deputy Commissioner of Operations (DCO) or designee may invoke the procedure. In a widespread disaster, obtain concurrence from the Associate Commissioner (AC) for Office of Income Security programs (OISP) before evidentiary expedients may be used.

D. Disaster assistance tools and tips

In the aftermath of disaster, many individuals who evacuated from the disaster areas contact SSA about check delivery, missed appointments, and pending claims. We have developed several tools to help employees apply disaster procedures.

1. A summary receipt

Give this information to the individual as their documentation of the type of business conducted that day. Refer to Exhibit 1 – [GN 00410.050A](#).

2. Where to look for new instructions related to disaster

We post disaster-related Emergency Messages (EMs) to PolicyNet in the established manner. However, some EMs contain a brief description of the new information and hyperlink to the appropriate section in POMS where the new information is integrated and highlighted. In addition to the highlighted text, an alert-icon at the top of the POMS section indicates new information.

E. Reference

See Information and Security Policy [ISP Section 4.1.3 Anomalies and Events: Reporting](#).

Section History

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Action Item Explanation

Effective Date Title

09/27/2017 [Disaster Management Procedures](#)

05/27/2011 [Disaster Management Procedures](#)

Prior Versions of Section

Effective Date Title

09/26/2017 - 12/03/2023 [Disaster Management Procedures](#)

09/26/2017 - 03/29/2020 [Disaster Management Procedures](#)

05/26/2011 - 09/25/2017 [Disaster Management Procedures](#)

06/14/2010 - 05/25/2011 [Disaster Management Procedures](#)

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