

City of Canton

Natural Disaster Recovery Procedures - Historic Preservation District

Referencing Municipal Code Section 26 and Centering Homeowner Safety, Practicality, and Historic Integrity

A. Immediate Action and Homeowner Authority

In the event of damage to a residential property within the Historic Preservation District due to a natural disaster, homeowners are authorized to take immediate emergency actions to protect life and property.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Debris removal
- Temporary shoring or bracing
- Weatherproofing and boarding up
- Other urgent measures advised by qualified professionals (licensed structural engineer, architect, or contractor)

These emergency actions do not require prior approval. Homeowners or their agents must notify the City of Canton and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), or its designated staff, within 10 business days of taking such action, unless extenuating circumstances prevent timely communication.

B. Review Process for Repairs and Reconstruction

In the event of damage to residential property, homeowners, who have acquired the necessary building permits, are authorized to begin work on in-kind repairs listed as “no HPC approval required” in the Residential Guidelines Approval Matrix, as those repairs do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). If the intended repair requires a COA, residents must submit an application and go through the design review process. If a state of emergency or a local emergency has been declared, where residential property in the Historic Preservation District has been affected by a natural disaster, the City of Canton and HPC, in line with City Municipal Code Sec. 26-7, will consider the following:

- Adjust HPC meeting schedule by holding special case meetings, virtually if suitable, to streamline application and approval timelines, with decisions issued within 15 days of the completed submission
- Issue permits for temporary dwellings to be placed on the property for up to six months while rebuilding occurs
- To prioritize timeliness and affordability, balance preservation goals with the reality of rebuilding a safe, livable home (exact replication of every detailed is encouraged but not required, especially when original materials or methods are impractical or cost-prohibitive)

C. Designated Homeowner Support and Advocacy

Referencing City Municipal Code Sec. 26-8, the City of Canton may appoint a dedicated Emergency Management Coordinator or establish an HPC subcommittee tasked with:

- Guiding affected homeowners through the review process
- Providing clear, written guidance
- Responding to inquiries within 5 business days
- Advocating for practical solutions in collaboration with homeowners and HPC staff