

## Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IV Debris Removal Quick Guide for South Carolina

Please review the guidelines below for reimbursement of debris removal costs you may incur as a result of Hurricane Florence occurring from September-ongoing. South Carolina Emergency Management Division Public Assistance Section is providing this information early in an effort to inform applicants on requirements for removing debris and reimbursement.

### The FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (April 2018, page 44) states:

**Debris Removal** activities, such as clearance, removal, and disposal, are eligible as Category A if the removal is in the public interest based on whether the work eliminates immediate threats to lives, public health, and safety, eliminates immediate threats of significant damage to improved public or private property, ensures economic recovery of the affected community to the benefit of the community at large or; mitigates risk to life and property by removing substantially damaged structures and associated structures and appurtenances as needed to convert property acquired using HMGP funds to uses compatible with open space, recreation, or wetlands management practices. Such removal must be completed within 2 years of the declaration date unless extended by the FEMA Assistant Administrator of the Recovery Directorate.

FEMA may reimburse reasonable costs associated with debris removal, such as labor, disposal fees, monitoring costs, equipment costs, material costs, or contract costs. Contracts must comply with Federal (2 CFR Part 200.317-326), State, and local procurement standards.

### FEMA Eligibility Requirements

You must be an **Eligible Applicant** as defined in the Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG), page 9, and have the legal responsibility, page 20, to be reimbursed for debris removal. For the most recent version of the PAPPG please go to:

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/111781>

Debris was generated by the disaster event and is located on improved property or right-of-ways of an eligible Public Assistance applicant.

### Permitting and Documentation Requirements

1. Debris **volume** or **weight** and **pickup location(s)**,
2. **Source documentation** (e.g. timesheets, work logs, equipment use logs, receipts, load tickets, monitoring logs, contracts, mutual aid agreements),
3. Final **disposal location** of debris (e.g. name, address and GPS coordinates for the permitted landfill, recycling facility, etc.),
4. **Temporary disaster debris staging areas:**
  - To **obtain approval for a new site** or to **activate a site pre-approved** by the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), please contact DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality (BAQ) at **(803) 898-4123**, DHEC's Bureau of Land and Waste Management (BLWM) at **(803) 898-2000** or the local Bureau of Environmental Health Services Office for more information. Contact information for regional staff may be found here: <https://www.scdhec.gov/about-dhec/contact-us>
5. If **burning** (vegetative debris only):
  - **Burn approval** for debris staging areas are required from South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Bureau of Air Quality (SCDHEC-BAQ). **Burn Notification:** State law requires that you notify the Forestry Commission prior to burning outdoors. Notifications are handled through the SC Forestry Commission and must follow DHEC regulations for open burning (Regulation 61-62.2). For information on outdoor burning, go to: <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/fireburn.htm>

- All burning **MUST** comply with regulations established by the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). In addition, there may be other local ordinances that apply in your area; be sure to check with your local fire department or county fire marshal prior to burning. It is best to burn between 10am to 3pm.

### Handling Debris

1. Segregate waste types (e.g. vegetative, C&D, white goods, household hazardous waste, electronic waste, animal carcasses, sand and mud, etc.).
2. Grinding, chipping, recycling, or disposals within permitted landfills are preferred methods of disposal over burning.
3. For questions regarding animal mortality waste disposal, contact SC Natural Resources Conservation Service online at <http://www.vetca.org/lacd/sc-lacd.cfm>.
4. Careful consideration of demolition, debris removal techniques and debris staging areas located within historically or culturally sensitive areas (i.e., historic cemeteries, battlefields, known archaeological sites, and/or buildings, structures, sites, objects, or districts listed in or eligible for listed in the National Register of Historic Places). Debris activities in these areas should be brought to the attention of FEMA EHP for further investigation. **Consultation with the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and interested Tribes**, may be necessary to determine appropriate measures to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Failure to follow these stipulations may jeopardize FEMA funding
5. Additionally, any debris removal or debris staging sites located on non-paved surfaces should be brought to the attention of FEMA PA for further investigation. When removing debris from these locations, the following Best Management Practices (BMPs) are recommended:
  - Utilize methods to avoid or minimize soil disturbance around the stump
  - When using heavy equipment, work from hard, firm and dry surfaces to the fullest extent possible, avoid sinking into soft soils.
  - No heavy machinery will be allowed on sensitive or at-risk landscapes and all staging should be limited to service roads, parking lots, or non-sensitive landscapes.
  - Tracked vehicles will be used whenever possible to reduce soil compaction and surface disruption.
  - Excavation of on-site materials for backfill or landscaping purposes is not allowed nor is on-site burial of debris. If it is necessary, void spaces must be backfilled with any original loose soil from the root ball or with clean fill, from an approved source.
  - If any potential archaeological materials are discovered, work must immediately cease and the Applicant or contractor must notify the State and FEMA-EHP. Archaeological materials consist of any items, fifty years or older, which were made or used by man. These items include, but are not limited to, stone projectile points (arrowheads), ceramic sherds, bricks, worked wood, bone and stone, metal and glass objects, and human skeletal materials.
  - **Consultation with the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and interested Tribes**, may be necessary to determine appropriate measures to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Failure to follow these stipulations may jeopardize FEMA funding.
6. Any change in the approved scope of work that increases the need for additional ground disturbance (e.g. additional demolitions) will require a re-submission of the project to FEMA for re-evaluation.

### **South Carolina State Point of Contact**

To coordinate your debris removal operations or for more information please contact Van Keisler, Director, at 803-898-0900 or [keislecv@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:keislecv@dhec.sc.gov)

### **Other Federal Agencies Debris Removal Programs**

#### **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

The Emergency Watershed Program (EWP) may be available to assist state agencies, county governments, towns and other subdivisions of state government to relieve storm caused impairments and imminent threats to watershed function. EWP may support removal of storm debris that poses a threat to health, life, or property. Not all storm debris in water is eligible for EWP. For more information, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/sc/home/> or contact Ann English, State Conservationist at 803-253-3935.

#### **USDA Farm Service Agency**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) may provide assistance with debris removal from farming or ranching operations through the Emergency Conservation Program, animal mortality thru the Livestock Indemnity Program, and assistance to eligible non-industrial private forest owners thru the Emergency Forest Restoration Program. For more information contact your county FSA office.

A listing of SC FSA county offices is available at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateoffapp?mystate=sc&area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>

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....and assistance to eligible non-industrial private forest owners thru the Emergency Forest Restoration Program at: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/emergency-forest-restoration/index>.

For more information contact your county FSA office. A listing of NC FSA county offices is available at: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?service=page/CountyMap&state=SC&stateName=South%20Carolina&stateCode=45>.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public site for debris management guidance, sample contracts and job aids available at:

<http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/EmergencyOperations/NationalResponseFramework.aspx>.

#### **More Information Online**

Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide, Version 3.1 (April 2018) has replaced all previous PA information: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/111781>.