



# FEMA Fact Sheet

## Debris Removal and Demolition

Debris removal is the clearance, removal, and/or disposal of items such as trees, sand, gravel, building components, wreckage, vehicles, and personal property. For debris removal to be eligible, the 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.
- Ensure the economic recovery of the affected community to the benefit of the community-at-large.
- Mitigate the risk to life and property by removing substantially damaged structures and associated appurtenances as needed to convert property acquired through a FEMA hazard mitigation program to uses compatible with open space, recreation, or wetlands management practices.

### Examples of eligible debris removal activities include:

Debris removal from a street or highway 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 natural (unimproved) wilderness areas.
- 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.

### Private Property Debris Removal

Debris removal from private property is generally not eligible 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 curb side 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.



FEMA

“FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.”