



PUBLIC ASSISTANCE: DEBRIS REMOVAL TIPS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance (PA) Program provides supplemental assistance to states, tribes, and local governmental entities, as well as certain private non-profit organizations (hereinafter referred to as applicants). FEMA's *Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide* (<http://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-policy-and-guidance>) provides comprehensive information regarding assistance that FEMA can provide and the requirements that applicants must follow in order to receive the assistance. The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to provide key information to consider when planning and initiating debris removal operations.

Costs to remove incident-related debris (including, but not limited to, vegetative debris, components of structures, sand, mud, silt, gravel, rocks, boulders, vehicles, and vessels) from improved public property and public rights-of-way (ROWs), including Federal-aid roads, are reimbursable. FEMA also reimburses a limited timeframe for vehicle and vessel storage when necessary to provide applicants time to identify the owner.

If applicants authorize residents to place incident-related debris on the public ROW, including Federal-aid roads, costs to subsequently remove the debris from the ROW are reimbursable. In such cases, local governments should provide guidance to citizens to avoid placing hazardous waste on the ROW and to avoid placing debris near fire hydrants and power poles. Applicants should consider placing large roll-off trash bins on public property and ROW for use by the citizens to minimize significant debris piles on the ROW and establishing debris drop-off sites for household hazardous waste.

Various types of resources are reimbursable, including the applicants' employees, temporary hires, mutual aid, and contractors. Additionally, the value of volunteer hours or donated equipment may be used to offset the non-Federal cost share (usually 25%).

Monitoring Debris Operations

FEMA requires that applicants monitor all contracted debris removal operations. If it does not monitor contracted debris removal operations, it jeopardizes FEMA funding. Applicants may use employees (including temporary hires), contractors, or a combination for monitoring. FEMA will provide debris monitor training to an applicant's employees upon request. It is not necessary, or cost-effective, to have Professional Engineers or other certified professionals perform debris

DOCUMENT THESE ITEMS

Applicants need to document the following information to support debris removal claims:

- Quantity and type of debris:
 - Hauled to a temporary staging site
 - Reduced, including reduction method (e.g., chipped, burned)
 - Hauled to a final disposal site
 - Recycled
- Pick-up locations
- Disposal locations (temporary staging, recycling, and final disposal)
- Owned ("Force Account") equipment:
 - Type of equipment and attachments used
 - Year, make, model, size/capacity
 - Days and hours used
 - Operator name
- Contracted equipment
 - Certifications of truck size/capacity
- Labor:
 - Name
 - Days and hours worked
 - Work performed

monitoring. FEMA considers costs unreasonable when associated with the use of staff that are more qualified than necessary.

SELECTING DISPOSAL SITES

- DO: If burning debris as a reduction method, obtain guidance from applicable State, Territorial, Tribal, or local regulatory agencies to determine if and where burning can be conducted.
- DO: Obtain permits from applicable Federal, State, Territorial, Tribal, and local regulatory agencies.
- AVOID: Areas such as endangered species' critical habitats, archeologically sensitive areas, rare ecosystems, contaminated sites, well fields, or surface waters. If near these areas, establish buffer and/or turbidity barriers.
- AVOID: Areas of close proximity to schools, nursing homes, hospitals, historic buildings, residences, or public water supplies especially in windy areas due to dust and odor.
- DO NOT: Dispose of debris in floodplains or wetlands.

Alternative Procedures Pilot Program for Debris Removal

FEMA is currently conducting the Alternative Procedures Pilot Program for Debris Removal. Under this pilot program, applicants may elect to participate in one or more of the following:

- Reimbursement of straight-time for employees (limited to overtime under standard program)
- Retention of income generated from recycling debris
- 2-percent increased cost-share incentive for applicants with a FEMA-accepted debris management plan with pre-qualified debris removal contractors before the start of the incident period
- Increased Federal cost share based on a sliding scale to accelerate completion of debris removal (This procedure must be authorized in the President's major disaster declaration for declarations requested on or after August 28, 2017):

Debris Removal Conducted (Days from Start of Incident)	Federal Cost Share
1-30	85%
31-90	80%
91-180	75%
FEMA will NOT provide funding for debris activities after 180 days (unless FEMA grants an extension)	

FEMA's *Public Assistance Alternative Procedures Pilot Program Guide for Debris Removal*, <http://www.fema.gov/alternative-procedures> provides detailed guidance on the pilot program.

Additional Fact Sheets are available for debris removal from waterways, removal of animal carcasses, and contract requirements.