

# Debris Management

## Resources for Debris Removal and Demolition Operations

- [Debris Removal from Public Property Overview](#)
- [Debris Removal from Private Property and Demolition of Private Structures Overview](#)
- [Policies and Fact Sheets](#)
- [FEMA 325 - PA Debris Management Guide](#)
- [Debris Removal Contractor Registry](#)
- Debris Management Plan Workshop Student Handbook ([PDF](#) 2.41MB, [TXT](#) 33KB)  
*Applicants may request the one day debris management plan workshop by contacting their FEMA region.*
- [USACE Debris Management](#)

## Debris Removal from Public Property Overview

Debris removal is the clearance, removal, and/or disposal of items such as trees, sand, gravel, building components, wreckage, vehicles, and personal property. Public Assistance funds are available to eligible applicants for debris clearance, removal and disposal operations. Eligible applicants include State and local governments, Indian tribes, and certain private nonprofit organizations. In order to be eligible for FEMA funding, the debris removal work must:

- Be a direct result of a Presidentially declared disaster;
- Occur within the designated disaster area; and
- Be the responsibility of the applicant at the time of the disaster.

In addition, debris removal work must be necessary to:

- Eliminate an immediate threat to lives, public health and safety;
- Eliminate immediate threats of significant damage to improved public or private property; or
- Ensure the economic recovery of the affected community to the benefit of the community-at-large.

Examples of eligible debris removal activities include:

- Debris removal from a public right-of-way to allow the safe passage of emergency vehicles; and
- Debris removal from public property to eliminate health and safety hazards.

Examples of ineligible debris removal activities include:

- Removal of debris, such as tree limbs and trunks, from an applicant's unimproved property or undeveloped land;

- Removal of pre-disaster sediment from engineered channels;
- Removal of debris from a natural channel unless the debris poses an immediate threat of flooding to improved property;
- Removal of debris from Federal lands or facilities that are the authority of another Federal agency or department, such as Federal-aid roads, USACE navigable waterways, and NRCS canals. See Public Assistance Fact Sheet 9580.202, Debris Removal Authorities of Other Federal Agencies, for a description of these authorities.

## Debris Removal from Private Property and Demolition of Private Structures Overview

**Debris Removal from Private Property.** Debris removal from private property is generally not eligible for *Public Assistance grant funding* because it is the responsibility of the individual property owner. If property owners move the disaster-related debris to a public right-of-way, the local government may be reimbursed for curbside pickup and disposal for a limited period of time. If the debris on private business and residential property is so widespread that public health, safety, or the economic recovery of the community is threatened, FEMA may fund debris removal from private property, but it must be approved in advance by FEMA. *Please refer to Disaster Assistance Policy, [DAP 9523.13 Debris Removal from Private Property](#), for information on the eligibility of debris removal from private property.*

**Demolition of Private Structures.** State and local governments may need to enter private property to demolish private structures made unsafe by disasters to eliminate immediate threats to life, public health, and safety. In some cases, the costs of performing demolition of private structures may be eligible for Public Assistance grant funding.

The demolition of unsafe privately owned structures and subsequent removal of demolition debris may be eligible when the following conditions are met:

- The structures were damaged and made unsafe by the declared disaster, and are located in the area of the disaster declaration;
- The applicant certifies that the structures are determined to be unsafe and pose an immediate threat to the public.
- The applicant has demonstrated that it has legal responsibility to perform the demolition.
- A legally authorized official has ordered the demolition of unsafe structures and removal of demolition debris;
- The applicant has indemnified the Federal government and its employees, agents, and contractors from any claims arising from the demolition work; and
- The demolition work is completed within the completion deadlines outlined in 44 CFR §206.204 for emergency work.

Eligible activities include demolition of the facility superstructure, filling in of open below-grade structures (basements, swimming pools), and other activities including capping of wells and pumping and capping of septic tanks.

Ineligible costs associated with the demolition of private structures may include:

- removal of slabs or foundations, except in very unusual circumstances, such as when disaster-related erosion under slabs on a hillside causes an immediate public health and safety threat;
- removal of pads and driveways;

Demolition activities are eligible for permanent work assistance when the work is required in support of eligible repair, replacement, or reconstruction of a project.

Please refer to Disaster Assistance Policy, [DAP 9523.4, Demolition of Private Structures](#), (provide link), for information on the eligibility of private structure demolition.

Additional information on debris removal and demolition operations can be found in the [FEMA 325 Public Assistance Debris Management Guide](#).