



FEMA

DISASTER ASSISTANCE STRATEGY 2007-2

I. TITLE: **Debris Removal Operations**

II. DATE: June 1, 2007

III. PURPOSE:

To establish a strategic framework for providing debris removal assistance in support of a Presidentially declared emergency or major disaster.

IV. SCOPE AND AUDIENCE:

This Strategy applies to emergencies and major disasters declared on or after the date of publication, above, and until superseded. It is applicable to all states eligible to receive assistance under sections 403 and 407 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (hereafter, the Stafford Act), 42 U.S.C. 5121-5206; all Federal agencies that may be directed by FEMA to provide such assistance; and all signatories to the National Response Plan.

V. AUTHORITY:

Sections 403 (Essential Assistance) and 407 (Debris Removal) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (hereafter, the Stafford Act), 42 U.S.C. 5121-5206, and implementing regulations at 44 CFR Part 206.

VI. DEFINITIONS/DESCRIPTIONS:

A. **Eligible Public Debris:** Disaster-related vegetative materials, construction and demolition materials, household goods, and other materials deposited (either by the event or a property owner) on *public* property (including public rights-of-way), and which present an immediate health and safety threat to the general public.

B. **Eligible Private Debris:** Disaster-related vegetative materials, construction and demolition materials, household goods, and other materials deposited (by the event) on *private* (personal or commercial) property, and which present an immediate health and safety threat to the general public. *Debris on private property does not typically present an immediate health and safety threat to the general public, so removal is normally not eligible for reimbursement.* However, the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) is authorized to approve the removal of debris from private property when he/she determines that such debris does present an immediate health and safety threat to the general public, and such removal would be in the



FEMA

DISASTER ASSISTANCE STRATEGY 2007-2

public interest. Debris removal from the roads and streets of a gated community will generally be in the public interest when the work is completed by an eligible PA applicant.

C. **Direct Federal Assistance (DFA):** Within the framework of this Strategy, DFA is debris removal assistance provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) or other federal agencies.

D. **Other Federal Agencies (OFA):** Within the framework of this Strategy, OFA refers to other (than FEMA) Federal organizations invested with varying authorities for debris management activities. They include the USACE, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, and Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Transportation.

E. **Debris Removal Contractor Registry:** A web-based database that reflects information about and the material and operational capabilities of debris removal contractors, including their organic assets. This registry was developed and fielded as a tool to assist local governments to plan in advance for, and establish the institutional capability to immediately and effectively manage, debris removal operations.

VII. STRATEGY:

A. OVERVIEW

1. State and local governments have principal responsibility for coordinating and managing debris removal operations, with eligible costs reimbursable under the Public Assistance program.

2. If a State and/or local government lacks the capability to initiate, coordinate and manage debris removal operations following a major disaster, FEMA can provide DFA through a mission assignment to another Federal agency (normally USACE) upon request, when it has been demonstrated that the State and/or local government lack the capability to perform or contract for the requested work.

a. *The duration of DFA mission assignments for debris removal will be limited to 60 days from the disaster declaration date.* The FCO may approve extensions for up to an additional 60 days, if a State or local government has demonstrated it lacks the capability to assume oversight of the debris removal mission. Additional extensions will require approval of the Assistant Administrator of the Disaster Assistance Directorate at FEMA Headquarters.

b. Cost-Share. The non-federal cost-share for debris removal costs (applied equally to both State/local-managed and DFA missions) will be as directed by the President.



FEMA

DISASTER ASSISTANCE STRATEGY 2007-2

(1) If the President has authorized 100% Federal funding for emergency work under sections 403 or 407 of the Stafford Act, the 100% Federal funding is based on actual debris clearance and/or removal work accomplished, either by direct Federal assistance or by grant assistance, during the designated period. Federal funding for Direct Federal Assistance is not based on when a task order was initiated. This work includes whatever clearance, pick up, hauling, processing and disposal activities FEMA authorizes.

(2) For work accomplished after the designated period either by DFA or by grant assistance, the Federal cost-share is at the prevailing rate for the particular disaster. In events where DFA is authorized, the State shall agree in advance to reimburse FEMA for the appropriate non-Federal cost-share of the work including the overhead of the Federal agency assigned the task of debris removal.

3. PA Pilot Program. As directed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act, 2007, Public Law 109-295, FEMA will be conducting a Public Assistance Pilot Program, beginning June 1, 2007, until December 31, 2008. The legislation sets forth three goals: reducing the costs to the Federal Government of providing assistance to State and Local governments, increasing flexibility in grant administration, and expediting the provision of assistance to States and local governments. Participation in the PA Pilot Program is open to all State and local governments, and Federally recognized Indian Tribes, that elect to participate in a particular project. This Program currently offers four distinct pilot opportunities, as follows:

- a. The provision of grants on the basis of estimates for large projects up to \$500,000.
- b. The provision of an additional five percent Federal costs share, not to exceed 100%, to applicants with a FEMA-approved debris management plan, and at least two pre-qualified debris and wreckage removal contractors identified prior to a disaster.
- c. The retention of any revenue from the salvage value of recyclable disaster debris, as an incentive to recycle debris.
- d. Reimbursement of the straight or regular-time salaries and benefits of an applicant's permanently employed staff performing eligible debris-related activities.

B. PRE-EVENT PREPARATION AND PLANNING

1. State and Local



FEMA

DISASTER ASSISTANCE STRATEGY 2007-2

(a) State and local governments are encouraged to plan for - and expected to manage - their own debris removal operations following an emergency or major disaster. DFA, in the form of USACE support, is designed *only* to address situations where the level of debris is catastrophic in scale, or where the capabilities of the State and/or local government to effectively manage such operations are overwhelmed.

(b) State and local governments are encouraged and expected to pre-qualify local or regional debris removal contractors, to assure the immediate availability of coordinated debris removal support following a debris-producing incident. To assist State and local governments identify available debris removal contractors, FEMA maintains a State/Local-accessible web-based Debris Removal Contractor Registry.

2. **Federal.** As the Emergency Support Function (ESF) 3 Coordinator and primary Federal provider of DFA in support of debris removal, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

(a) Maintains seven Debris Removal Planning and Response Teams (PRTs). Each PRT is pre-rostered and fully trained, and ready to deploy within 6 hours to begin operationally planning a Direct Federal Assistance mission.

(b) Maintains advance debris removal contracts, to ensure immediate availability of support.

(c) Will, 96 hours prior to projected hurricane landfall, commence development of a tailored, operational debris removal plan.

C. **PRE-LANDFALL.** Upon a Presidential declaration of a pre-landfall *Emergency* (including designation of Category A – Debris Removal and Direct Federal Assistance), FEMA and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will, *if warranted*:

1. Activate, if not previously accomplished, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 3 (Public Works and Engineering).

2. Deploy, if not previously accomplished, a team of debris experts to the FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) to initiate coordination and planning with the State.

3. Deploy (with State consent), debris experts to the State Emergency Operations Center to provide technical assistance and planning support on debris-related issues.



FEMA

DISASTER ASSISTANCE STRATEGY 2007-2

4. Begin, if not previously initiated, assessing the capabilities of threatened State and local governments to effectively coordinate and manage debris removal operations, as well as identify those potentially requiring DFA.

5. Deploy Debris Planning and Response Teams to affected States.

6. Initiate USACE's debris modeling to estimate volume of debris that may be expected given the pre-landfall predictions.

7. Commence development of a tailored, operational debris management plan.

8. As appropriate, activate ESF-3 Support Agencies and Advance Contract Initiative contractor(s) to coordinate and assist in debris management planning.

D. POST-LANDFALL. Upon a Presidential declaration of a post-landfall *Emergency or Major Disaster* (including designation of Category A – Debris Removal and Direct Federal Assistance), FEMA and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will, *if warranted*:

1. Activate, if not previously accomplished, ESF-3.

2. Deploy, if not previously accomplished, a team of debris experts to the RRCC to initiate coordination and planning with the State.

3. Deploy, if not previously accomplished (and with State consent) debris experts to the State Emergency Operations Center to provide technical assistance and planning support on debris-related issues.

4. Assess the capabilities of affected State and local governments to effectively coordinate and manage debris removal operations, and identify those requiring DFA.

5. Deploy, if not previously accomplished, Debris Planning and Response Teams to affected States

6. Refine debris model results and participate in Rapid Needs Assessment process to define possible requirements for assistance.

7. Work with State agencies to establish intergovernmental Debris Management Team, as appropriate, to integrate and coordinate debris operations under all authorities and to further develop the operational debris management plan. ESF-3 Support Agencies and Advance



FEMA

DISASTER ASSISTANCE STRATEGY 2007-2

Contract Initiative contractor(s) will be activated as appropriate to assist with planning and management efforts.

8. As required, provide Technical Assistance to State/local agencies developing their own debris management capabilities and contracts.

9. Commence debris removal operations under DFA, when State and local governments lack the coordination and management capability, and following request, approval, and mission-assignment.

VIII. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Disaster Assistance Directorate (Public Assistance Division).

IX. SUPERSESSION: This Strategy replaces and superseded FEMA Recovery Strategy RS-2006-2, *Debris Removal Operations*, dated July 24, 2006.

X. REVIEW DATE: One year from the date of publication.



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