



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Full Service Debris Removal Program Enrollment Process

1. What is the Full Service Debris Removal Program?

The Full Service Debris Removal Program (“Full Service Program”) has two phases: Phase 1 - removal of household hazardous waste and bulk asbestos-containing material and Phase 2 - the removal of other fire-related building debris and trees that a certified arborist determines are dead or likely to die within five years as a result of the fire and that present a threat to public roads or other public infrastructure (“hazard trees”).

In **Phase I**, county governments, state and federal agencies have organized a team of experts and contractors from the New Mexico Environment Department and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“US EPA”) to assess your property, make safe, and/or remove any household hazardous waste (“HHW”) and bulk asbestos-containing material (“ACM”) that may pose a threat to human health, animals, and the environment such as batteries, herbicides, pesticides, propane tanks, asbestos siding, and paints.

In **Phase II**, New Mexico Environment Department (“NMED”), New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (“DHSEM”), Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (“USACE”) and local officials will coordinate through a Debris Management Task Force to conduct fire-related debris removal from your property.

2. What do I need to do?

Right of Entry (ROE) permits are available at the following county buildings:

- Mora County: 1 Courthouse Drive, Mora
- San Miguel County: 500 W National Ave, Suite 106, Las Vegas.

ROEs are available electronically at <https://www.nmdhsem.org/2022-wildfires/>. You will fill out the permit to grant government contractors access to your property to conduct the debris removal. Those forms are then either turned into the county locations listed above or can be emailed to HAZWASTE.BUREAU@NM.GOV. All ROE's will require a photocopy of the property owner's government issued photo ID, if available.



After I turn in a ROE to my county government, what happens next?

First, your county government will review your ROE and ensure it has been filled out correctly. If any information is missing or incomplete, your county government may contact you to collect additional details. Your county government will also cross check property records to verify that you are the property owner. Afterwards, the ROE will be transferred to the US EPA for processing and scheduling of Phase I debris removal.

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

US EPA will remove household hazard 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 hazard waste removal phase has been complete. Site hazards such as asbestos, heavy metals, impalement hazards, standing chimneys, or unsupported walls may still be present on the property.

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

This debris removal program is for fire-destroyed houses. If you are unsure if your structure qualifies as fully-destroyed, please contact your county government for assessment as soon as possible.

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 chemicals that are ignitable, toxic, corrosive, or reactive. Examples include pool chemicals, car batteries, antifreeze, used oil filters, solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, propane tanks, disinfectants, aerosols, paint, bleach, and ammunition.

Are burned electronics and appliances (white goods) included in the household hazardous waste cleanup?

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 have been destroyed by the fire will be removed during Phase 2 as scrap metal.

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 that is going to the landfill.

Removal of hazardous waste from the fire debris prevents environmental contaminants from polluting the environment and protects the workers and public from exposure during all debris removal efforts. Removal crews are specifically certified to handle household hazardous waste.

4. When will my debris be cleared?

The process for debris removal begins with the signed ROE permit. Your county government will cross check property records and your photo ID to verify that you are the property owner. Afterwards, the ROE will be transferred to the US EPA and USACE for processing and scheduling based on numbers and areas from which ROEs are received. Removal of hazardous household waste is scheduled to start in late June 2022. USACE will begin Phase II of debris removal soon thereafter.

There are a number of factors that determine when your lot will be scheduled for debris removal. The county government sets priorities within the community, such as properties that are near public use facilities and areas with sensitive areas, or that are a threat to the environment, such as near creeks and other bodies of water. To maximize efficiency, the Counties, State, EPA and USACE will schedule the properties as best they can in groups to maximize efficiency and overall productivity to restore the communities as quickly as possible.

5. Can property owners hire their own contractors to remove household hazardous waste, asbestos-containing material and the remaining debris?

Yes. If you decide to remove all fire-related debris from your property, you must obtain the Opt-Out Form, all necessary permits and environmental clearances from your county and state government before your contractors start any work. Further guidance can be found in the State of NM Opt-out Debris Removal Program Cleanup Standards found at <https://www.nmdhsem.org/2022-wildfires/>. Initiating debris removal impacts eligibility for the Full Service Program if you later decide to Opt-In.

6. I own a private, nonprofit, 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 Full Service Program, these properties may be approved by FEMA on a case by case basis. FEMA will consider a commercial property owner's ability to remove debris from the property, and in conjunction with the State and Federal Environmental



Programs determine 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 your county government when submitting your ROE and be prepared to provide supplemental information as requested.

Health and Safety

7. 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 Full Service Program. However, sifting through structural debris can present serious health and safety risks. Property owners who desire to search debris for possible salvageable items should do so with caution and with proper protective gear, including eye protection, masks, gloves, long-sleeved shirts, closed toe shoes 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 your county or state government public health website or visit the DHSEM's link at <https://www.nmdhsem.org/2022-wildfires/> and access the Dangerous Debris Fact Sheet.

Property owners who wish to participate in the Full Service Program may not begin their own cleanup operations, including moving debris outside of the structural footprint, separating debris into piles, or recovering certain items (such as metals) for recycling. Doing so will render the property ineligible for further debris removal assistance, as the government cannot take over the cleanup after it has been started. Property owners who do not wish to participate in the Full Service Program should submit an opt-out form to their county government and comply with the Opt-Out Debris Removal Program Cleanup Standards found at <https://www.nmdhsem.org/2022-wildfires/>

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

Yes, however, exclusion zones will be established prior to debris removal to ensure safety. Property owners may not enter these zones during debris removal. The safety of the general public and workers is a priority during operations. To prevent safety hazards, the public is encouraged to stay away from areas where debris removal operations are underway.



9. Who ensures compliance with worker safety regulations?

The NMED Occupational Health and Safety Bureau (“OHSB”) safety professionals ensure all work complies with applicable NMED, OHSB and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (“OSHA”) standards.

10. What environmental laws and regulations are applicable for debris removal efforts?

All County, State and Federal environmental protection laws and regulations are applicable to debris removal and proper disposal. All entities are required to take all appropriate measures to protect natural and cultural resources, including protecting endangered species, creeks and streams, and historical artifacts. The agencies employ resource professionals, such as biologists and archaeologists, to help ensure the environment is protected during debris removal.

If you have any questions regarding the Full Service Program, send them to hazwaste.bureau@state.nm.us or visit our website at <https://www.nmdhsem.org/2022-wildfires/> or call 1-800-432-2080.