

# Waste Management Disaster Preparation Checklist

A waste management disaster preparation checklist is a key part of your business disaster plan to ensure environmental and public safety. This is an example of a preparation checklist your business can follow to address all the basic concerns before a disaster affects your community:

- Become familiar with federal debris removal criteria and guidelines:**  
Determine the scope of debris removal to be established during the recovery phase.
- Develop removal strategy:** Prioritize the debris removal operation into two phases. Which phase to start with will vary depending on your immediate needs.
  - Phase 1 – roadway debris removal for emergency vehicles
  - Phase 2 – public right-of-way debris removalCoordinate the removal of debris by assessing the disaster, communicating with your waste removal company about your needs and evaluate any damaged utility systems or buildings.
- Evaluate disaster situation and select debris management program(s):**
  - Set program goals – determine the recycling rate in the area, your facility needs, landfill space and enforcing illegal dumping regulations to your employees
  - Define labor needs – predict the staffing requirements for removing the debris and enter mutual aid agreements before the disaster
  - Identify equipment needs – compile a list of equipment needed to support the waste removal
  - Define method of operation and timeline – determine who is implementing the program, how the materials will be collected, where your business is located on the route and how long the entire removal process will require to complete
  - Look into funding options – Research any local or private funds that can be used to start the removal process until your business has received FEMA reimbursement



- Communicate your plan:** Your management company and your clients should be aware of your waste removal plan so they know what their resources are.
- Implement the plan:** Put into action the specific steps for removing the debris in a timely manner.
- Develop a contingency plan:** Know where the nearby temporary storage locations are or make arrangements with neighboring counties, to use their facilities. Know the timeline for FEMA reimbursements and make an agreement with a waste management company ahead of time to remove any excessive waste after a disaster.
- Set up a tracking system for debris removal program:** Verify payments to waste facilities and document recycling rates for your records in case the city or state requests them.
- Develop a training program for employees:** Write removal guidelines for employees involved in the process and educate your waste management provider with any special instructions of your business' waste removal needs.
- Create a final report:** This may be required for FEMA reimbursement, plus it allows jurisdiction to evaluate the success and areas of improvement for the removal program

Following a natural disaster, the first priority is ensuring the public's safety and keeping communication open. Businesses actually play a big role in this process because their waste management efficiency after a natural disaster affects the economic recovery for the community. A reputable waste management company should work with vendors nationwide to resume service as quickly as possible and to provide resources from outside the affected community should local infrastructure be damaged, destroyed or inaccessible. Securing the proper resources, partners and planning today makes tomorrow's potential disasters less daunting.

