

APPENDIX H: SNOW ASSISTANCE

Snow-related activities, including snow removal, de-icing, salting snow dumps, and sanding of roads and other eligible facilities, is only an eligible emergency protective measure when a winter storm event results in record or near-record³⁹¹ snowfall.³⁹² FEMA authorizes snow assistance by county based on a finding that the county received record or near-record snowfall or meets the contiguous county criteria as described below. FEMA will evaluate Tribal lands as part of a requested county or separately.

Record or Near-Record Snowfall

FEMA utilizes data collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) to identify the historical 1-, 2-, and 3-day snowfall records for each county. For current event snowfall, FEMA relies primarily on snowfall measurements taken at National Weather Service (NWS) Cooperative Network Stations, but will accept measurements from other sources if those measurements are verified as reasonable and accurate by the NWS. Historical 1-, 2-, and 3-day snowfall records by county are available on the NCEI Snow Climatology Database (SCDB) at the following website: www.ncdc.noaa.gov/snow-and-ice/snowfall-extremes. Daily snowfall reports by county are available at: www.ncdc.noaa.gov/snow-and-ice/daily-snow.

FEMA follows the following process to determine record or near-record snowfalls:

- Compare current snowfall amounts with the historical record snowfall amounts for a like number of days without regard for the month in which the record snowfall or current event occurred.
- For multiple-day snowstorms, a county or Tribal lands that meet the 1-day record or near-record requirement on any 1 day, or the 2-day record or near record over 2 consecutive days, or the 3-day record or near record over 3 consecutive days, etc., will have met the record or near-record criteria for that county or Tribal lands.
- FEMA relies on the NWS to determine the duration of the snowstorm.
- When data from multiple NWS-verified sources exist within a county, or Tribal lands, compare the highest current event snowfall reported by the NWS within that county or Tribal land with the highest historical record snowfall for that county or Tribal land.
- For counties or Tribal lands that do not have NCEI or NWS historical record snowfall data, use the historical record from the nearest NWS Cooperative Network Station in an adjacent county or Tribal land, even if located in an adjacent State, for determining historical snowfall records.
- If current event snowfall data are not available from the NWS for a county or Tribal land, use the nearest NWS Cooperative Network Station data from an adjacent county, even if located in an adjacent State.
- FEMA may designate a county or Tribal land that does not receive a record or near-record snowfall, but is contiguous to a county (generally referred to as a “core county”) that does receive a record or near-record snowfall, for snow assistance if the county or Tribal land has current event snowfall that meets or exceeds the current event snowfall of

³⁹¹ FEMA generally considers near record as being within 10 percent of the record snowfall.

³⁹² 44 CFR §206.227.

the core county, to which it is contiguous. Base this comparison on the highest current event snowfall received by each county as reported by the NWS.

- Consider counties or Tribal areas that experience snowfalls occurring over a period exceeding 3 consecutive days that do not reach record or near-record snowfalls during a 3-day period, and for which there are no historical snowfall records for a period exceeding 3 days with NCEI or NWS, on a case-by-case basis.

Winter Storm or Snowstorm Declaration Requests

The request for a Major Disaster Declaration must include a request for snow assistance as part of that declaration. All such requests are subject to the requirements and processes established in the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, and FEMA regulations.³⁹³ In addition to the information required in every disaster request, requests for snow assistance must include the following information:

- Identification of core and contiguous counties³⁹⁴ for which a snowstorm declaration is requested;
- Duration of snowfall, as identified or confirmed by the NWS; and
- For each requested county or Tribal land, daily snowfall totals from NWS stations or NWS-verified sources and historical record snowfall data from the NCEI.

Generally, the current event weather and snowfall information is included in a statement or report from the NWS describing the event.

FEMA only includes costs related to snow activities as part of the preliminary damage assessment data for counties or Tribal lands that meet the record or near-record criteria or qualify as contiguous counties.

Other categories of work, including Permanent Work, may be authorized for snowstorm or winter storm declarations as appropriate.

³⁹³ 44 CFR §206 Subpart B (206.31–48).

³⁹⁴ "Core County" means a county that has a record or near record snowfall with public assistance costs that exceed the annually established countywide per capita impact indicator and is designated for snow assistance under a major disaster declaration. "Contiguous County" means a county in the same State that shares a common border with a core county without geographic separation other than by a minor body of water, typically not exceeding one mile between the land areas of such counties.