

Frequently Asked Question (FAQs)
Effects of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma on the August 2017
New Residential Sales Data

How much do the areas that had the biggest impact from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma typically represent of the nation's total new residential sales?

Data on New Residential Sales data are not available at the state or local level.

Using annual data on housing units authorized from the Census Bureau's Building Permits Survey, the counties in Texas and Florida that were included in the FEMA Hurricane Harvey and Irma Individual Assistance disaster declarations accounted for about 14% of U.S. single-family housing units authorized by permits in 2016, and about 27% of single-family housing units authorized in the South region.

Does the Census Bureau produce monthly estimates of New Residential Sales for the affected areas?

No. New Residential Sales data are obtained from the Survey of Construction (SOC). This survey was designed to make regional and U.S. estimates, not state or local estimates.

How was the collection and estimation of data on New Residential Sales affected by the hurricanes?

New Residential Sales data are obtained from the Survey of Construction (SOC), a sample survey of new housing units from 900 permit jurisdictions and from a sample of land areas where permits are not required. Several areas in Texas and Florida that were impacted by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma are in the Survey of Construction sample. Permits issued in August were selected for the sample. However, for single-family permits sampled in August and prior months, information on the sales status at the end of August was collected for only about 65% of cases in the Texas and Florida counties in the FEMA Individual Assistance disaster declarations. Typically, this information is collected from respondents or by observation for nearly 95% of cases sampled for SOC.

For projects in the Survey of Construction for which we do not receive sales information in August or September, we assume that there was no change and count the units in their previous status as for sale. Newly issued single-family permits are counted as for sale if the sales status cannot be determined.

Did the Census Bureau alter the procedures for developing seasonally adjusted estimates for New Residential Sales?

No.

Source: U. S. Census Bureau
Economic Indicators Division

Last Revised: September 26, 2017