



WILDFIRE DEBRIS

MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST & RESOURCES

*A guide to get started on debris
management in your jurisdiction.*

*Federal assistance for debris management may
be available during Federally Declared Disasters.*

*State assistance can be requested but is
incident-specific and determined by the nature
and severity of each event.*

General Wildfire Recovery page resources
[OEM Wildfire Recovery](#) and [OEM Wildfire Cleanup](#)

Oregon Emergency Response System
Contact 800-452-0311 (or in Salem 503-378-6377)



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

PHASE 1: HAZARDOUS WASTE REMOVAL

(Assume hazardous waste is always present: propane tanks, lithium-ion batteries, household chemicals, etc.)

☐ Step 1: Public Notification & Re-Entry Safety

- Notify the public of hazardous materials debris guidance via 211 and/or local media outlets
- Provide re-entry safety guidance ([OSFM After a Fire Re-entry Guide](#))
- Share health/safety tips for returning property owners ([DEQ Home that Survived A Wildfire Guidance](#)), ([OHA Wildfire Recovery Contaminates and Health Concerns](#))
- Property owners should contact their insurers as soon as possible to initiate claims and recovery process.
- Property cleanup after a fire is the responsibility of the property owner. [The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services' Division of Financial Regulation \(DFR\)](#) can provide help or field complaints against insurers for private property owners.

☐ Step 2: Conduct Damage Assessments (DA)

- Conduct DA using OEM Damage Assessment tools ([OEM GIS Damage Assessment Tool](#))
- Use DA data to estimate scope and volume of debris removal ([OEM Debris Removal Cost Estimator tool](#))
- Coordinate with GIS/mapping tools to track property status.

☐ Step 3: Regulatory Notification & Emergency Waivers





- **Notify relevant partner agencies:**
 - Local utilities and jurisdictions (e.g. county public health, public water systems, waste contractors)
 - Contacts can be found here for state agency partners ([Wildfire State Agency Contacts](#))
 - OERS at 800-452-0311
- Identify landfills that can accept hazardous or specific materials (PVC, etc.)
 - Use DEQ website & contact landfill operators directly ([DEQ Wildfire Debris Removal](#), scroll to bottom of page for list)
- Local jurisdiction request rule/permit/fee/public notice waivers (if needed)

☐ Step 4: Offer Right of Entry (ROE) Forms for debris removal performed by government

- Use ROE forms curated by county. Forms should include, at a minimum:
 - Confirmation of home and property ownership
 - Address and contact information (may be different from property address)
 - Insurance information (insurer, policy #, expiration, coverage)
 - Locations of areas of concern (septic tanks, drain fields, heating oil tanks, vehicles, chemicals)
 - Opt-in/opt-out options
- Clarify opt-in/opt-out options for property owners
- **ROE required** if cleanup is done performed by a public entity
- **ROE not required** if the property owner hires private contractor to clean their own property
- Confirm requirements with impacted jurisdictions' counsel
- **Make clear to the public what the ROE does and doesn't do.** A common question from property owners is: "Do I lose my legal recourse or land rights if I sign a ROE?"
 - A Right of Entry (ROE) form does not waive your legal rights. It simply grants permission for authorized personnel—such as government contractors or cleanup crews—to access your property for a specific purpose, like removing debris after a disaster.

PHASE 1-CONTINUED

Signing an ROE form:

-  Allows access to your property for cleanup or demolition work
-  Is only for the tasks outlined in the form (e.g., debris removal)
-  Does not transfer ownership of your land or structures
-  Does not waive your rights to insurance claims, compensation, or legal recourse
- The ROE form explicitly states that the property owner retains all legal rights and that the government or contractors are not assuming liability beyond the agreed-upon work.

☐ Step 5: Household Hazardous Waste Cleanup Contractor Coordination

- There is no statewide contract list currently for debris management (list coming soon 2025)
- Jurisdictions may use their own contracted debris removal and waste vendors
- Local and/or state procurement policies and standards should be used for procuring contractors
- Ensure contractors are **certified HazMat professionals** (currently no statewide contract list)
- Homeowners **are strongly advised NOT** to perform hazardous waste cleanup
 - [DEQ Household Hazardous Waste Services by County](#)
 - [DEQ Factsheet on Household Hazardous Waste Health impacts](#) (this factsheet is from 2020 but contains relevant information to assist local jurisdictions and homeowners)
- **Resource:** [DEQ Wildfire Cleanup Guidance](#)

☐ Step 6: Execute Household Hazardous Waste Cleanup

- Coordinate contractor mobilization and site access
- Follow environmental and safety protocols
- Track progress and maintain cleanup documentation





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PHASE 2: DEBRIS, ASH, AND HAZARD TREE REMOVAL

(Begins after household hazardous waste removal and public access to property resumes)

☐ Step 1: Identify Debris Types – Site Assessment

- Use material matrix for debris classification ([OEM Clean Up Matrix for Materials](#))
 - Include: concrete, metal, non-hazardous household contents
- Number of parcels needing debris removal

☐ Step 2: Cost Estimating

- Apply [OEM Debris Removal Cost Estimator Tool](#) for debris volume and removal costs
- Prioritize efficiency and cost recovery

☐ Step 3: Asbestos Testing and Identification within Ash and Debris

- Ensure ash and debris are tested for asbestos by [DEQ-accredited labs](#) prior to removal and transport to qualified landfill
- Follow Oregon [DEQ rules for asbestos abatement \(DEQ Asbestos Inspectors\)](#)

☐ Step 4: Hazard Tree Removal

- Identify and remove trees posing risk to life/safety/infrastructure
- Use certified arborists or foresters

☐ Step 5: Ash Removal

- Remove no less than three and no more than six inches of ash from affected areas only; this cleanup is generally not intended to cover the entire parcel
- Ensure that proper erosion controls are in place prior to debris removal (e.g. hydro-mulch, wattles, dust control, wood chips)
- Conduct sampling only when necessary to minimize delays (example: landfill waste acceptance testing)
- Follow [Occupational Safety and Health and environmental protection standards](#)

☐ Step 6: Public Communication & Messaging

- Provide daily updates to the public and media on:
 - Cleanup progress
 - Available resources
 - How to participate in cleanup programs
- Establish local info lines – what are your channels for pushing out info? What are your partner channels?
- Create an email list the public can register for to receive upcoming events and recovery news.
- Establish a webpage or informational dashboard
- Start collecting and publishing FAQs
- Schedule regular, in-person resource meetings/fairs where you can share topic-specific resources and presentations, and answer questions. Invite state and local subject matter experts to participate.

State Debris Management Task Force (If Activated by Governor)

Federal assistance for debris management may be available during Federally Declared Disasters. State assistance can be requested but is incident-specific and determined by the nature and severity of each event.

- Task Force is only activated during state-declared emergencies and when directed to do so by the Governor.

PHASE 2-CONTINUED

- If activated, the Task Force is situated within the State Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) Operations Section, specific contact information can be acquired through the OEM Duty Officer that can be reached through OERS at 800-452-0311 (or in Salem 503-378-6377) or review a State ECC Incident Action Plan 205a for incident specific contacts.

