



Public Assistance for Federal Disaster Grants Category A Debris Removal Fact Sheet

Purpose

The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to provide essential information for potential applicants with eligible Emergency Work, Category A: Debris Removal. 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 nonprofit organizations. FEMA's [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#) (PAPPG V.4) provides comprehensive information regarding assistance that FEMA can provide and the requirements that applicants must follow in order to receive the assistance.

Category A

Debris* removal activities are eligible as Category A if the removal is in the public interest. Activities include the removal of:

- Vegetative debris
- Components of structures
- Sand
- Mud or Silt
- Gravel or Rocks
- Boulders
- Vehicles
- Vessels

*SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL IS NOT CONSIDERED DEBRIS

Costs and Documentation

Costs to remove from improved public property and public rights-of-way, including Federal-aid roads, may be reimbursable in a federally declared disaster. Applicants are required to maintain and update documentation during and after the incident period for all emergency work performed including, but not limited to, information which would be beneficial to the completion of a scope-of-work (SOW) for the project.

Applicants are required to maintain and document detailed information to support all debris removal including, but not limited to the:

- Estimated debris quantities by type (required for all uncompleted work);
- Photographs of debris impacts, if available;
- Location of temporary reduction sites and permanent disposal sites (required);
- Copies of permits for reduction and disposal sites (required);
- Quantities of debris removed, reduced, disposed, and recycled (by type) with load tickets to support quantities (required if contracted);
- Tower logs (required if contracted);
- Documentation to substantiate legal responsibility (required);
- The basis of the immediate threat determination (required);
Location of debris (required); and
- Documentation to substantiate the debris was deposited by the incident and was not preexisting (e.g., waterway soundings that show pre-and post-incident levels) (required).

Force account resources such as labor and equipment may be eligible. Documentation includes:

- Name of Employees
- Days /Hours worked
- Work Performed
- Pay Policy
- Contract Procurement Policy
- Type of Equipment and Attachments Used
 - [FEMA Schedule of Equipment Rates](#)
- Time log of usage
- Operator name
- Contracted personnel/equipment
- Certifications of truck size/capacity

Ineligible Expenses and Work

Debris removal from the following is ineligible:

- Federally maintained navigable channels and waterways;
- Flood control works under the authority of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Flood control works under the specific authority of NRCS are those that are part of the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Program under PL 83-566;
- Agricultural land; and
- Natural, unimproved land, such as heavily wooded areas and unused areas.

Alternative Procedures for Debris Removal

The Applicant may elect to participate in the Alternative Procedures for debris removal and receive reimbursement for straight-time for the Applicant's budgeted employees that conduct debris removal activities. The Applicant opts-in by including straight-time in their debris removal (Category A) project claims.

Debris Contracts

According to the FEMA [Debris Monitoring Guide](#), when procuring contracts for debris removal operations and monitoring services, Applicants must use their standard procurement processes and practices that conform to SLTT procurement policies and regulations, as well as those required by Federal regulations. Failure to adequately follow procurement requirements may result in the deobligation of all or some of an Applicant's PA funding. If a Federal requirement is different than the SLTT requirements, or the Applicant's own requirements, it must use the more restrictive requirement.

Applicants are required to use competitive contract bidding procedures when procuring debris contracts, unless they can justify sole sourcing. If the Applicant, in compliance with SLTT law, wants to issue a sole source contract rather than conduct a sealed bidding process, the Applicant would have to demonstrate that there are "exigent circumstances" necessitating procurement by non-competitive methods and use of a sealed bidding process would cause an unacceptable delay. Applicants are also required to maintain proper oversight of these contracts to ensure compliance with contract terms. The Applicant must include in the contract a termination date for the non-competitively procured contract and justify in writing why the period of performance is reasonable under the prevailing circumstances.

Debris Removal from Non-Navigable Waterways

Non-navigable waterways, including flood control works and natural waterways debris deposited by the incident may obstruct a natural waterway (that is, a waterway that is not improved or maintained) or a constructed channel, including flood control works. In these cases, removal of the debris from the channel is eligible if the debris poses an immediate threat, such as when the debris:

- Obstructs, or could obstruct, intake structures;
- Could cause damage to structures, such as bridges and culverts; or
- Is causing, or could cause, flooding to improved public or private property during the occurrence of a 5-year flood.

Removal of the obstruction is eligible in streams where debris removal might also be eligible under the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) unless NRCS provides assistance for the debris removal. However, FEMA, the Recipient, and the Applicant need to coordinate with NRCS first to ensure that any work performed does not jeopardize other assistance that may be eligible under the EWP.


Debris removal from flood control works that are under the specific authority of NRCS is ineligible for PA funding, even if NRCS does not have sufficient funding or does not provide assistance. Flood control works under the specific authority of NRCS are those that are part of the WFPO Program under PL 83-566. For flood control works that are eligible for the USACE Rehabilitation and Inspection Program (RIP), debris removal is eligible for PA funding. USACE does not reimburse Applicants for debris removal but conducts this activity directly when necessary.

Privately Owned Vehicle Removal

Privately Owned Vehicles and Vessels on Public Property Removal of privately-owned vehicles and vessels from public property is eligible if all of the following conditions are met:

- The vehicle or vessel blocks access to a public-use area;

- The vehicle or vessel is abandoned;
- The Applicant follows applicable SLTT government ordinances or laws for private vehicle or vessel removal; and
- The Applicant documents the handling of the vehicle or vessel. The Applicant needs to retain documentation to support it met these criteria. A limited timeframe for vehicle and vessel storage is eligible if it is necessary to remove the item prior to being able to identify the owner. If the owner is identified, the Applicant should work with private property owners to pursue and recover storage and removal costs and credit FEMA the Federal share of any funds received.



NRCS EWP and USACE RIP

The **NRCS EWP** is an emergency recovery program designed to relieve imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural occurrences. Activities include, but are not limited to, providing financial and technical assistance to:

- Remove debris from stream channels, road culverts, and bridges
- Reshape and protect eroded banks
- Correct damaged drainage facilities
- Establish cover on critically eroding lands
- Repair levees and structures
- Repair conservation practices

The **USACE RIP** provides rehabilitation assistance for flood risk reduction structures.

Additional Information and Resources

FEMA [Debris Monitoring Guide SOP](#) (2021)

FEMA [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#) (PAPPG V.4)

FEMA [Schedule of Equipment Rates](#)

FEMA [Procurement Disaster Assistance Team Guidance and Information for Contracting Requirements](#)

For questions regarding Category A: Debris Removal, please email Recovery@VDEM.Virginia.gov.