APPENDIX A

MISSION OVERVIEW

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WHEN DISASTER STRIKES: AN OVERVIEW

This appendix provides an overview of natural disasters that can cause debris removal problems and corresponding local and Federal response actions. The overview is from a document which FEMA provides to local officials as a reference for disaster response activities. The document is FEMA publication 325, dated November 1998, titled Public Assistance, Debris Management Guide.

1. Natural Disasters

Hurricanes. The damaging forces of hurricanes and tropical storms include high-velocity winds (up to 150 miles per hour or higher in gusts), storm surge, and wave action. The most severe damage frequently occurs in the shorelands adjacent to the ocean. The resultant debris consists primarily of trees, construction materials from damaged or destroyed structures, personal property, and sediment. Although the greatest concentration of debris will be located along the shoreline, flooding and tornadoes spawned by hurricanes can cause extensive amounts of tree and structural debris far inland.

Tornadoes. Damage from tornadoes is caused by high-velocity rotating winds. The severity of the damage depends on the velocity of the tornado funnel and the length of time the funnel is on the ground. Tornado debris consists primarily of trees, construction materials from damaged or destroyed structures, and personal property. Damage is generally confined to a narrow path, which can be up to ½ mile wide and from 100 yards to several miles long.

Floods. Damage from flooding is caused by structural inundation and high velocity waters. Structural damage is usually limited to the floodway and the floodplain area immediately adjacent to the river. Heavy structural damage may result from high velocity waters in mountainous areas or failure of a flood control project, such as a dam or levee. Flood debris consists of sediment deposited on public and private property and personal belongings discarded from flooded homes. Additionally, heavy rains and floods may produce landslides; in such cases, debris consists primarily of soil, gravel, rock, and some construction materials.

Earthquakes. Damages from earthquakes are caused by shockwaves and earth movements along fault lines. Secondary damages, such as fires and explosions, may result from the disruption of utility systems. Debris consists of building materials, personal property, and sediment caused by landslides.

Wild Fires. Debris from wild fires consists of burned out structures, cars and other metal objects, ash, and charred wood waste. Large-scale loss of ground cover may lead to

mudslides, resulting in clogged drainage structures and possible damage to homes and bridges.

2. Who Responds

Local Government. Local government is the first to respond to a disaster. Response efforts are first directed to activities that protect lives, such as evacuations, sheltering, fire fighting, utility restoration, and clearing roads of debris. These response efforts may be accomplished with local force account labor and equipment, contractors, volunteers, and assistance from adjacent communities.

The State. When the response efforts appear to be beyond the capability of local government, the State normally provides the next level of assistance by declaring a State of Emergency. The State Emergency Management Organization typically evaluates the disaster situation and provides
advice to the Governor on the availability of State resources that could assist local efforts. State resources may consist of the Department of Transportation, the Health Department, the Department of Natural Resources, and the National Guard. These State resources can assist local government in its immediate response efforts, including debris removal and disposal activities.

The Federal Government. When the response and recovery efforts appear to be beyond the capability of both local and State governments, the State may request Federal assistance, in the form of a Presidential Disaster Declaration. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) evaluates the request and recommends to the President the type of Federal assistance that is warranted.

If an emergency or major disaster declaration is made under the authority of by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288), as amended, assistance is usually provided in the form of financial reimbursement of a portion of the disaster-
related costs. Debris removal costs incurred by local and State governments are evaluated and, if determined eligible, reimbursed on a cost-sharing basis (normally 75% Federal, 25% non-Federal).

FEMA-Direct Assistance. In catastrophic disasters, FEMA can also provide direct Federal assistance to support local and State governments in performing some of the activities related to debris removal and disposal. The response capabilities of both the local and State governments must be clearly exceeded before this level of assistance can be provided. For a short and clearly defined time period, FEMA incurs all costs; however, as soon as possible, local
and State governments are responsible for all debris removal activities.

FEMA-Technical Assistance. FEMA may also direct other Federal agencies to provide debris removal technical assistance to local and State governments. Technical

assistance may be provided in contract preparation, bid solicitation, contract management, and debris disposal activities. Local and state governments remain responsible for all debris removal activities and are reimbursed for their eligible costs. The costs of Federal technical assistance may be the responsibility of FEMA.

3. Local Debris Management Response Actions

Activate the Debris Management Staff. A community should have in place a Debris Management Plan that identifies key staff members and their responsibilities for managing and controlling debris removal and disposal operations. This staff should be immediately activated whenever a natural
disaster occurs. Staff members should document the critical decisions made in response to the disaster and provide the
debris manager and local, State, and Federal officials with a clear plan of action. The debris removal and disposal operations may extend for weeks or months, and the lack of documentation of the evolving plan could cause stress and confusion and, thus, an inefficient operation.

Conduct an Initial Damage Assessment. Damage assessment should be conducted to identify necessary life-saving actions, assess the magnitude of damage, and determine the additional resources that may be needed from other local governments and the State. Most States require an initial report that simply defines the type of disaster, estimated cost, and requirements for State assistance. This initial report is followed by a more detailed preliminary damage
Assessment report that can be found in local or State Emergency Operation Plans.

To conduct the damage assessment, the community should be divided into sectors using the following criteria to determine sector boundaries:

- Type of debris (structural, trees, sediment, and mixed).
- Location of debris.
- Volume of debris (1arge versus small).
- Land use (residential, business, agricultural).
- Location of existing and potential temporary storage and volume reduction sites.
- Location of existing and potential permanent disposal sites public and/or private landfills).
- Transportation availability.

The damage assessment team should then investigate the damaged areas by sector to record the extent of damage and to identify specific assistance requirements. Damage assessment teams should also estimate the amount and compositions of debris observed in each sector and annotate the locations on community maps.

Identify Available Resources. The debris staff should initiate actions to assess the availability of local, State, Federal, and other resources to provide immediate and long-term assistance. Experience has shown that resources will not be used effectively unless work assignments and cleanup priorities are coordinated and controlled by the designated

debris manager. The designated debris manager should have total responsibility and authority for managing the debris cleanup operation. The following are examples of local, State, Federal, and other resources available for cleanup activities:

Local Government. Most local governments maintain equipment such as trucks, rubber tire loaders, graders, chippers,
chain saws, small cranes, dozers, and backholes and have experienced operators who can be used to open roads and remove debris. Temporary hires may be added to provide additional labor and equipment operators for 24-hour-a-day operations, if needed. The principal advantage to using
local government force account equipment and operators is their lower cost and flexibility in assignment. This equipment generally represents the only resources the community can immediately commit to emergency debris clearance and cleanup operation.

Mutual Aid Agreements. A Mutual Aid Agreement is an agreement among neighboring communities (and possibly
States) to provide assistance to one another in time of need. The equipment and operators of neighboring communities can be used to quickly augment local force
account resources and have many of the same advantages.

State Agencies- The National Guard, State Department of Transportation and State Department of Natural Resources have equipment and personnel that may provide limited assistance on a short-term basis. The State Department of Transportation is normally responsible for debris removal on State roads. This assistance may be obtained by contacting the State emergency management organization.

Volunteers. Volunteers have historically played a significant role in large-scale debris removal operations. Volunteer organizations can assist private property owners or provide financial assistance in the removal of debris from private property. Additionally, community organizations such as civic clubs, student groups, and neighborhood organizations have proven to be a tremendous community resource in past disasters. To provide for maximum utilization of these resources, community leaders should be prepared to organize voluntary groups and keep the debris management staff informed of their activities. Sponsoring organizations should ensure that personnel are properly equipped and that common sense safety precautions are followed.

Federal Agencies. The Federal Highway Administration may provide grant assistance to State governments for debris removal and repair of roads on the designated Federal Aid System.

Contractors. Labor and equipment for debris removal and disposal should be available from local contractors. Following a major disaster, emergency contracts can be executed to augment local force account resources; however this equipment is generally expensive, and its use should be limited as much as practicable.

Update and Implement the Debris Management Plan. Immediately following a disaster, engineering personnel on the debris management staff should explore alternative courses of action and update the existing plan based on the initial damage assessment, available resources, and any new information. The updated plan can be hand written initially and later converted to a more formal document.

Maps of the affected area should be annotated to show damaged areas and locations of key facilities and disposal sites and distributed with the updated Debris Management Plan. Information should also be entered into a Geographic Information System (GIS) database, if available.

4. Federal Debris Management Response Actions

When a natural disaster occurs, it is the responsibility of local communities and the State to respond. Often times their combined efforts are not sufficient to effectively cope with the direct results of the disaster. In these instances, Federal assistance is necessary to supplement the State and local efforts.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended (FRP) was enacted into law in 1988. It is the centerpiece of the Federal Disaster Relief Programs that are managed by FEMA.

When a disaster occurs and a locality has responded to the best of its ability but is or will be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the damage, it turns to the State for help.
The Governor, after examining the situation, may direct that the State's emergency plan be executed. If it is evident that the situation is or will be beyond the capabilities of the State and local resources, the Governor may request that the President declare that an emergency or major disaster exists in the State under the authority of the Stafford Act.

While the request is being processed, local and State government officials should not delay in taking actions to respond to and start recovery from the disaster. Such actions should not be dependent upon whether there will be Federal assistance. Commensurate with the supplemental nature of Stafford Act assistance, the Federal share of recovery expense for State and local governments is normally limited to 75% of eligible costs.

5. The Declaration Process

The request for a declaration must come from the Governor or Acting Governor. After the initial declaration, the person designated by the Governor as the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) may make requests for additional areas to be eligible for assistance or for additional types of assistance. All requests are directed through the Regional Director of the appropriate FEMA region. Before sending a formal request letter to the President, the Governor requests FEMA to conduct a joint preliminary damage assessment with the State to verify actual damages and estimate the amount of supplemental assistance that will be needed. After this assessment is complete, if the Governor believes that Federal assistance is necessary, the request letter is sent. The FEMA Regional Director reviews the request and forwards it with a recommendation to

the Director of FEMA, who, in turn, makes a recommendation to the President. The President makes the decision whether or not to declare a major disaster or emergency.

If the declaration is made, FEMA designates the area eligible for assistance and the types of assistance available. With the declaration, a Federal Coordinating Officer is appointed. This person is responsible for coordinating all Federal disaster assistance programs administered by FEMA and other Federal agencies. At the same time, the FEMA Regional Director or a staff member is appointed the Disaster Recovery Manager (DRM) responsible for managing the FEMA assistance programs.

6. Federal Response Plan

The Federal Response Plan (FRP) is implemented to coordinate the overall delivery of Federal assistance to disaster victims.

The plan is organized functionally by Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). Each ESF is composed of a lead or primary agency and supporting agencies grouped together to deliver specific services and resources. Delivery of assistance under the plan is flexible to best meet the unique needs of each disaster. Under the FRP, Federal agencies can provide assistance under their own authorities, or they can be assigned missions by FEMA and receive reimbursement for their activities through the FEMA mission assignment process.

7. FEMA Debris Mission Assignment Process

Following a Presidential Declaration, FEMA may elect to use its mission assignment authority to task the USACE to contract for and manage the debris removal and disposal operations. The debris and removal mission is coordinated by Emergency Support Function #3 (ESF #3), Engineering and Public Works.

The ESF #3 action officer works directly with the FEMA debris staff. They are responsible for the overall coordination, control, policy, guidance, and implementation actions necessary to accomplish response and recovery missions tasked to the USACE by FEMA. This includes receiving, coordinating, and formulating all mission assignments and subsequent funding.

The ESF #3 action officer meets regularly and as needed with appropriate FEMA, State, and local government officials to collect and coordinate information necessary to accomplish the assigned mission. The action officer assembles information, provide tasks to the USACE staff for necessary action, and ensure that contract scope requirements are accurate and timely. An ESF #3 action officer is FEMA's direct liaison responsible for coordinating assigned missions. Daily assessments are made and reported to FEMA and others, as required, via coordination meetigs and memoranda. The debris managers and action officers are normally full-time USACE emergency management personnel.

8. Debris Removal Eligibility Criteria

Debris that may be eligible for clearance and removal include trees, sand and gravel, building wreckage, vehicles, personal property, etc. To be eligible for FEMA assistance, such removal must be necessary to do one of the following:

- Eliminate immediate threats to lives and public health and safety;
- Eliminate immediate threats of significant damage to improved public or private property; and/or
- Ensure economic recovery of the affected community to the benefit of the community-at-large.

Removal from Public Property. In general, debris that is on public property must be removed to allow continued safe operation of governmental functions and, therefore, is eligible under one of the first two criteria. However, not all public property clearance is necessarily eligible. Debris that is blocking streets and highways is a threat to public health and safety because it blocks passage of emergency vehicles or it blocks access to emergency facilities such as hospitals. Debris in a stream or flood channel may cause flooding from a future storm. If such flooding would cause an immediate threat of damage to improved property, removal of the debris only to the extent necessary to protect against an event that could reasonably be expected to occur within five years may be eligible. However, removal of fallen trees in a forested or wilderness area is not normally eligible.

Removal from Private Property. Debris on private property is treated somewhat differently. Debris removal from private property is the responsibility of the individual property owner, aided by insurance settlements and assistance from volunteer agencies. Most homeowner fire and extended coverage insurance policies have specific coverage for debris removal and demolition of heavily damaged structures. FEMA assistance is not available to reimburse private property owners for the cost of removing debris from their property; however, an eligible local or State government may pick up and dispose of disaster-related debris placed at the curb by those private individua1s. Generally this type of work is carefully controlled with regard to extent and duration.

If the debris on private business and residential property is so widespread that public health, safety, or the economic recovery of the community is threatened, the actual removal of debris from the private property may be eligible. In such situations, the work normally must be done or be contracted by an eligible applicant.

Removal from Drainage Structures. Debris removal from certain drainage structures may have to meet the following criteria:

Reservoirs- Removal of disaster-related debris from reservoirs may be eligible in accordance with the criteria for debris basins below. Not all reservoirs are cleaned out on a regular basis, and evidence of such maintenance must be provided to FEMA. In

addition, removal of debris that poses an immediate threat of clogging or damaging intake or adjacent structures may be eligible.

Natural Streams. Debris removal from natural streams is not normally eligible for assistance. Only debris that causes a threat to lives or public health and safety or damage to improved property from a 5-year flood event is eligible. Work to protect improved property must have a favorable benefit/cost ratio. Any work in natural streams must also be closely reviewed and monitored to minimize undesirable environmental effects.

Engineered Channels and Debris Basins. Debris removal from engineered channels, lined or unlined, and debris basins may be eligible. The pre-disaster level of debris in the channel or basin is of particular importance to determine the amount of disaster-related debris. Such facilities must also have had a regular schedule of debris removal in order to be considered an actively used and maintained facility.

Removal from Roads and Highways. Debris may be cleared from roads and highways, including the travel lanes and shoulders, roadside ditches and drainage structures, and the maintained right-of-way. Clearance from Federal-aid roads and highways follows these criteria except when the Emergency Relief (ER) program of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is activated. For highways being repaired by the ER program of FHWA, the debris is removed as part of that work. Even when the ER program is activated for an area, FHWA assistance is granted only for portions of the road actually damaged by the disaster. Debris on undamaged sections of highway may be eligible for FEMA assistance.

Removal from Recreational and Wilderness Areas. The removal of debris from parks and recreational areas used by the public is eligible when it affects public health or safety or proper utilization of such facilities. Trees frequently constitute a large part of debris in these areas, and some special guidance is appropriate, as detailed below.

Debris in the wilderness or forested areas of these facilities that does not pose a health or safety threat is not eligible.

Hazardous trees within a naturalized area of parks or golf courses that are unstable and leaning into the areas used by the public are eligible for removal only, not replacement. Normally, trees requiring removal are flush cut at the ground. Generally, stump removal should not be considered eligible for reimbursement except if it is determined that the stump itself would be a hazard, as when the tree has been uprooted. When eligible, stump removal is accomplished by the most economical means, such as grinding.

A tree with more than 50 percent of the tree crown destroyed or damaged, a split trunk, or broken branches that expose the heartwood, or tat has been tipped over or uprooted, is eligible for removal, especially if it is in a location approximate to or within public use areas.

Should the applicant choose to attempt to save a tree with any of the conditions described above that justify its removal, then the expense is the applicant's. FEMA's responsibility in that case is to remove only the hazardous limbs.

Hazardous limbs are defined as limbs greater than two inches in diameter that are still hanging in the tree and are threatening a public use area, such as a trail, sidewalk road, golf cart path, etc.

9. Public Assistance Building Demolition Criteria

FEMA PA funds may be used for demolition and removal of resulting debris under the authority of Section 403, Essential Assistance, of the Stafford Act. This section allows for the demolition of unsafe structures that pose an immediate threat to life, property, and public health and safety.

The following are basic types of work that might be eligible for PA demolition funding under Section 403:

- Health and Safety
- Attractive Nuisance
- Health Hazard

Health and Safety. The primary responsibility for demolition of unsafe structures lies with the owner. Most insurance policies have a clause that provides payment for demolishing houses damaged beyond repair. The applicant must certify that no insurance exists that would pay for the demolition, the owner is not capable of paying for such work, and there is no opportunity to recoup the cost from the owner. If permission for demolition is not provided, the applicant must follow legal condemnation. The applicant must obtain right of entry and hold harmless agreements prior to start of the work. The ownership of the property remains in the hands of the original owner.

All properties must be reviewed for historical significance, hazardous materials, endangered species, and other appropriate regulations prior to Federal funds being provided for the demolition. The State Emergency Management Division should provide each applicant with a demolition checklist that must be completed and returned by the applicant prior to any actual demolition of the property.

The checklist provides a partial list of items with which the applicant must comply prior to demolition. These items include verification the applicant has obtained right of entry, hold harmless agreements, and investigation of insurance coverages and liens. The applicant will also be provided forms pertaining to SHPO requirements, hazardous materials requirements, and endangered species requirements. The applicant must sign and return these forms indicating he has read them and understands that it is his responsibility to assure fill compliance with all Federal, State and local rules and regulations.

The applicant must provide a copy of the bid specifications final property list, and bid results prior to demolition. FEMA reviews the bid specifications to ensure that the specifications contain the proper scope of eligible work.

Once all necessary information has been received and reviewed, FEMA sends a demolition memo to the State Emergency Management Division stating that FEMA has no objection to the applicant's proceeding with the demolition of the properties identified in the demolition bid. The State emergency management division provides the applicant with written authorization to proceed with the demolition project.

Eligible work under the health and safety demolition is limited to the demolition and removal of structures and other improvements that may represent an immediate threat to public health and safety. The inspection team may inspect each facility to make a determination on the structural integrity of the unit and/or may review the reports of the applicant1s building inspection. The team may make the necessary inspections to confirm the reports.

Structures that are in danger of collapse, thus representing a threat to life and safety, are documented and recommended as eligible for demolition. In the event a structure is questionable, and a clear determination of the stability of the structure cannot be established, the structure is recommended for demolition.

Other eligible project description under the health and safety category may include cleaning septic systems, backfilling basements, capping wells, clearing debris, and any other items that may represent an immediate threat to public health and safety.

Items such as slabs on grade, driveways, fences, structurally sound buildings, etc., are not eligible under the public health and safety category because they do not represent an immediate threat to public health and safety.

At the completion of the project, the State notifies FEMA that the applicant's demolition bas been completed. A joint FEMA State team inspects the applicant's demolition sites to ensure full compliance with the project description identified in the report form. At the time of closeout, small projects where the project description has not changed are treated in accordance with other normal small project closeouts. Small demolition projects where the project description has changed are treated as large project closeouts and only actual eligible documented costs are eligible for FEMA funding.

Eligible costs may include any cost incurred by the applicant to complete the project description identified on the report form. Necessary costs of requesting, obtaining, and administering the demolition program are covered by the Subgrantee Administrative Allowance. However, other costs such as engineering services to write the demolition specifications, field inspections, testing, etc., may be eligible demolition costs based upon review of the documented costs. For estimating purpose, the amount determined on the engineering and design services is shown on the report form.