

Frequently Asked Question (FAQs)

Natural Disasters and the Impact on Construction Spending Data

For areas impacted by a natural disaster, how can I tell how much they typically represent in terms of the nation's total construction spending?

Data on *total* construction spending are only available at the national level.

Annual estimates of construction spending by state are available for Private Nonresidential and State and Local categories. Users can compare these state estimates to the corresponding division, region, and U.S. totals to determine their representative spending volume. Annual state, division, and region estimates can be found here www.census.gov/construction/c30/historical_data.html

Do you have monthly estimates of Construction Spending for the affected areas?

No. Most data on Construction Spending are from sample surveys that are designed to estimate monthly spending at the national level only.

How are the collection and estimation of data on Construction Spending affected by a natural disaster?

Data on private nonresidential, private multifamily, state and local, and federal construction are obtained from the Construction Progress Reporting Surveys, which samples selected construction projects. Imputations are made for projects that have not reported at the time of the monthly tabulation, based on estimated total construction value and month of start of the project.

In the event of a natural disaster, Census Bureau staff will review non-reporting projects in the impacted area and try to determine a likely impact on their spending. If we determine the standard imputation method is not appropriate given the analysis and likely impact of the disaster in the area, we can intervene in the imputation process. This includes options to either reduce the spending or assume that there was no spending on the project for the month.

Data on private residential construction spending include estimates of spending on improvements to owner-occupied housing units. These are obtained from household interviews of a sample of owner-occupied units selected for the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE), which is conducted by the Census Bureau for the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Any sampled households located in the areas affected by the disaster that are not able to be contacted are considered ineligible for the survey. Data from sampled households in other parts of the country will be more heavily weighted to account for the smaller eligible sample households. We only capture spending on major replacements to damaged houses if paid by the homeowner.

Will completely rebuilt projects, those that have been destroyed or razed, be included in the Construction Spending figures?

Yes, however, the money spent on demolitions and related activities will be excluded from the figures. For projects where the demolition and rebuild are in the same contract, we attempt to exclude the demolition portion if the costs can be separated.

For single-family residential construction, 100% rebuilds will be counted if the permit is issued as new construction by the permit office. However, most damaged homes are not completely rebuilt, but are considered repairs, which are not included in these statistics.

Will cleanup costs be included in estimates of Construction Spending?

No. Cleanup is not defined as construction spending.

Does the Census Bureau alter the procedures for developing seasonally adjusted estimates of Construction Spending?

No.

Where can I find additional information on the impact of natural disasters?

For data from other Census Bureau sources on the areas impacted by natural disasters, please see the Census Bureau's www.census.gov/topics/preparedness.html page.

Source: U. S. Census Bureau
Economic Indicators Division

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