



Case Study: 2009 Georgia Flood, disaster response

**Partner
Community:**
Powder Springs, GA



Situation:

On September 21, 2009, the Atlanta area was hit by a flood that was declared “off the charts,” “epic,” and “stunning” by the U.S. Geological Survey. In an area that normally receives 50 inches of rain a year, some locations recorded 20 inches of rain within a 24-hour period. The City of Powder Springs had many neighborhoods impacted by the floodwaters.

Floodwaters did not begin to recede for several days. The area was declared a natural disaster and FEMA stepped in to oversee claims and response. Approximately 100 structures in Powder Springs were identified as being impacted by the flood initially and ultimately over 120 structures required inspection and assessment.

SAFEbuilt's Solution:

- Consulted with SAFEbuilt employees who had worked in flood-damaged areas after Katrina in Louisiana. These individuals were a valuable resource to determine Georgia's response and inspection/assessment tactics during the Powder Springs flood.
- Brought in additional support with experience responding to flood related issues to conduct the inspection and assessment process.
- Utilized ATC 45 rapid assessment forms to conduct initial assessments on over 90 structures within two weeks of the initial event on September 21. Completed full assessments on more red and yellow-carded structures within one month of initial rainfall.
- Navigated the FEMA process with City officials and attended FEMA and disaster response coordination meetings.
- Utilized SAFEbuilt's permitting software (already in use by the City of Powder Springs) to convert all flood inspections into Flood Permits. Assessment forms were scanned into the system and attached to these permits. This allowed City and SAFEbuilt staff to track the progress of rebuilding efforts and identify abandoned structures that required more City involvement.
- Waived permit fees associated with rebuilding efforts attached to flood permits.

“SAFEbuilt worked after hours in response to the disaster, and truth be told, we wouldn't have been able to respond to our residents and citizens with the assessment information they needed within the time frames they needed without SAFEbuilt's guidance. We are very lucky to have them on board to guide our building and permitting efforts, particularly when it comes to disaster occurrences.”

– **Pam Conner**, Community Development Director, City of Powder Springs, GA

“We are here for the community – where we live and work, where our neighbors and friends are as well. Our goal in any disaster is to help homeowners to recover and resume their lives as quickly and painlessly as possible, not to impede or profit from their loss.”

– **Mike McCurdie**, President and CEO, SAFEbuilt

SAFEbuilt

Building Department Services
for Public Agencies

SAFEbuilt.com

Jon Walker | JWalker@SAFEbuilt.com
(877) 887-0884