



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

DEBRIS REMOVAL FROM WATERWAYS INFORMATION PAPER

Mission: Commonly referred to as wet debris, the work performed under this task to the US Army Corps of Engineers addresses the removal of eligible obstructions, debris and vessels from waterways impacted by an event. The debris removal boundaries are within the waterway and include shorelines of the waterway itself. Anything in a waterway that creates an obstruction to the movement of vessel traffic in a commercial or commonly used waterway and within the task defined area is eligible. Debris within Federal maintained channels is not eligible. Wet debris may include objects that have been carried by the flood waters, tidal/storm surge, and/or the wind and deposited in the waterway. Debris may include but not limited to Styrofoam containers, barrels, construction and demolition debris, automobiles, i.e., anything man-made and remains resident in the water. Hazardous waste materials and receptacles are eligible but will be removed by ESF#10, USCG or EPA. The secondary focus will be to collect eligible debris along shoreline to the mean high-tide level.

1. Coordination:

- Coordination with FEMA, State, local and other federal agencies (to include but not limited to USCG (ESF-10), EPA and NRCS). Establishment of an interagency debris task force recommended. Such task force to be chaired by State or FEMA (Public Assistance) applicant.

2. Debris Eligibility:

- Eligible debris can be classified as either recoverable or non-recoverable.

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- Non-recoverable debris can be placed within ordinary debris stream, recycled or sent directly to an approved landfill.
- Recoverable debris is defined as a vessel or property traceable back to the owner.
- Typical debris consists of over wash along shoreline, submerged and semi-submerged targets.
- If debris located within the commonly navigated waterway is an obstruction that represents a threat to the public safety, such debris will be deemed eligible for removal. The USACE and FEMA will make those determinations, however FEMA has ultimate responsibility in determining all eligibility.

3. Responsibilities and Authority:

- It is the applicant's responsibility to determine ownership and recuperate funds if insurance monies were issued to owner for loss of property.
- Staging areas for transferring debris will be identified and provided by the applicant. The USACE contractor may be tasked to manage these staging areas.
- Debris removal from federal waters may not be covered by Stafford Act.
- Debris removal and dredging within federal project limits will be performed under normal Corps authority.
- All work will be accomplished in accordance with applicable local, state and federal regulations. All necessary rights-of-entry and legal instruments will be provided by the applicant and reviewed/approved by USACE.

4. Execution:

- USACE will utilize surveys for determining location and estimating volumes of debris in areas of limited visibility. Specialized surveying techniques can also be used for quality assurance monitoring.
- NEPA compliance is the responsibility of the host USACE District.
- Recommend breaking up debris fields in manageable geographic areas (or sectors) to expedite NEPA requirements and scoping.
- Determination of impact of debris removal operation will be made in an effort to minimize excessive environmental/ecological damage. In some

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cases debris removal may be more environmentally damaging than leaving the debris in place.

- Contract methods may vary based on site conditions. Unit cost, lump sum and equipment rental contracts are common.

5. Lead MSC:

- Mississippi Valley Division, Jim Garner, 601-634-7970.