## *Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q:** How does my community get FEMA funding for debris removal?

**A:** Local governments and other eligible applicants should contact their State's Emergency Management officials to discuss obtaining, completing and submitting a Request for Public Assistance form. Upon receipt of this request form from the State, FEMA will assign a Public Assistance Coordinator (PAC) to work with each applicant.

**Q:** Are there specialists that can help my community manage its debris issues?

**A:** Yes. FEMA has debris specialists that can be mobilized to a declared disaster location to assist applicants with debris management. Contact your State or Tribal Emergency Management Office for assistance.

**Q:** What kind of debris training is available?

**A:** FEMA offers an Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Independent Study course, IS 632- Introduction to Debris Operations, which is a CD-ROM computer based training course. Applicants can enroll at www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/enroll.htm or by calling the Independent Study office at 301-447-1200. FEMA also provides classroom instruction in debris management for State, Tribal and Local officials at EMI in Emmitsburg, MD.

**Q:** Are the costs of contract monitoring eligible for FEMA funding?

**A:** Yes. Overtime incurred by applicant forces, reasonable costs for contracted debris monitoring services, and costs for temporary monitors hired by the applicant, are eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

**Q:** If I have an existing T&M contract in place, can I convert it to unit price after 70 hours without rebidding?

**A:** No. The T&M contract must be competitively rebid on a unit price basis. However, if a few hours of work remain, an extension may be provided in order to complete the work.

**Q:** Does FEMA pay for debris on privately-owned land?

**A:** Generally no, however, disaster-related debris from private property brought to the curbside for public pickup is usually covered.

**Q:** Does FEMA have to approve my debris removal and disposal contracts?

**A:** No. FEMA does not approve contracts; however, FEMA can provide technical assistance to applicants regarding proper contracting procedures. Prior to contract execution, it is recommended that you provide a copy of your contract to the State Emergency Management Office and FEMA.

**Q:** Is debris generated by post-disaster reconstruction activities eligible?

**A:** No. This type of debris is the owner's responsibility and generally covered by insurance.

## *Additional Resource Material*

The following reference guides can be downloaded from FEMA's website at www.fema.gov/rrr/pa/padocs.shtm or ordered from the FEMA Publications Office at 800-480-2520:

- FEMA 321 - Public Assistance Policy Digest
- FEMA 322 - Public Assistance Guide
- FEMA 323 - Applicant Handbook
- FEMA 325 - Public Assistance Debris Management Guide

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**Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or economic status. Anyone who believes he/she has been discriminated against should contact the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-525-0321.**

# DEBRIS MANAGEMENT

**Debris removal is a challenging and expensive component of disaster response and recovery. This brochure provides information on eligibility and debris management under FEMA's Public Assistance Program.**

**FEMA 329 / MAY 2003**

## Eligibility

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, at least one of the following must apply:

- Removal eliminates immediate threats to human lives, public health and safety;
- Removal eliminates immediate threats of significant damage to improved public and private property; and/or
- Removal ensures economic recovery of the affected areas to the benefit of the community-at-large.

Debris located on public property and rights-of-way is eligible. Eligible debris can include downed trees, sand, building wreckage, and damaged personal property.

Generally, debris removal from private property is not eligible under the Public Assistance Program; however, FEMA may approve debris removal from private property on a case-by-case basis when extenuating circumstances exist. Applicants should contact their State Emergency Management officials prior to debris removal for specific eligibility requirements. Debris that threatens private homes may be eligible under FEMA's Individual Assistance Program.

See FEMA's Debris Management Guide (FEMA 325) at www.fema.gov/rrr/pa/padocs.shtm for further information.

## Debris Management Planning

A comprehensive debris management plan is a critical element in efficient recovery efforts when a disaster strikes. Debris management planning activities include the following:

- Identify the responsible debris operations managers within your organization.
- Contact your State Emergency Management officials for eligibility and contracting guidance.
- Procure standby debris removal and disposal contracts prior to the disaster. (Costs must be reasonable)
- Identify debris removal monitoring resources and staffing.
- Identify potential types and quantities of debris.
- Identify waste disposal methods (i.e., incineration, chipping, recycling, etc.).
- Identify and prepare debris storage and reduction sites:
  - Consider the proximity and affect on residential areas, educational facilities, and environmental features.
  - Collect baseline data. Video/photograph site. Take soil and ground water samples. Investigate potential historic or archaeological issues.
  - Determine site layout for storage, burning, grinding and other operations.
  - Provide buffer zones between areas within the site.
  - Provide ingress and egress to the site such that trucks do not delay normal traffic.
  - Construct inspection towers at ingress and egress locations.
  - Establish an environmental remediation and site restoration plan.
- Obtain appropriate Federal, State and local permits.
- Implement a regular public information campaign that instructs the general public on guidelines for dealing with debris.
- Ensure that costs are thoroughly documented and records are retained appropriately.

## Debris-Related Contracts

Applicants may use their own forces or contract for debris removal and disposal work. When utilizing contractors, applicants should follow proper contracting procedures to ensure maximum reimbursement for eligible work.

The following important points should be considered during the acquisition and oversight of debris removal and disposal contracts:

- All contracts should have a well-defined scope of work, specified costs, basis of payment, and performance schedule.
- Contracts must be competitively bid.
- Long-term contracts should be written on a unit price basis.
- Complete and accurate records of contractor activities should be kept by the applicant and are essential for receipt of federal funds.
- Contractor activities must be monitored by trained and knowledgeable applicant representatives.
- Time and materials (T&M) contracts are only allowed for the first 70 hours of response. After that point, the contracts must be competitively re-bid on a unit price basis.
- Unit price contracts are based on weights or volume of debris hauled and should be used when the scope of work is not well defined.
- Lump sum contracts are allowed but should be used only when the scope of work is clearly defined. An example of clearly defined work would be removal and disposal of an existing wood chip pile at a processing site.
- Cost plus percentage of cost contracts are not allowed.
- FEMA does not certify or approve contracts or contractors.

## Debris Removal Monitoring

Monitoring of debris removal and disposal contractor activities is a critical component in successful debris operations and in the justification and documentation of any application for FEMA Public Assistance funding. A successful debris monitoring plan will include the following activities:

- The applicant should deploy trained debris monitors to observe and document contractor activities. At a minimum, these monitors should be stationed at all pick-up and disposal sites.
  - Applicants may use their own full-time workforce or hire temporary workers as monitors;
  - Applicants may contract with local firms to provide debris monitoring services;
  - Applicants may request FEMA/State staff assistance for debris monitoring activities.
- For unit price contracts, applicants should use load tickets to document weights and volumes of contractor vehicles. These load tickets should be treated as accounting forms and represent critical documentation when applying for FEMA funds.
  - When unit price payments are based on weight, provisions should be made for weighing trucks at the disposal site. Periodically confirm empty weight of trucks.
  - When unit price payments are based on volume, monitors should verify truck capacities and inspect trucks for proper loading and compaction.
- For T&M contracts, applicants should document equipment and manpower time and ensure efficiency in usage. There is no reimbursement by FEMA for "down time" of equipment or manpower.
- Monitors should be on the look out for inappropriate contractor activities including: improper loading of trucks; picking up ineligible debris; posting trucks with inaccurate load capacities; etc.