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**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

**Information  
Bulletin**

March 5, 2001

Loan Guaranty Letter 01-4  
264-2

**SUBJ:** Earthquake in Washington State

**PURPOSE**

This is to notify you of VA requirements regarding loans secured by properties in the disaster areas designated by Federal or State authorities as a result of the earthquake in Washington state on February 28, 2001. The following are the disaster designated counties: King, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pierce, and Thurston.

**LOAN ORIGATION ISSUES**

Any loan closed prior to February 28, 2001, is eligible for VA guaranty without regard to the disaster. The "Loan Administration" information applies to these cases.

For a loan on a property appraised on or before February 28, 2001, and not closed prior to that date to be eligible for VA guaranty both of the following certifications must be submitted with the guaranty request:

**Lender Certification:** This is to affirm that the property which is the security for VA loan number \_\_\_\_\_ has been inspected to ensure that it was either not damaged in the recent disaster or has been restored to its pre-disaster condition or better.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lender Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lender Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Veteran Certification:** I have inspected the property located at \_\_\_\_\_ and find its current condition to be acceptable to me. I understand that I will not be charged for any disaster-related expenses, and now wish to close the loan.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Veteran Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The "remarks" section of VA form 26-0286, VA Loan Summary Sheet, must be annotated "Lender and Veteran Disaster Certifications Enclosed." Additionally, if local law requires the property to be inspected and approved by the local building inspection authority, a copy of the

appropriate local report (s) must be provided. Neither VA nor the veteran purchaser shall bear the expense of any disaster-related inspections or repairs.

If there is an indication that the property, despite repairs, will be worth less at the time of loan closing than it was at the time of appraisal, then the lender must have the VA fee appraiser update the original value estimate. The payment of the appraiser's fee for that service will be a contractual matter between the buyer and seller. If the property value has decreased, the loan amount must be reduced accordingly.

The lender should ascertain prior to closing that the veteran's employment and income have not changed since the loan application. If at the time of loan closing the veteran is no longer employed or family income has been reduced, that should be reported to VA or the automatic underwriter, as appropriate, for evaluation prior to closing the loan.

## **LOAN ADMINISTRATION ISSUES**

VA encourages holders of guaranteed loans in the disaster areas to extend every possible forbearance to borrowers in distress through no fault of their own. VA Regulations regarding "Reapplication of Prepayments" (38 CFR 36.4310), "Advances" (38 CFR 36.4313), "Extensions and Reamortizations" (38 CFR 36.4314), and "Supplemental Loans" (38 CFR 36.4355) may be of assistance in appropriate cases. It is the loan holder's responsibility to inspect damages to properties, counsel borrowers concerning assistance which may be available to them, and provide this office with a report which outlines the findings and actions for each damaged property. Loan holders should contact this office before consenting to an insurance adjustment where the proceeds will not be sufficient to pay the loan balance or restore the security.

Please include a copy of the attached VA bulletin with any correspondence you send borrowers in the disaster areas. The information it contains should be beneficial to all parties involved.

Although the loan holder is ultimately responsible for determining when to initiate foreclosure and for completing termination action, we are requesting that holders establish a 90 day moratorium from February 28, 2001, on initiating new foreclosures in the disaster areas. Since VA is requesting this, the provisions of 38 CFR 36.4319(f) will not be applied by VA during the moratorium to loans secured by properties in the disaster areas. Also, the period of the moratorium will be considered "VA-requested forbearance" for the purposes of the no-bid avoidance provisions of 38 CFR 36.4321. There are two exceptions to the 90 day moratorium on new foreclosures:

1. When a default is clearly insoluble and there is no likelihood of reinstatement and the holder requests and receives VA prior approval to initiate foreclosure during the period of the moratorium, and
2. When a foreclosure sale, the product of an insoluble default which occurred prior to the disaster, was already scheduled. The sale should be delayed only to the extent necessary to determine whether the liquidation appraisal remains accurate, and for such time as it may take the holder to obtain acceptable hazard insurance loss settlement for purposes of 38 CFR 36.4326.

VA Regulations (38 CFR 36.4326) requires that lenders and holders ensure that homes financed with the assistance of VA-guaranteed loans be sufficiently insured against hazards to which it

may be subjected to the extent customary in the locality. 38 CFR 36.4325(b) authorizes VA to adjust any claim resulting from a loan foreclosure in which the lender or holder failed to properly procure appropriate insurance. The burden of proof is upon the lender or holder to establish that no increase in VA's ultimate liability is attributable to the failure of the lender or holder to have the property properly insured.

### **IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS**

If there are any Loan Origination related questions, please contact 1-888-349-7541. Loan Administration related questions should be directed to 1-800-319-9446. Construction and Valuation questions may be directed to our Seattle office at (206) 220-6163.

VLINDA A. CHILDS  
Loan Guaranty Officer

Attachment: VA Loan Guaranty Benefits

Distribution: All Lenders, Holders and Servicers

**VA LOAN GUARANTY BENEFITS  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
DENVER REGIONAL LOAN CENTER**

COLORADO, WYOMING, MONTANA, NEW MEXICO, UTAH, WASHINGTON, IDAHO, OREGON AND ALASKA

**WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR DISASTER**

**CONTACT YOUR LENDER**

If you have a VA guaranteed home loan and your home is affected by a major disaster, it is very important that you contact your lender as soon as possible regarding your loss. You are not excused from making your regular monthly loan payments even if your home is not habitable. You should discuss possible extension or reamortization of your loan if you are unable to make your payments on time. You should also have your lender explain procedures regarding repairs to your property, payment to contractors, etc.

**CONTACT YOUR INSURANCE AGENT**

Do not make a hasty settlement on insurance. If possible, get at least two estimates from licensed contractors for cost of repairs or rebuilding. Insurance checks for personal property and living expenses should be made payable only to the homeowner. Checks for real property should be made payable to the homeowner and the lender. If the property is damaged but repairable, an inspection for structural damage should be obtained from the city engineer or a licensed engineer.

**CHECK ALL SOURCES FOR ASSISTANCE**

Be sure to check all sources, especially the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), at the Disaster Center for maximum assistance. Do not pay your loan in full before checking with the Small Business Administration (SBA) on a loan for the uninsured portion of your loss.

**CONTACT VA TOLL FREE AT 1-800-319-9446**

VA can provide additional assistance helping you work with your lender, your insurance agent, and other agencies. It is especially important to contact VA if you have a Specially Adapted Housing Grant. If you are receiving VA checks, notify your local Post Office and VA regional office of your change of address if you will not be receiving mail at your regular address. If you are in the process of purchasing a home in a disaster area, please call 1-888-349-7541.

If you need information on VA benefits other than home loans call 1-800-827-1000.