Accela for Disaster Recovery

Streamlined and efficient solutions to support disaster preparedness, response, and rebuilding efforts

Natural disasters often strike unexpectedly, leaving communities in a state of shock and disarray. Whether it's a flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, or other calamity, disasters can cause significant damage to properties and infrastructure.

It's crucial that state and local agencies have a solid disaster recovery plan in place. That's where Accela comes in. We offer products for various phases of disaster recovery, and while each provides a complete solution, they also work seamlessly together for a cohesive and comprehensive solution for communities.

The phases of disaster recovery include:

> **Disaster Preparedness–**Getting out in front of natural disasters requires solutions that ensure safety codes are being enforced across structures, hazardous materials, fire safety, and more.

> **Disaster Response–**Technologies that support rapid deployment of resources for damage assessment, providing aid to residents, and reporting to ensure requests for federal aid are submitted as quickly as possible.

> **Cleanup and Rebuilding–**Clearing debris and developing rebuild plans. Implementing tools to speed up plan review, permitting, and inspection processes, so the community can quickly get on the road to recovery.

Preparing Your Community for the Unexpected

Disaster preparedness is something all communities strive to achieve, but it can be a challenge. It involves many code enforcement functions, including ongoing structural permitting, fire safety procedures, and proper storage of hazardous materials. Examples of this include proactively inspecting areas ahead of a storm to identify those at higher risk. In addition, hazardous materials need to be stored properly to avoid fire or water contamination during a flood. And fire inspections should be done for weed abatement or to determine defensible space to protect homes.

Accela solutions help ensure communities have done what they can to reduce damage due to natural disasters with our pre-built and packaged Civic Applications. Each solution is workflow-driven, designed to enable automation of the planning and code enforcement processes that maintain a community's development.

For disaster preparedness, Accela provides:

> Civic Application for Building

> Civic Application for Planning

> Civic Application for Fire Prevention

> Civic Application for Environmental Health

Immediate Disaster Response

A critical phase of disaster recovery is how a community responds immediately after a disaster. Agencies must quantify damages to determine where there may be unsafe structures, and to build reports for FEMA aid and insurance purposes.

Efficient Cleanup and Rebuilding

For agencies, our rebuilding solutions are designed to shorten the time to review and approve plans and permit applications, inspect sites, and get rebuilding construction underway as fast as possible. Accela customers report a dramatic decrease in time to approve permits for builders, and in fact some have implemented "same day" permitting programs for certain types of permits.

This speed is enabled through fully digital applications for permits/inspections, real-time plan and engineering reviews, automated application processing, and the ability to manage physical or virtual inspections. Citizens are provided with a secure online portal for submitting permit applications, uploading relevant documents, and scheduling inspections. They can access the portal from any device, 24/7, and track their application status, fees due, and online payments.

For cleanup and rebuilding, Accela provides:

>   Civic Application for Building

>   Civic Application for Planning

>   Accela Citizen Access

Accela Mobile

A core component across all of these solutions is Accela Mobile. It allows an agency to access and update records, result inspection checklists, and run reports, without having to set foot in the office.

Accela Mobile plays its most critical role during the response phase. It is the primary tool for Rapid Damage Assessment immediately after an event, and can be used for inspections, reporting, and comprehensive assessment of damage of all types.

It is available for Apple, Android, and Windows devices, and leverages the GPS, camera, and communication tools on the mobile device so inspectors can efficiently complete their work whenever and wherever they need to.

Rapid Damage Assessment with Accela

Accela's **Rapid Damage Assessment (RDA)** solution enables inspectors to complete the necessary damage assessments after a disaster. These assessments, done using mobile devices and often referred to as windshield survey inspections, allow inspectors to gather the necessary data to report on the extent of a disaster's impact.

Using RDA, inspectors can determine whether a community has been completely destroyed or if damage varies house-by-house. Property ratings of Affected, Minor, Major, and Destroyed are assigned to each property and stored in Accela's centralized data management system. This data is then fed into reports that are sent to FEMA to analyze whether the community is eligible for financial aid.

RDA is pre-configured for rapid implementation, includes GIS integration, and can be used online or offline (critical in a natural disaster) to capture pictures, video, and other needed assessment data.

Another critical aspect of disaster response is ensuring residents have a way to report damage. Accela's Civic Application for Service Requests enables residents to report damage through 311 reporting of flooding, unsafe structures, fallen trees, etc. This is especially valuable when damage is extensive and resources are strained.

For disaster response, Accela provides:

>   Rapid Damage Assessment (RDA) Solution, which can be added to any of Accela's Civic Applications

>   Civic Application for Service Request Management (SRM)

"Within 24 hours, we had people out in the field doing damage assessment, seeing where our impact was, seeing where the flooding was [...] which is important to getting FEMA reimbursement and FEMA aid to our citizens."

–**Claire Jubb,** Community Development Director for Charlotte County, FL

The Importance of GIS

Accela integrates with an agency's Esri GIS data in the back office and in the field. This enables exact damage locations to be captured, giving teams a tool for understanding which areas are most impacted. Property assessment information for each parcel can be overlaid on hot spot maps to provide an estimate of the dollar amount of damage.

Leveraging GIS via Accela Mobile supports location-based planning and workflows, providing the ability to automate inspection and cleanup assignments based on geographic region, areas of need, and/or staff and volunteer availability.
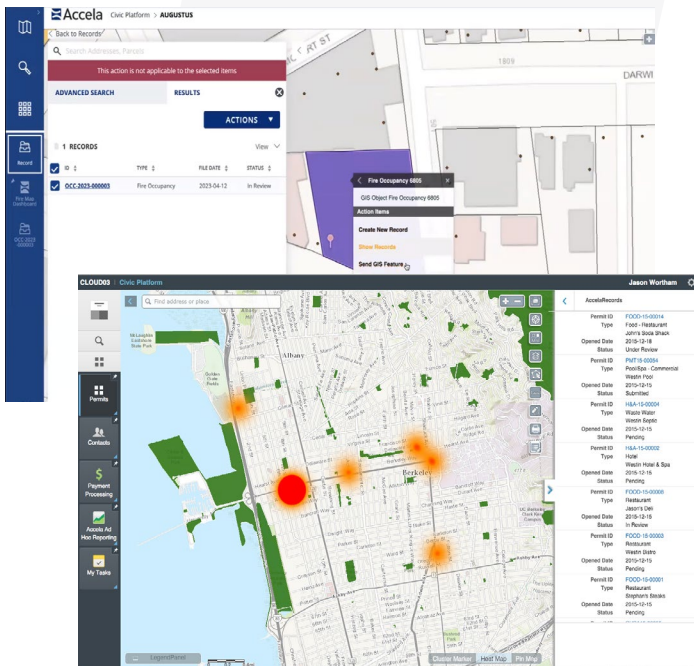
Streamlined FEMA Relief Reporting

As information is gathered, data is fed into a single centralized data management system, facilitating analytics and reporting. Accela Insights, an interactive data visualization tool, empowers agency employees to build dashboards that summarize damage amounts and document rebuild expenses, including equipment and materials costs, all of which must be submitted when applying for FEMA public assistance grant funding.

Pre-Built Solutions on a Foundational Platform

The power of Accela for the various facets of a community's disaster recovery program and response are captured in the Civic Applications and the fact that these solutions are built on one single powerful platform.

Civic Applications are pre-built solutions that are based on Accela's 25 years of experience automating disaster recovery initiatives for agencies across the country. They include pre-built permit and license types, configurations, workflows, checklists, fee generation capabilities, and reports and notifications so agencies can get their systems up and running quickly, with best practices built-in.

All Civic Applications are built on Accela's Civic Platform. It provides foundational technologies such as security, processing, GIS capabilities, and virtually everything needed across all our solutions. With all solutions on a consistent platform, it makes process integration and data sharing across functions, departments, and even jurisdictions much easier and lower cost than the use of point solutions.

Benefits of Accela for Disaster Recovery

> **Reduced Time and Costs**–Automation of the permit application and review processes reduces time and costs for both citizens and agencies.

> **Improved Productivity**–Being able to conduct damage assessments on mobile devices allows inspectors to stay 100% in the field, improving overall productivity.

> **Quicker Recovery Cycles**–As more inspections get completed faster, funding processing is jump started, shortening overall recovery and rebuild periods.

> **Increased Public Safety**–Data centralization and automated reports enable effective communication channels and accelerated cleanup efforts that increase the safety of citizens.

About Accela

Accela provides market-leading SaaS solutions that empower governments worldwide to build thriving communities, grow businesses, and protect citizens. Powered by Microsoft Azure, Accela's open and flexible technology helps agencies accelerate efficiency and transparency today, while ensuring they are prepared for any emergency or complex challenge in the future.

For More Information

If you would like additional information on Accela for Disaster Recovery please contact DisasterRelief@accela.com or your Accela Account Executive.