



Public Assistance Hazardous Limbs, Trees and Stumps

This fact sheet provides you with guidance on Federal Emergency Management Agencies (FEMA) Hazardous Limbs, Trees and Stumps review process. If you are seeking funding for disaster recovery from the FEMA, please read this carefully.

Broken Limb or Branch Removal

Removal of broken limbs or branches that are 2 inches or larger in diameter (measured at the point of break) that pose an immediate threat are eligible. An example is a broken limb or branch that is hanging over improved property or public-use areas, such as trails, sidewalks, or playgrounds if it could fall and cause injury or damage to improved property. FEMA does not fund removal of broken limbs or branches located on private property unless:

- The limbs or branches extend over the public Right of Way (ROW)
- The limbs or branches pose an immediate threat; and
- The Applicant removes the hazard from the public ROW (without entering private property). Only the minimum cut necessary to remove the hazard is eligible. For example, cutting a branch at the trunk is ineligible if the threat can be eliminated by cutting it at the closest main branch junction.

Tree Removal

FEMA considers incident-damaged trees to be hazardous and eligible if the tree has a diameter of 6 inches or greater measured 4.5 feet above ground level, and the tree:

- Has a split trunk
- Has a broken canopy; or
- Is leaning at an angle greater than 30 degrees

For trees that have 50 percent or more of the root-ball exposed, removal of the tree and root-ball and filling the root-ball hole are eligible. For contracted removal of a tree with a root-ball, FEMA will not reimburse two separate unit costs to remove the tree and its root-ball.

For trees that have less than 50 percent of the root-ball exposed, FEMA only provides PA funding to flush cut the item at ground level and dispose of the cut portion based on volume or weight. Grinding any residual stump after cutting the tree is ineligible.

Stump Removal

For stumps that have 50 percent or more of the root-ball exposed, removal of the stump and filling the root-ball hole are eligible. If grinding a stump in-place is less costly than extraction, grinding the stump in-place is eligible.

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- Stump removal in areas with known or high potential for archaeological resources usually requires that FEMA further evaluate and consult with SHPO or THPO. If the Applicant discovers any potential archaeological resources during stump removal, the Applicant must immediately cease work and notify FEMA.

Contracted Sump Removal

FEMA only reimburses contracted costs charged on a per-stump basis if:

- The stump is 2 feet or larger in diameter measured 2 feet above the ground; and
- Extraction is required as part of the removal

The Applicant needs to ensure the price for stump removal includes extraction, transport, disposal, and filling the root-ball hole. For stumps that have less than 50 percent of the root-ball exposed, FEMA only provides PA funding to flush cut the item at ground level and dispose of the cut portion based on volume or weight. Grinding any residual stump is ineligible. For stumps smaller than 2 feet in diameter, or for stumps of any size that do not require extraction, FEMA only provides PA funding based on volume or weight as removal of these stumps does not require special equipment. If the Applicant claims reimbursement of these stumps on a per stump basis, FEMA limits PA funding based on a unit price for volume or tons, calculated using Appendix E: Stump Conversion Table.

If the Applicant incurs additional costs in picking up stumps 2 feet or larger in diameter that the contractor did not extract, it should complete Appendix F: Hazardous Stump Worksheet and present documentation to substantiate the costs as reasonable based on the equipment required to perform the work.

Documentation Required for Hazardous Limbs, Trees, and Stumps

The Applicant must retain, and provide when requested, all of the following documentation to support the eligibility of contracted work to remove tree limbs, branches, stumps, or trees that are still in place: Specifics of the immediate threat with the location (geographical coordinates in latitude, longitude) and photograph or video documentation that establishes the item is on public property (required, FEMA reviews a representative sample);

Quantity removed (Note: If a contractor charged an individual price for each limb, tree, or stump removed, FEMA requires the diameter of each item removed. For stumps, the measurement must be 2 feet up the trunk from the ground. For trees, it must be 4.5 feet up from the ground.) (required);

Quantity, location, and source of material to fill root-ball holes (required); and Equipment used to perform the work (required).

Appendix E – Stump Conversion Table

Diameter to Volume Capacity

FEMA quantifies the number of cubic yards of debris for each size of stump based on the following formula:

$$\frac{[(\text{Stump Diameter}^2 \times 0.7854) \times \text{Stump Length}] + [(\text{Root-Ball Diameter}^2 \times 0.7854) \times \text{Root-Ball Height}]}{46,656}$$

0.7854 is one-fourth Pi and is a constant.

46,656 is used to convert cubic inches to cubic yards and is a constant.

The formula used to calculate the cubic yardage used the following factors, based upon findings in the field:

- Stump diameter measured 2 feet up from the ground
- Stump diameter to root-ball diameter ratio of 1:3.6
- Root-ball height of 31 inches

Stump Diameter (Inches)	Debris Volume (Cubic Yards)	Stump Diameter (Inches)	Debris Volume (Cubic Yards)
6	0.3	46	15.2
7	0.4	47	15.8
8	0.5	48	16.5
9	0.6	49	17.2
10	0.7	50	17.9
11	0.9	51	18.6
12	1	52	19.4
13	1.2	53	20.1
14	1.4	54	20.9
15	1.6	55	21.7
16	1.8	56	22.5
17	2.1	57	23.3
18	2.3	58	24.1
19	2.6	59	24.9
20	2.9	60	25.8
21	3.2	61	26.7
22	3.5	62	27.6
23	3.8	63	28.4
24	4.1	64	29.4
25	4.5	65	30.3
26	4.8	66	31.2

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Stump Diameter (Inches)	Debris Volume (Cubic Yards)	Stump Diameter (Inches)	Debris Volume (Cubic Yards)
27	5.2	67	32.2
28	5.6	68	33.1
29	6	69	34.1
30	6.5	70	35.1
31	6.9	71	36.1
32	7.3	72	37.2
33	7.8	73	38.2
34	8.3	74	39.2
35	8.8	75	40.3
36	9.3	76	41.4
37	9.8	77	42.5
38	10.3	78	43.6
39	10.9	79	44.7
40	11.5	80	45.9
41	12	81	47
42	12.6	82	48.2
43	13.3	83	49.4
44	13.9	84	50.6
45	14.5		