



FEMA

4831DR-VA Tropical Storm Helene
Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP)



Environmental and Historic Preservation Fact Sheet: Debris Removal Activities

General Debris Removal Guidance

When planning and implementing debris removal operations, it is important to record the full operation from “cradle to grave.” FEMA requires that eligible applicants **document the following information**:

- Location of collected debris in GPS coordinates.
- Debris type.
- Location of temporary staging sites in GPS coordinates, if applicable.
- Method of transportation
- Method of final disposal (chipping, mulching, licensed facility, etc.)
- Final disposal location in GPS coordinates.

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Links

- [Solid Waste Permits](#)
- [Severe Weather Debris Management](#)
- [Debris Burning](#)

United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

- [Spongy Moth Quarantine Map](#)

Use of Temporary Debris Management Sites

The use of temporary debris management sites may be necessary during removal operations. FEMA advises localities meet the below conditions to ensure compliance with federal environmental and historic preservation laws and Executive Orders:

1. Site is located **outside** of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). See the [FEMA Flood Map Service Center](#) to determine if your location(s) are in the SFHA.
2. Obtain an emergency permit, where required, from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Please visit [Severe Weather Debris Management](#) under the “For Localities” tab for permit application guidance. Note: An emergency permit is not required for vegetative waste management sites that meet certain exemption criteria. DEQ can issue an exemption letter for documentation.
3. The site is placed on pre-disturbed hardened surfaces (asphalt, concrete, gravel lots, etc.). Sites should be monitored and secured to ensure debris from the emergency event is being managed.

Invasive Species

Some Virginia communities fall under federal quarantine to limit the movement of the invasive Spongy Moth. Debris collected, particularly vegetative debris, should not be transported outside of the designated [quarantine zone](#). Please consult the mapper linked above to see if your community is within a quarantine zone.

Work in Water

- Some work in waters (e.g. rivers, streams, wetlands) may require a Department of the Army permit, pursuant to the Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and/or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.
- Some work in waters in response to a natural disaster may qualify for [Nationwide Permit 3](#).
- Some work in waters may also be exempt from the permitting requirements of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, 33. [Note: these exemptions do not apply to work conducted in waters subject to the Rivers and Harbors Act requirements.]
- If you need assistance in determining if a permit is required and/or need documentation from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to support a FEMA financial assistance request, please refer to the corresponding [USACE Post-Helene Guidance](#).

Endangered Species

During emergency debris removal operations, it is important to track any work that may take place in sensitive habitats (such as in waterways and standing trees) as it relates to threatened and endangered species. For activities occurring in these types of areas, please fill out the [Endangered Species Act Debris Form](#). Care should be taken in forested areas as well as areas with rivers and streams, where the following best management practices (BMPs) would apply:

- Limit the removal of standing trees to the greatest extent practicable.
- Minimize instream work to the greatest extent practicable.
- Photograph areas before and after debris removal activities occur if the above two BMPs are not practicable.

Additional Resources: For more information on EHP review and FEMA grant assistance, contact your State Emergency Management Agency or Tribal office or visit <http://www.fema.gov/environmental-planning-and-historic-preservation-program>.