

Providing Proof of Occupancy

Survivors of the Feb. 27-March 4, 2021, West Virginia severe storms and flooding in Cabell, Kanawha, Mingo and Wayne counties who apply for federal assistance must be able to prove they lived in the disaster-damaged primary residence before the storms. Once they provide proof, they may be considered for help from FEMA, such as Housing Assistance and some types of Other Needs Assistance, including personal property assistance and moving/storage assistance.

All household members at the time of the disaster are considered occupants. FEMA will verify the applicants' occupancy when they register for assistance or when the applicant provides supporting documentation during the process. This applies to owners and renters of the disaster-damaged property.

If FEMA is unable to confirm an applicant's occupancy, the person may be asked to provide FEMA with any of the documents listed below. FEMA also may request additional documents in cases where the name on utility bills does not match the name of the primary occupant of the damaged home. The documents that can prove occupancy are:

- Utility bills dated within three months before the disaster:
 - Electric, gas, oil, trash, water/sewer bills that show the name of the applicant or the co-applicant and the address of the disaster-damaged residence.
- Merchant's statement dated within three months before the disaster:
 - Bank or credit card statement, phone bill, cable/satellite bill, etc. that shows the name of the applicant or the co-applicant and the address of the disaster-damaged residence.
- Employer's statement, which must be dated within 3 months before the disaster:
 - Pay stubs and similar documents that show the name of the applicant or the co-applicant and the address of the disaster-damaged residence.
- A lease/housing agreement that was in place at the time of the disaster:
 - Copy of a written lease, housing agreement or landlord's written statement that includes the name of the applicant or co-applicant, the landlord's contact information, and the basic terms of tenancy, including the location of the damaged home, the amount of rent and duration of the lease. This is to confirm that the applicant lived there at the time of the disaster. Both the landlord and the applicant or co-applicant must sign the document.
- Rent receipts dated within three months before the disaster:



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- Copy of a rent receipt or bank statement, including a canceled check, that shows the name of the applicant or co-applicant, the landlord's contact information, the address of the pre-disaster home, the amount of rent, and the landlord's signature.
- Public official's statement dated within the 18-month period of assistance:
 - A written statement from an official (a police chief, mayor, postmaster, etc.) that includes the name of the applicant or co-applicant, the residence address, the period of occupation, and the name and contact information of the official.
- Driver's license, state-issued ID card or voter card that reflects the name of the applicant or co-applicant and the address of the damaged residence. These documents must be current at the time of the disaster.

For more information on the storms:

- For more information on the severe storm and flooding in West Virginia, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4605](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4605). Follow the FEMA Region 3 Twitter account at twitter.com/FEMARegion3.

For concerns and allegations of discrimination, please contact the Office of Equal Rights at headquarters at 202-212-3535 or FEMA-Civil-Rights-Program-OER@fema.dhs.gov.