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## Debris Removal – FEMA Standards

Debris removal must be documented to meet FEMA standards in order to receive reimbursement if an event becomes a federally-declared disaster. Documentation standards include:

- a) Monitoring and documenting the type and quantities of debris (i.e. take pictures, measure debris piles/truckloads, track addresses, road sections, GPS locations, etc.);
- b) Documenting where the debris came from;
- c) Documenting where the debris is going to including and staging areas and final disposition (i.e. landfill, chipped in place or other specific disposition);
- d) Ensuring adherence to all environmental requirements and/or restrictions for debris to include permits, hazardous waste tracking, invasive species and endangered species restrictions, stream restrictions, floodplain and wetland laws, regulations, Executive Orders and policies; and
- e) Tracking and documenting all related costs to include contracts and force account equipment and labor, time sheets, load tickets, etc. Contracting must comply with all applicable federal, State and local procurement policies.

**Emergency Work Categories.** Debris activities that are a direct result of an event resulting in a federally declared disaster and pose a threat to public safety are generally reimbursable. Debris removal is considered Emergency Work, designated as either CAT A: Debris Removal (e.g. collection and disposal of debris generated directly by the event, such as vegetative debris and flood damaged building contents)<sup>1</sup> or CAT B: Emergency Protective Measures (e.g. placing and removing sandbags, clearing storm drains immediately prior to a forecasted event or pushing debris to the roadside for emergency vehicles).

**Debris as Threat to Public Safety.** Direct removal of debris that does not pose a threat to public safety is not reimbursable (e.g. fallen trees in the natural wooded areas on public or private property). However, addressing fallen trees floating in a public waterway or that may endanger hikers on a public park path may constitute reimbursable debris activities. Debris removal from areas under the jurisdiction on another federal agency (e.g. USACE for navigable waterways) are generally not eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

**Debris on Private Property.** Direct debris removal from private property is not eligible for reimbursement unless previously approved by FEMA. However, if debris located on private property, including sandbags placed by homeowners, is moved to the public right of way, and the entity with jurisdiction deems it in the public interest (i.e. safety) to collect and dispose of that debris and makes that service available throughout the jurisdiction **for debris from the declared event**, that entity may seek reimbursement from FEMA for the costs associated with collection and disposal of that debris.

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<sup>1</sup> Debris activities that are indirectly related to the storm/flood event, such as demolition and construction debris associated with eligible repairs may be captured as part of the Permanent Work repair projects.