



Oak Fire Consolidated Debris Removal Program

Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

1. What is the Consolidated Debris Removal Program?

The Consolidated Debris Removal Program (Debris Program) has two phases: Phase 1 is the removal of household hazardous waste and Phase 2 is the removal of other fire-related structural debris and eligible hazard trees.

In Phase 1, Mariposa County and the State of California have organized teams of experts and contractors from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to inspect your property and assess, make safe, and/or remove any household hazardous waste (HHW) that may pose a threat to human health, animals, and the environment such as batteries, herbicides, pesticides, propane tanks, asbestos siding, and paints. Phase 1 is automatic and includes all residential properties that the fires have destroyed.

In Phase 2, the Mariposa County Debris Removal Operations Center and its contractors will remove debris from destroyed structures, destroyed vehicles, and eligible hazard trees from your property if you have elected to participate in the County Program by signing a Right-of-Entry Permit.

2. What do I need to do?

Phase 1 (household hazardous waste): You do not need to do anything to have household hazardous waste removed from your property. Operations are automatic and already underway.

Phase 2 (remaining debris, ash, and hazard trees): Submit a Right-of-Entry (ROE) Permit. You will fill out the permit to grant government contractors access to your property to conduct the debris removal. The ROE is available in person at the Environmental Health Unit office at 5100 Bullion Street, Mariposa, CA or online at www.mariposacountyrecovers.org.



Phase 1: Household Hazardous Waste Removal

3. What is considered household hazardous waste?

Household hazardous waste is waste from houses that poses a threat to public health, animals, or the environment. Hazardous waste includes ignitable, toxic, corrosive, or reactive chemicals. Examples include pool chemicals, car batteries, antifreeze, used oil filters, solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, propane tanks, disinfectants, aerosols, paint, bleach, and ammunition.

4. Are burned electronics and appliances (white goods) included in the household hazardous waste clean-up?

Household hazardous waste removal crews will assess and remove e-waste during Phase 1. E-waste can include cathode ray tubes (CRTs) from televisions, computers, and other electronic devices. Larger appliances, such as washers, dryers, and refrigerators that the fire has destroyed, will be removed during Phase 2 as scrap metal.

5. Why not just have the contractors remove household hazardous waste as part of the general clean-up?

Household hazardous waste must be removed without delay to protect public health and safety. This is an emergency protective measure. Hazardous waste could have significant long-term environmental impacts and should not be combined with the waste from the general clean-up going to the landfill. Removal of hazardous waste from the fire debris prevents environmental contaminants from polluting the environment and protects the workers and the public from exposure during debris removal efforts. Removal crews are specifically certified to handle household hazardous waste.

6. How will I know if the household hazardous waste has been removed from my property?

DTSC will remove household hazardous waste and place a stake and laminated sign in front of your property indicating that household hazardous waste has been removed. Please note that this sign indicates only that the household hazardous waste removal phase has been completed. Site hazards such as asbestos, heavy metals, impalement hazards, or unsupported walls may still be present on the property. DTSC also maintains an online dashboard which is updated nightly showing which properties they have removed household hazardous waste from. The dashboard is available at www.mariposacounty.org/2654/Debris-Removal.



Phase 2: Debris Removal and Hazard Tree Removal

7. After I turn in an ROE to the County, what happens next?

First, Debris Removal Operations Center staff will review your ROE and ensure it has been filled out correctly. Staff may contact you to collect additional details if any information is missing or incomplete. Staff will also cross-check property records to verify that you are the property owner. Afterward, the ROE will be processed and scheduled for a site assessment.

8. Is the debris removal program only for houses that are completely destroyed?

This debris removal program is for fire-damaged or destroyed houses. Homes that have mostly burned, but may have walls still standing, may be eligible for the County's debris removal program on a case-by-case basis. When you submit your Right-of-Entry Permit, notify the representative that your structure is not entirely destroyed, so your property may be reviewed as quickly as possible. If insured, you should also include a "total loss" letter from your insurance company with your Right-of-Entry Permit.

9. When will my debris be cleared?

Crews have already begun the removal of hazardous household waste across the burned area. Removal of fire debris and hazard trees, other than hazardous household waste, is scheduled to start in late September or early October.

Several factors determine when your lot will be scheduled for debris removal. The Debris Removal Operations Center sets priorities within the community, such as properties near public use facilities and areas with sensitive receptors, such as schools, parks, and nursing homes. Secondly, they prioritize sites that are a threat to the environment, such as near creeks and other bodies of water. To maximize efficiency, the County will schedule the properties as best they can in groups to maximize efficiency and overall productivity to restore the communities as quickly as possible.

10. What is soil testing? Why is this being performed, and how? Who tests the soil?

Crews scrape 3 – 6" of soil from the ash footprint and samples of the remaining soil are sent to a State-approved lab for analysis. The results are compared against fire-specific clean-up goals, which are established based on background samples taken from areas in the vicinity that are not directly impacted by fire and established human health screening levels. If necessary, more soil is removed, and the site is retested until it meets the clean-up goals. All soil testing results are returned to Mariposa County Environmental Health for final review and validation.

11. After debris clearance and soil testing, what are the next steps?



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Once the debris removal contractors have removed all debris and soil testing meets the county's standards, contractors will return to install erosion control methods. If eligible hazard trees have been identified on your property, these hazard trees will be felled and removed. After all work has been completed, Debris Removal Operations Center personnel will conduct an onsite inspection of the property to confirm that all project specifications have been met. You will then be notified you that your property is safe and ready for rebuilding.

12. Once DTSC removes the household hazardous waste, can property owners hire their own contractors to remove the remaining debris?

Yes. If you wish to hire your own contractor to remove the remaining debris, you and your contractor must comply with the *Mariposa County Ash and Burn Debris Clean Up and Removal Process* and coordinate with Mariposa County Environmental Health.

13. I own a private-non-profit, or a commercial property, and it was damaged in the fire, is my property eligible?

While commercial properties are generally ineligible to participate in the Debris Program, these properties may be approved by the County on a case-by-case basis. The County will consider a commercial property owner's ability to remove debris from the property and whether the debris on the property presents an immediate threat to the health and safety of the community. If you are responsible for a fire-damaged private nonprofit or commercial property, please advise the County when submitting your ROE and be prepared to provide supplemental information if requested.

14. My house was destroyed in the fire. Can I go back onto my property to see if I can find any valuables or mementos?

Sifting through your property will not jeopardize your claims for disaster assistance, including eligibility for the Debris Program. However, sifting through structural debris can present severe health and safety risks. Property owners who desire to search debris for possible salvageable items should do so with caution and proper protective gear: eye protection, masks, gloves, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants. Residents should minimize contact with fire debris, which may contain materials that can be hazardous to their health.

Property owners may not begin their own clean-up operations, including moving debris outside of the structural footprint, separating debris into piles, or recovering certain items (such as metals) for recycling, in advance of the Debris Program. Doing so will render the property ineligible for further debris removal assistance, as the County cannot take over the clean-up after it has been started. Property owners should not commence any clean-up work until approved to do so by the County environmental health department.



15. Can residents be present during the clean-up of their personal property?

Yes, however, exclusion zones will be established surrounding the work area to ensure safety, and property owners may not enter these zones during debris removal. These zones will be marked with yellow and red tape. The safety of the general public and workers is a priority during debris operations. To prevent safety hazards, the public is encouraged to avoid areas where debris removal operations are underway.

16. How is the Debris Removal Operations Center protecting our rivers, streams, and aquifers from contamination?

The County's debris contractors will use erosion controls on the site, and silt collection devices around storm drains to minimize impacts on rivers, streams, and aquifers. They are also taking measures such as wrapping the debris in trucks to minimize particles traveling from the air to the water.

17. Who ensures compliance with worker safety regulations?

The County's and contractor's safety professionals ensure work complies with all applicable Cal/OSHA standards.

18. What environmental regulations are contractors required to comply with?

Contractors are generally required to comply with all State and Federal environmental protection laws and regulations. Because of the emergency nature of the clean-up, certain State permitting, and regulatory requirements may be waived in order to expedite operations. However, contractors must take all appropriate measures to protect natural and cultural resources, including endangered species, creeks and streams, and historical artifacts. The Debris Removal Operation Center contracts with resource professionals, such as biologists and archaeologists, to help ensure the environment is protected during debris removal.

19. I am a contractor and want to help, how can I learn about contracting opportunities?

Mariposa County will choose a prime contractor who will hire subcontractors. The county will make every effort to encourage the prime contractor to use local subcontractors.

More information about the contracting process will be available at:
<https://www.mariposacounty.org/bids.aspx>



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Payment and Insurance

20. Who will pay for the debris removal?

Mariposa County will pay all upfront costs and apply for reimbursement from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. However, if property owners have homeowner's insurance covering debris removal, owners must inform County officials by indicating that coverage on their ROE. Property owners will be required to remit that portion of their insurance proceeds specifically reserved for debris (see additional clarification below).

21. If I have homeowner's insurance, can I still participate in the debris removal program?

Yes. However, to avoid a duplication of benefits provided by government agencies, your insurance company will be required to provide payment from your policy designated for debris removal to the government. (See additional clarification below)

22. What portion of my homeowner's policy will the County collect for debris removal?

It depends on the policy that you have. There are generally two types of debris removal coverages in a homeowner's insurance policy:

- Specified Amount: If your homeowner's insurance policy contains a separate, debris-specific clause, the County will only collect the specified amount designated in the debris removal clause. These clauses are typically capped at a percentage of the coverage amounts listed in the policy (for example, five percent of the value of a primary structure, other structure, and personal property). You will not owe the County any additional money, even if the actual costs to remove the debris exceed the amount designated in your insurance policy for debris removal. The County will only collect the remaining insurance proceeds, if any after you have removed all fire-related debris.
- No Specified Amount: If your homeowner's insurance policy does not have a separate, debris-specific clause and instead includes the costs of debris removal in the total coverage, the County will only collect insurance proceeds for debris removal after you have rebuilt your home. The County will only collect any available insurance proceeds, if any, after the rebuild. If there are no remaining funds, the homeowner will not owe the County any additional money for debris removal.

23. If I participate in the Consolidated Debris Removal Program, will the County have the right to take all my insurance proceeds?

No. The County will only seek reimbursement from the insurance carrier as stated above. The County will not attempt to collect any insurance proceeds designated for rebuilding.



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24. Can I use my debris removal insurance policy to remove items that are ineligible for removal under the Consolidated Debris Removal program?

Yes. If you have a specified amount for debris removal in your insurance policy, you may use your insurance proceeds to remove fire-related debris that is ineligible for removal under the program (e.g., swimming pools, patios, etc.). The County will only collect the remaining insurance proceeds, if any after you have removed ineligible fire-related debris.

Suppose your homeowner's insurance policy does not have a separate, debris-specific clause and instead includes the costs of debris removal in the total coverage. In that case, you may use these proceeds to pay for the removal of fire-related debris that is ineligible for removal under the program. The County will only collect the remaining insurance proceeds, if any after you have removed ineligible fire-related debris.

In either scenario, the property owner must substantiate all expenditures.

Have more questions? Contact us at:

- **In Person:** Environmental Health Unit, 5100 Bullion Street, Mariposa, CA
- **Phone:** 1-209-966-2000
- **Email:** firedebris@mariposacounty.org