

[Updates/new items are in GREEN]

The Army Corps of Engineers estimates that more than 4,250,000 tons of structural ash, metal, debris, soil and foundations will be removed during this event. This total does NOT include vehicles or damaged trees.

DEBRIS REMOVAL PHASES

The consolidated Debris Removal Program resulting from the LA County Wildfires in January 2025 is a two-phase process:

Phase 1: [The Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) is tasked to conduct Household Hazardous Material (HHM) collection and disposal to protect public health and safety in impacted communities. HHM includes but is not limited to paints, solvents, pesticides, batteries, propane tanks and bulk asbestos-containing materials (ACM).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is executing Phase 2 of the federally funded debris cleanup effort on behalf of FEMA. Our responsibility is to remove fire-related debris from private properties, including hazardous trees, ash and structural remains. On a property-by-property basis, this work will follow the EPA's initial hazardous materials removal in Phase 1. However, we will not wait until all the EPA work is done throughout the burn areas before stepping in to begin their Phase 2 work. Phase 1 and Phase 2 work will happen at the same time across both the Palisades Fire and Eaton Fire areas.

What is Phase 2 of the debris cleanup?

Phase 2: The Corps of Engineers was tasked to support FEMA and the Consolidated Debris Removal Program in the affected cities and communities. Objectives of this mission include:

- 1) Reducing immediate threats to public health and safety,
- 2) Expediting economic recovery of the affected cities and communities.

These efforts involve the removal of ash, burned structural remains, hazardous materials, foundations, ACM, vehicles, vessels, contaminated soil and debris from private and public properties. And foundations, if specified on the right-of-entry (ROE) form by the owner.

When does Phase 2 begin?

We will begin debris removal as the EPA completes its work in individual neighborhoods and many residents completes right-of-entry (ROE) forms to opt in. Residents MUST opt for the Corps of Engineers contractor to enter your property for debris removal.

Within the communities affected by fire, both phases of work will be going on concurrently. Working in two phases has proven to expedite the work of clearing property of debris in the wake of multiple fire disasters. The Corps of Engineers and the

EPA are not waiting for Phase 1 to be finished across the region before we begin Phase 2.

On each individual property, the sequence goes in this order:

1. EPA needs to first clear hazardous material in Phase 1 to expedite the larger debris removal work of the Army Corps of Engineers in Phase 2.
2. The Army Corps of Engineers contractors will follow behind EPA and clear phase 2 debris as well as household hazardous material not removed by the EPA.

Do I have to wait until all hazardous debris is cleared everywhere in LA County for Phase 2 to start?

No, Phase 1 and Phase 2 will run concurrently. Once each cluster of properties is cleared under Phase 1, the Army Corps of Engineers can begin Phase 2 cleanup on properties where Right-of-Entries have been submitted, and ownership has been verified.

RIGHT OF ENTRY PROCESS QUESTIONS

What is a Right of Entry (ROE) form?

A Right of Entry form gives government contractors permission to access your property and begin the private property debris removal (PPDR) clean-up process. This process will include all fire-damaged debris. These forms were coordinated between Los Angeles County and the Army Corps of Engineers. The final deadline for submitting is March 31, 2025 (as of today).

Right-of-Entry forms and debris removal program information are available on the LA County [website](#).

What is the deadline to file a right-of-entry (ROE) form?

The deadline to “opt in” to the government-sponsored debris removal program is March 31, 2025.

What do I have to do to get the debris work done on my property?

Sign a Right-of-Entry (ROE) form giving the Army Corps of Engineers access to your property. The form can be found at recovery.lacounty.gov/debris-removal.

You should fill out the form as soon as possible, unless you are “opting out” of free debris removal by the Army Corps of Engineers. ***Debris removal by the Army Corps of Engineers cannot proceed until you submit your form.***

The form can be downloaded, completed online, or filled out at one of the FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers with the help of a Disaster Response Coordinator. [Current DRC locations can be found @ <https://recovery.lacounty.gov/recovery-centers/>].

If I fill out the ROE form first, will my home be cleaned first?

No, the debris removal process is not a first-come, first-served process. But getting your forms in early – and encouraging your neighbors to do so as well – will speed the work in your neighborhood.

Why do I need to complete a RIGHT-OF-ENTRY form for debris removal?

The government requires written consent from property owners to access their private property to perform the Phase 2 debris removal program. By submitting an RIGHT-OF-ENTRY form, homeowners are opting into the debris removal program and granting the government permission to access and enter onto their property to determine eligibility for the program and perform these critical functions to protect the public health and safety, and help homeowners begin their rebuilding process as quickly as possible.

[NOTE: While everyone is encouraged to sign up for the debris removal program so the maximum number of properties can be cleared, not everyone who applies for the debris removal program will qualify.]

Will debris removal by the Army Corps of Engineers be delayed if all residents in my neighborhood do not submit their Right-of-Entry forms at the same time?

No. However, neighborhood captains can reach out and encourage other property owners in their neighborhood to sign up at the same time. It is more efficient for the Corps of Engineers to clear lots when there is a cluster of homes to clear.

What happens if I own a condo? Does the entire building need to agree and file an Right-of-Entry form?

Generally, yes. Each owner of an affected unit must submit a Right-of-Entry form AND the building's Homeowners Association (HOA) must also submit a Right-of-Entry form.

What about trailer parks? As the owner of an individual trailer on leased land, do I need to file the Right-of-Entry or does the park owner need to file?

If the land under the trailer(s) is owned by an individual or entity beside the trailer owner, then the landowner must request removal.

What about apartment buildings?

The owner of the building must file a Right-of-Entry form.

OPTING IN

What happens after I opt in to the Right-of-Entry program?

If you opt-in, the debris removal will be performed for you by the Army Corps of Engineers, with no out-of-pocket cost. ***You do not need insurance to participate in the program.***

If I opt in, can I opt back out even after I submitted my Right-of-Entry (ROE) form?

Yes, if you submit the [Right-of-Entry \(ROE\) form](#) and then decide to opt out, you can do so. However, it may cause delays.

Does the opt in form require a wet signature of all the owners?

You can complete the OPT-IN form online at <https://recovery.lacounty.gov/debris-removal/>. Or, you may download and send the form in.

I am filling out the Right-of-Entry form for someone else who is unable to do so. What information do I need to provide?

If you are filling out the form for someone else, you must provide a signed and notarized document for the authorized agent. You will also need to provide your contact information on the form so the Army Corps of Engineers can get in touch with you if needed.

After I turn in a Right-of-Entry (ROE) to the County, what happens next?

First, the County will review your form and ensure it has been filled out correctly. Property records will be used to verify property ownership. Once the County validates the Right-of-Entry (ROE), it will transfer the Right-of-Entry to the Army Corps of Engineers. We then assign your parcel to our debris removal crews to work.

OPTING OUT

If I opt out, can I opt in again?

Once your opt-out application is approved and your permit is issued, you **cannot** opt back in. You will bear the full cost of debris removal and disposal.

If I do not fill out the Right-of-Entry form and opt out of Phase 2, will I be deprioritized for Phase 1?

No. The Opt-Out form is specific to Phase 2 only.

What happens if I opt out?

If you opt out of the program, you must receive a permit to proceed with debris removal from the County and your city, and then you will be responsible for hiring the appropriately licensed and certified contractors. You will be responsible for all costs of debris removal and asbestos abatement.

What steps are required and what qualifications does a contractor need to handle the debris removal if I opt out?

Once the EPA has completed its Phase 1 hazardous waste removal work, you will be responsible for hiring the appropriately licensed and certified contractors to remove the debris. This will include retaining a Certified Asbestos Consultant (CAC) to conduct a survey to identify asbestos in debris. If the CAC finds asbestos, you will need to hire an abatement contractor; and the CAC and abatement contractor will work together to

submit an asbestos cleanup plan to South Coast AQMD for review and approval. More information on this process can be found [here](#).

Your contractors will need to be approved by the County and your city, and you will be responsible for all costs of debris removal. The work must be completed in compliance with all local rules and regulations related to debris removal. Private contractors must also adhere to the same haul routes and safety standards being used by the Army Corps to minimize neighborhood disruption.

Please check in regularly for additional information and updates on specific regulations at recovery.lacounty.gov or call the LA County Public Works Fire Debris Hotline at 844-347-3332.

OPTING OUT BY DEFAULT

What happens if I do not complete any of the paperwork?

Not submitting a Right-of-Entry form by the specified deadline date of March 31, 2025, is the same as “opting out” of the program. That is, if property owners do not complete a Right-of-Entry form by the advertised deadline, they lose the opportunity for government-sponsored debris removal services. Homeowners will then have to conduct debris removal at their own expense.

LA County and participating cities will make attempts to contact the property owners prior to the deadline to inform them of options available. If necessary, the County and participating Cities may take steps to abate hazards not addressed by the property owner for the protection of public health and safety.

DEBRIS CLEANUP & REMOVAL

How is the debris removal process conducted?

Verified Right-of-Entry forms are grouped together and assigned to debris removal crews. Factors like property size, access, and the complexity of handling specific debris on site will determine how long each cleanup takes.

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

Yes. Sifting through your property wearing the appropriate protective gear will NOT jeopardize your claims for disaster assistance. Please do not remove non-salvageable debris from your property to reduce the risk of spreading ash.

For more information visit:

- cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR18-056.aspx
- publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/docs/respiratory-protection-508-new.pdf

How long does the cleanup take?

We are aiming for debris to be safely removed in two-to-three days PER PROPERTY. This timeline can change depending on the size of the lot or parcel, the amount of debris, inclement weather, and other factors, so it may take longer to remove debris. Other factors include the size of the lot, the amount of hardscape, the degree of damage, the condition of the foundation and whether you want to remove or try to maintain the foundation. None of those specifics will be available to the Army Corps of Engineers until they get on site.

Estimating how long it will take to clean up your property will be unknown until the contractor assesses the site. And for the same reasons, we cannot accurately predict at this time how long the overall cleanup effort will take.

Where will the debris be taken once removed from my property?

County officials will determine the landfill sites for the debris. See the county website for more information: <https://recovery.lacounty.gov/>.

Please note: Debris is being separated into metals, concrete, soil and ash. Recyclable materials, such as concrete and metal, are being recycled by area facilities. Other items are being disposed in approved waste landfills.

Disposal sites have specific criteria for the types of debris they can accept, such as fire-damaged material or concrete. Once each site determines what materials it can take, the debris will be disposed of accordingly in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. The Corps of Engineers' goal is to ensure safe and appropriate disposal while prioritizing community and environmental safety.

Which landfills will be used for fire-related debris and is the material considered hazardous?

County officials will determine the safest and most efficient truck routes for debris removal, and the landfill sites for the debris. Once routes are finalized, the County will communicate them to the public through official channels. *See the county website for more information: <https://recovery.lacounty.gov/>.*

Can I be present during the cleanup of my personal property if I am participating in the Corps of Engineers debris removal program (Phase 2)?

Your safety, as well as the safety of our contract workers, will be a priority during debris operations. While you may be present while we are conducting debris removal on your property during Phase 2, to reduce risks from safety hazards, we encourage you to stay outside the areas where debris removal operations are underway [unless you have been instructed by our contractors to be onsite].

What protective gear should I wear when visiting my home with the contractor?

While we cannot provide you with a definitive list of requirements specific to your personal needs and health, we suggest you wear protective gear such as eye protection,

gloves, close-toed shoes with a durable sole, and protective masks, such as an N-95 mask.

What is the “ash footprint” I keep hearing about on the news and why is it important? Will the Army Corps of Engineers contractors clear our entire lot or only the ash footprint?

The “ash footprint” is defined as the area where debris from your structures settled after the fire. Contractors will determine the ash footprint during the site assessment. Items outside the ash footprint – including patios, landscaping, non-hazardous trees, extended driveways, etc. – will NOT be removed under the private property debris removal program; however, each property will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

There are always exceptions, for example, trees or other vegetation may need to be removed for the safety of debris removal crews or debris might have landed on the driveway, which would necessitate removal.

What debris is being removed, and why?

Debris falls into two broad categories: Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and fire-related debris, such as timber, bricks, mortar, etc. HHW is being removed in the first phase of debris removal by the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#). As removal of HHW is completed, Phase II will start. In Phase II, Army Corps of Engineers contractors will follow behind the EPA and begin removing burned remnants of homes, public properties, and other contaminated structures.

What agencies are involved in the debris removal program?

The [Los Angeles County Department of Public Works](#) is coordinating the debris-removal process in conjunction with the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) and the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#).

Phase 2 is managed by the Army Corps of Engineers under the direction of the [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#) and in partnership with the [California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services](#) (CalOES).

CORPS OF ENGINEERS CONTRACTORS

Who is the contractor hired by the Army Corps of Engineers to complete the debris removal work and how will I know if they are legitimate?

ECC is the prime contractor for debris removal but will be hiring local subcontractors to help with the process. [See our “Contracting in a Disaster” [website](#) for more information.]

How are the debris removal teams protecting our rivers, streams and aquifers from contamination?

The debris removal teams will use erosion controls on the site as well as use silt collection devices around storm drains to minimize impacts to rivers, streams and aquifers. They are also taking measures such as wrapping the debris that is placed in trucks to minimize particles traveling from the air to the water.

Who ensures compliance with worker safety regulations?

Safety professionals and contractor safety staff ensure work complies with all OSHA, Cal/OSHA, CDC, and state and federal EPA standards.

What safety and environmental regulations are contractors required to comply with?

Contractors are required to comply with all local, state and federal laws and regulations regarding safety and the environment. Whenever there is a conflict between codes or regulations, the most stringent regulation is applied.

SCHEDULING AND OPERATIONS

How does the Army Corps of Engineers decide which properties will be cleared and when?

Contractors are responsible for planning their work, based on priorities set by Los Angeles County with input from city governments, to maximize efficiency.

Will the cleanup work and transport be conducted at night?

Yes.

What is the expected timeline for debris to be removed from a property?

The Army Corps of Engineers is aiming for debris to be safely removed in two-to-three days PER PROPERTY. This timeline can change depending on the size of the lot or parcel, the amount of debris, inclement weather and other factors, so it may take longer to remove debris.

Who is supervising the debris removal contractors? How do we know the work is being done properly?

The Army Corps of Engineers has a robust Quality Assurance (QA) program. Our QA representatives and supervisors are in the field to provide oversight of government contractors, ensuring compliance with the contract terms and approved debris removal operations plan, and correcting safety issues.

WHAT DEBRIS WILL BE REMOVED

What “debris” does the Army Corps of Engineers remove?

Corps of Engineers contractors are responsible for removing:

- Chimneys
- Hazardous trees (dead or at risk of dying within five years)

- Fire ash and debris
- Foundations (if specified in the Right-of-Entry)
- Up to 6-inches of Soil in the ash footprint (if necessary and safe to do so)
- Household hazardous materials not removed in Phase 1 by the EPA

How will you decide which properties are cleared first?

Properties cannot begin Phase 2 until they have received a Phase 1 clearance from the USEPA. As Right-of-Entrys are collected and ownership is verified, the Army Corps of Engineers will batch properties together for clearing with the objective of moving as quickly as possible and addressing health and safety issues as a top priority.

Will the Corps of Engineers demo my house?

If the home is substantially damaged by the fire and requires demolition, FEMA will make the determination on eligibility. If the home is found to be eligible, Corps of Engineers will demo and remove the fire debris.

What happens with hazardous trees?

Hazardous trees are assessed by arborists and removed if they are dead or expected to die within five years. This is done to ensure safety and prevent future risks.

Will my pool be drained as part of the Government-Sponsored Program?

The Army Corps of Engineers advises that pool water may be pumped out of swimming pools for wetting the debris which is used to keep dust down during the debris removal process. Any fire debris in the pool will be removed by the contractor. Contractor will place metal fencing completely around the pool where feasible and notify the homeowner. This only pertains to pools adjacent to structures that are considered within the ash footprint.

Are driveways being removed as part of the program?

Driveways are not eligible for the private property debris removal program and contractors will not remove them; however, there may be instances where portions of a driveway were in the ash footprint and must be removed.

Are burned cars being removed as part of the program?

Yes, burned cars on private property are being removed as part of the Consolidated Debris Removal Program. USACE, FEMA and CALOES are working with the California DMV on this effort. In some cases, the car may be one of the last items removed during the final preparation phase.

How will I know when Army Corps of Engineers will clean my property?

The Army Corps of Engineers will contact you a few days before your property is scheduled for cleanup. The day before work begins, the Army Corps of Engineers will

reach out again to see if you are interested in observing the process from a safe distance.

If my property was not destroyed, am I eligible for soil removal and other Phase 2 cleanup?

Phase 2 cleanup is offered to eligible properties, as determined by FEMA. If a residence is standing and habitable, it likely will not be eligible. A destroyed structure of at least 120 square feet must be on the parcel to qualify for free debris removal by the Army Corps of Engineers. If you are unsure if you are eligible and wish to opt in to Phase 2, you are encouraged to complete the Right of Entry form.

WHAT WON'T BE REMOVED?

What will the Army Corps of Engineers not remove?

Army Corps of Engineers contractors will NOT remove slope-stabilizing structural walls and other foundational elements if their removal could destabilize the property or neighboring areas.

Will the Corps of Engineers remove damaged hardscape, including swimming pools, driveways, chimneys, and foundations?

You will need to indicate on the Right-of-Entry whether you want your foundation removed. The Army Corps will also remove chimneys.

In-ground pools and driveways will not be removed.

SAFETY

How does the Army Corps ensure safety during debris removal?

The Army Corps of Engineers follows strict protocols for:

- Identifying hazardous trees and structures
- Using appropriate equipment and trained personnel
- Complying with environmental safety standards to prevent harm to workers, residents, and neighboring properties

The Army Corps of Engineers follows strict procedures to ensure public safety during private property debris removal. When removing fire ash and debris, the material is placed in the bed of a dump truck inside a heavy-duty plastic liner. This liner is tightly wrapped around the ash, and a tarp is then lowered over the truck to ensure the ash remains contained during transit. You will hear the Army Corps of Engineers teams call this process "burrito wrapping" because of the way the plastic is folded over itself to contain the debris.

The Army Corps of Engineers also utilizes the "wet method" for debris removal, which involves applying water and mist to keep ash on the ground and prevent it from becoming airborne. This approach helps mitigate risks to the community, particularly for standing homes that have been reoccupied.

MY HOME IS STILL STANDING

Is the Government-Sponsored Consolidated Debris Removal Program only for houses that are completely destroyed?

The debris removal program is only for fire-destroyed houses as identified by local, state or federal agencies. If you are unsure if your property qualifies for the debris-removal program, submit a Right-of-Entry form to roe@dpw.lacounty.gov so your property may be assessed. For more information visit recovery.lacounty.gov.

My home is still standing, do I need to fill out the Right-of-Entry form?

The debris removal program is only for fire-destroyed houses as identified by local, state or federal agencies. A fire-destroyed house could still have walls standing. If you are unsure if your property qualifies for the debris-removal program, submit a Right-of-Entry form to roe@dpw.lacounty.gov so your property may be assessed. For more information visit recovery.lacounty.gov. If you have a destroyed structure on your property, please fill out and submit the [Right-of-Entry form](#).

If my home is standing but I have a burned homes immediately next to it, do I need to complete the Right-of-Entry form?

No, only properties with destroyed or heavily damaged structures that qualify for the Private Property Debris Removal Program will need to fill out an Right-of-Entry form.

I don't have any burned structures on my property, but I have burned trees, am I eligible for the Government-Sponsored Consolidated Debris Removal Program?

No. This debris removal program is for fire-destroyed houses only as identified by local, state or federal agencies.

If my home is undamaged structurally, but there is smoke damage, is there a reason for me to execute a Right-of-Entry?

No, smoke damage alone would not qualify for the Private Property Debris Removal Program. You can also contact directly the LA County Public Works Fire Debris Hotline at 844-347-3332

COSTS & INSURANCE

What if I don't have insurance?

If you don't have insurance, you can opt in to the Army Corps of Engineers debris removal program (Phase 2) at **no cost to you**. If you opt out, you will be responsible for the cost of clearing the debris from your property.

Debris removal by the Army Corps of Engineers has no cost to you regardless of your insurance coverage or whether you have any insurance at all. *[See your Right-of-Entry form for more information on insurance.]*

Do I need to get estimates from my own contractor and/or an insurance settlement before deciding?

It is up to you whether to seek other advice about doing this work yourself, but we would strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of this free federal program to safely remove all debris from your property.

Can I get an estimate from the Army Corp of Engineers before I decide to opt in or opt out of the debris removal program?

No. The Phase 2 debris removal program comes without any additional out-of-pocket expense for the homeowner.

Will opting in to debris removal impact other benefits I am eligible for?

There is NO IMPACT to your ability to receive benefits from other Individual Assistance programs if you opt in to the debris removal program.

DO-IT-YOURSELF

Can I clear the hazardous materials myself? If not, why not?

No, you are not legally entitled to do so. Federal, state and local officials have determined that the fastest, safest way to accomplish this work is by relying on trained EPA experts to get it done. Private citizens are not allowed to drop hazardous materials at landfills. Controlling the disposal of these hazards needs to be subject to strict quality control to ensure safety during transport through other communities and to avoid illegal dumping that has occurred in other disasters and threatened community safety.

Can I opt into the government debris removal program and simultaneously pursue my own debris removal?

No, the government will not conduct debris removal on any property where the owner or any of its contractors or agents are undertaking separate debris removal functions. The reason for this is that structural fire debris removal is subject to various rules and regulations and the government cannot take any action that could be construed as assuming liability for noncompliant work.

If I opt out and hire my own company to handle debris removal, can they start immediately?

The start would come after Phase 1 is complete on your property and the permit has been granted.

VEHICLES

My car was on the street and was burned. Where's my car?

For vehicles left in the right-of-way following the fires: The California Highway Patrol removed vehicles that were left on the street and destroyed by the Eaton Fire and Palisades Fire. To find your vehicle, contact the California Highway Patrol Dispatch at 323-259-3200.

My vehicle (boat, car, RV, motorcycle, trailer) is still on my property/in my garage and was burned. What will happen to my vehicle?

Any “titled property” with a VIN (vehicle identification number) such as a motorcycle, car, RV, will be hauled to a staging area for adjudication by CHP. CHP will notify the rightful owner as identified through the VIN’s registration and provide a “junk title” for the so the titled property can be disposed of and insurance claims filed.

FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

What if I suspect fraud is being committed by a contractor?

The Corps of Engineers takes fraud, waste and abuse complaints seriously. Any suspected fraud should be reported to the Corps of Engineers Office of the Inspector General <https://www.oig.ca.gov/connect/report-misconduct/>.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

Who can I call for more information?

Property owners with questions about eligibility, operations or other concerns can contact the USACE Debris Removal Information Line at (213) 308-8305.

The line is staffed from 6 a.m. – 6:30 p.m., 7 days a week and is the gateway to the Issue Resolution Process. (Response times will vary due to call volume.)

You can also email us at: socalwildfires@usace.army.mil.