

**FEMA****RECOVERY****FACT SHEET****9580.206****PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR ANIMAL  
CARCASS REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL****Overview**

Generally, FEMA will provide assistance for the removal and disposal, which may include open burning, incineration, or rendering, of animal carcasses resulting from a Presidentially declared major disaster, Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) declared fire, or emergency declaration when animal carcass removal and disposal is necessary to reduce or eliminate an immediate threat to life, protect public health and safety, and/or to protect improved property. This assistance is authorized under Sections 403, 407, and 502 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). Other Federal agencies may also provide assistance.

Local, state, territorial, and tribal governments are encouraged to prepare for animal carcass removal and disposal by developing Animal Carcass Management Plans as addenda or annexes to their Debris Management Plans if animal carcasses are not already included in their debris management plan. Animal carcasses do not have to be collected separately from other disaster generated debris to be eligible for removal and disposal.

**Eligible FEMA Assistance**

In Stafford Act declared emergencies, major disasters, or FMAG declarations that authorize Public Assistance Category A (debris removal) and/or Category B (emergency protective measures), eligible applicants may be reimbursed for certain carcass removal and disposal activities. In order to be eligible for reimbursement, carcass removal and disposal activities must be:

- Required as a direct result of a declared major disaster or emergency;
- Located within the designated area of the declaration; and
- The legal responsibility of an eligible applicant at the time of the declared event.

Additionally, carcass removal and disposal activities must be necessary to reduce or eliminate an immediate threat to life, protect public health and safety, and/or to protect improved property.

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Removal and disposal activities must be compliant with all Federal, state and local laws, including the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Migratory Bird Treat Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. FEMA will conduct an Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) review in coordination with other Federal agencies as appropriate before funding is obligated to ensure that carcass disposal is carried out in compliance with these laws and regulations.

Eligible applicants may be reimbursed for costs directly tied to the performance of eligible work. Such costs must be:

- Reasonable and necessary to accomplish the work;
- Compliant with all Federal, state and local requirements for competitive procurement; and
- Reduced by all applicable credits, such as insurance proceeds or salvage values.

### Direct Federal Assistance – Stafford Act

FEMA may provide direct Federal assistance (DFA) through a mission assignment to another Federal agency to perform carcass removal and disposal work or to provide technical assistance regarding proper carcass management. for major disasters and emergency declarations only. DFA is not available for FMAG declarations. The grantee must request the direct Federal assistance and certify that it lacks the capability to perform or contract for the requested work. If another federal agency has authority to perform the work requested, FEMA will not mission assign the work.

### Other Federal Agency Assistance

Generally, FEMA will not provide funding when another Federal agency has the authority to provide assistance for debris or carcass removal and disposal under its own authorities:

#### *U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)*

- In some instances, USDA may provide for partial reimbursement to individual landowners under existing programs; these programs are developed with local authorities as the need arises.
  - The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) may be able to provide local assistance for the removal and disposal of dead animals under the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP), if it meets the eligibility requirements as debris.
  - The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) may provide assistance for farmland debris cleanup in order to return the land to its productive agricultural capacity through the Emergency Conservation Program. Agricultural producers with farmland impacted by debris should contact their local FSA office for further information on potential assistance programs.

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- NRCS may provide applicants with technical assistance. Private landowners with animal carcass issues, following a natural disaster, should contact their NRCS State Office to inquire about potential technical assistance.
- If there is evidence that an animal was exposed to a pest or disease of livestock, USDA may exercise authority under the Animal Health Protection Act to destroy and dispose of the animal carcass.

***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)***

EPA and USCG have the authority to respond to animal carcasses that are contaminated with oil, hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants under the Clean Water Act/Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (CWA/OPA) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as specified in those laws. Response actions may include but are not limited to providing: Federal carcass removal and disposal, technical assistance, and/or oversight of carcass removal and disposal by potentially responsible parties or state, tribal, or local governments. FEMA Public Assistance Policy 9523.8 describes how FEMA will fund ESF #10 Mission Assignments when there is a major disaster or emergency declaration. Under that policy, EPA and USCG will fund and respond to animal carcasses contaminated with oil, hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants that are related to pre-existing CWA/OPA removal actions and pre-existing CERCLA (also known as Superfund) sites, in accordance with those authorities.

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**Frequently Asked Questions**

- 1. Would all animals be covered for carcass removal and disposal, or would it be limited to small animals, large animals, domestic animals, etc.? Would wildlife carcasses be included?**

Carcass removal and disposal must be performed to reduce or eliminate an immediate threat to life, protect public health and safety, and/or to protect improved property as a result of the declared event. FEMA may require certification from the state or local health department or the USDA that a health threat exists to make the determination that an immediate threat exists. When few in number, smaller animal carcasses (such as rodents, skunks, opossums, etc.) typically do not pose a threat to public health and safety and, therefore, would not be eligible for removal and disposal.

Federal laws protecting wildlife such as eagles and other migratory birds, endangered and threatened species, and marine mammals limit possession of these species. Check with your State wildlife agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or the National Marine Fisheries Service for information.

- 2. Is carcass removal and disposal on private property eligible?**

Removal and disposal of carcasses on private property is generally not eligible work. If the carcasses are determined to present an immediate threat to life, public health and safety, then removal and disposal may be eligible as an emergency protective measure. FEMA may require certification from the state or local health department or the USDA that a health threat exists to make the determination that an immediate threat exists to warrant FEMA funding for removal from private property.

The removal of carcasses from private property, is subject to the same FEMA eligibility criteria and conditions as those for all private property debris removal must be met, including hold harmless agreements. Private landowners with animal carcass issues following natural disasters should contact their NRCS State Office to receive information on technical assistance and other assistance that may be available.

- 3. Is there a certain number of animal carcasses that will trigger Public Assistance for carcass removal and disposal?**

No. Regardless of the number of animal carcasses involved, the carcasses must pose a threat to lives, public health and safety in order for their removal and disposal to be eligible for Public Assistance.

- 4. If temporary carcass burial, mounding, composting, or preprocessing is required, will FEMA cover both the interim activity and the final disposal costs?**

FEMA will provide assistance for both interim activity and final disposal costs, which may include rendering and incineration, when the applicant, cost, and work are eligible for assistance.

**PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR ANIMAL CARCASS REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL****5. What procedures can be implemented to assure prompt management of animal carcasses in a safe and timely manner?**

Jurisdictions are encouraged to develop Animal Carcass Management Plans as addendums or Annexes to their Debris Management Plans. Some procedures for the disposal of animal carcasses are rendering, disposal in landfills and off-site and onsite incineration, with burial in unlined pits being the least preferred method. Animal carcasses may need to be separated from typical storm debris (as are other items such as propane tanks, refrigerators, etc.), but generally can be collected and properly disposed of by debris contractors. This would also apply to animal owners (e.g., livestock producers) who maintain large numbers of animals.

**6. What are all of the currently available technologies for pretreatment or disposal? What approval guidelines can be developed to allow expedited evaluation and implementation of new technologies?**

There are numerous publications regarding the subject and most are available on the Internet free of charge. Most state environmental agencies also provide free literature as does the federal government at the following websites:

Links for Debris/Carcass Disposal Decision Support:

<http://soils.usda.gov/survey/geography/hurricane/index.html>

EPA's debris disposal decision support tool suite:

<http://www2.ergweb.com/bdrtool/login.asp>

Farm disaster assistance:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

**7. Is there a limit on distance of transport for animal carcasses that would be covered under Public Assistance?**

No. Transportation costs may be eligible for Public Assistance, so long as the applicant, work and cost are eligible for assistance. Costs must be reasonable and necessary for the type of work performed. In order to receive Public Assistance, the work must be completed in a manner consistent with Federal, state and local regulations and guidelines, including applicable state and local transportation regulations.

**8. Are there specific requirements for mode and location of carcass disposal?**

In order to receive reimbursement from FEMA, the carcass removal and disposal must comply with all Federal, state and local requirements for competitive procurement and environmental considerations. Most states have administrative codes, regulations, and/or laws that outline the requirements for mass disposal of animal carcasses. Potential FEMA Public Assistance (PA) applicants should become familiar with these requirements and incorporate them into their plans to address animal carcasses.

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When planning and conducting carcass disposal operations, applicants should identify potential sites for temporary storage or staging and final disposal that consider environmental resources. These staging and disposal sites should avoid floodplains, wetlands, as well as ecologically and archeologically-sensitive environments. Any disposal or staging sites should be a safe distance from property boundaries, surface water, wetlands, and wells and should consider potentially negative impacts to schools, residences, nursing homes, hospitals, or other facilities housing people, animals, or food. Operations should also consider environmental factors, such as prevailing winds, odors, and operating hours of disposal and transportation. Upon completion of carcass removal, staging, and/or disposal areas may require some degree of site remediation.

NRCS provides an initial land evaluation suitability screening tool for disposal of dead animal carcasses through Web Soil Survey (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>). Soil-based interpretations for large animal disposal, by both pit and trench methods, are available for a selected area of interest. Numerical ratings for detailed soil map unit components indicate levels of limitations based on flooding, wetness, seepage, slope, excavation stability and other soil map parameters. Further on-site assistance for appropriate burial site location can be obtained through local and state NRCS offices.

**9. Can animal owners and agriculture producers receive compensation for animal losses after Stafford Act declared disasters? What about animals that are not immediately killed by the event but cannot be maintained, moved, or marketed due to logistics, public opinion, or unknown safety issues?**

USDA has certain programs, which if funded, may pay claims to owners when livestock are lost due to natural disasters such as tornados, floods, hurricanes, etc. Agriculture producers who have livestock mortalities resulting from natural disasters should contact their local FSA office for further information on potential reimbursement programs. Insurance through private companies is also available.

FEMA has disaster assistance policies (DAPs) that are authorized by the Stafford Act to provide for reimbursement of allowable expenses related to household pets and service animals (DAP 9523.19); animals in zoos (which may include aquariums and wildlife parks), museums, and rehabilitation facilities (DAP 9524.9); and research animals (DAP 9525.16).

**10. Is there an approval process for contractors providing carcass removal and disposal services?**

Eligible applicants should follow their normal Federal, state and local government contracting and competitive bidding requirements. Transporters and landfill locations will need to be permitted in accordance with all applicable environmental regulations and transportation regulations.