

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Consolidated Debris Removal Program?

- A. The Consolidated Debris Removal Program has two phases: removal of household hazardous waste and removal of other fire-related debris.

In **Phase I**, county, state and federal agencies have organized teams of experts from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the California State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to inspect your property and remove any household hazardous waste that may pose a threat to human health, animals, and the environment such as batteries, asbestos siding, and paints. **Phase I** is automatic and includes both residential and commercial properties that have been destroyed by the fires.

In **Phase II**, Cal OES, FEMA and local officials are coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and CalRecycle to execute contracts and conduct fire-related debris removal from your property if you have elected to participate in the program by signing a Right of Entry Form.

2. What do I need to do?

- A. **Phase I:** Household hazardous waste: Operations are already underway.
Phase II: Debris and ash removal: Contact county officials to get a Right-of-Entry (ROE) which grants government contractors access to your property. Check your county's website for information on how to obtain the form or visit wildfirerecovery.org

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

- A. **Safe sifting through your property will NOT jeopardize your claims for disaster assistance.** Property owners who desire to search debris for possible salvageable items should do so with caution and with 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 your health. For more information visit:

<https://calepa.ca.gov/disaster/fire/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/index.html>

<https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2016/10/Disaster-Documents-FireAsh.pdf>

4. When will the debris removal begin?

- A. Crews have already begun removal of hazardous household waste. Removal of fire debris, other than hazardous household waste, is scheduled to begin by Nov. 1, 2017.

5. Who will pay for the debris removal?

- A. All initial costs will be paid by state and federal agencies. However, if property owners have insurance that specifically covers debris removal owners must

inform local officials, and they may be required to remit that portion of the insurance proceeds that are specifically reserved for debris.

- 6. Once the household hazardous waste is removed by US EPA or DTSC, can property owners hire their own contractors to remove the remaining debris?**
 - A. Yes. If you decide to remove fire-related debris from your property, you must obtain all the necessary permits and environmental clearances from your local government.

- 7. Can residents be present during the cleanup of their personal property?**
 - A. The safety of the general public and workers is a priority during debris operations. To prevent safety hazards, the public is encouraged to stay away from areas where debris removal operations are underway. Exclusion zones will be established surrounding the current work area to ensure safety of the public.

- 8. How will I know if household hazardous waste has been removed from my property?**
 - A. Debris removal teams will mark the property indicating that household hazardous waste has been removed.

- 9. Is the debris-removal program only for houses that are completely destroyed?**
 - A. This debris removal program is for fire-damaged or destroyed houses, as directed by local government. If you are unsure if your house qualifies for the debris-removal program, submit a Right-of-Entry form to your local government for assessment.

- 10. What is considered household hazardous waste?**
 - A. Household hazardous waste is waste from houses that poses a threat to public health, animals, or environmental. Hazardous waste includes chemicals that are ignitable, toxic, corrosive and reactive. Examples include pool chemicals, car batteries, antifreeze, used oil filters, solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, propane tanks, disinfectants, aerosols, paint, bleach, and ammunition.

- 11. Are burned electronics and appliances (white goods) included in the household hazardous waste cleanup?**
 - A. Teams handling hazardous waste will not remove appliances or electronic wastes, such as TV and computer monitors, computers processing units or cell phones. These materials will be removed as part of the overall debris removal process.

- 12. Why not just have the contractors remove household hazardous waste as part of the general clean up?**
 - A. Household hazardous waste must be removed without delay to protect the public health and safety. Additionally, hazardous waste could have significant long-term environmental impacts and should not be combined with the waste from the general clean-up that is going to the landfill.

Removal of hazardous waste from the fire debris prevents these 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.

13. Will USACE use local contractors in this effort?

- A. Yes. USACE will use a prime contractor who will hire local contractors. The prime contractor for the 2017 California wildfire recovery is Environmental Chemical Corporation. Local contractors can register as subcontractors at the primary contractor website: ecc.net.

14. Will USACE use California State prevailing wage, Davis-Bacon, or GSA rate?

- A. The USACE contractor is required to pay Davis-Bacon or California state prevailing wage, whichever is higher.

**Debris Removal Program
Frequently Asked Questions About Insurance**

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

- A. Yes. However, to avoid a duplication of benefits provided by the state or federal government, your insurance company may be required to provide payment from your policy that is designated for debris removal.

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

- A. 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: One type of debris removal insurance coverage contains a separate, specific debris clause, typically capped at a percentage of the coverage amounts listed in the policy (for example, 5 percent of the value of a primary structure, other structure, and personal property.) If you have this type of policy, the county will only collect the specified amount designated in the debris removal clause. You will not owe the county any additional money, even if the actual costs to remove the debris exceeded the amount designated in your insurance policy for debris removal.

No Specified Amount: Another type of debris removal insurance policy does not have a specified amount but includes the costs of debris removal in the total proceeds provided for the primary structure, other structure, or personal property. If you have this type of policy, the county will only attempt to collect insurance proceeds for debris removal after you have rebuilt your home. The county will only collect any money that remains in your insurance policy, if any, after the rebuild. The homeowner will not owe the county any additional money for debris

removal.

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

- A. No. There have been many rumors that if a homeowner participates in the Consolidated Debris Removal Program, the county will take all of the homeowner's insurance proceeds or the insurance proceed designated to rebuild their home. **This is simply not true.** The county will only seek reimbursement from the insurance carrier as stated above.

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

- A. If you have a specified amount for debris removal in your insurance policy (for example, 5 percent of the value of a primary structure, other structure, and personal property), you may use your insurance proceeds first to remove fire related debris that is ineligible for removal under the program (e.g., swimming pools, patios, trees, etc...). The county will only collect any money that remains in your insurance policy, if any, after you have removed ineligible fire related debris.

If you have a policy that includes the costs of debris removal in the total proceeds provided for the primary structure, other structure, or personal property, 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 any money that remains in your insurance policy, if any, after the rebuild and removal of ineligible fire related debris. The homeowner will not owe the county any additional money for debris removal.

The property owner will be required to substantiate all expenditures.

If you have any questions regarding the Consolidated Debris Removal Program, send them to debrisquestions@caloes.ca.gov or visit our website at wildfirerecovery.org.