

Public Assistance: Category B - Emergency Demolition

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance (PA) Program provides supplemental assistance to states, tribes, and local (SLTT) governmental entities, as well as certain private non-profit organizations. FEMA’s [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide \(PAPPG\), Version 4](#) provides comprehensive information regarding FEMA assistance and the eligibility requirements that SLTT governments must meet in order to receive the PA assistance. This Fact Sheet provides key information for demolition of structures on private property that may be eligible as emergency protective measures under PA when partial or complete collapse is imminent and is an immediate threat to the public.¹ Nothing in this fact sheet should be interpreted to constitute a waiver of compliance with applicable federal and SLTT government laws, ordinances, regulations, and executive orders (EOs).

Demolition

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY FOR DEMOLITION

Emergency demolition of structures located on private property may be eligible when partial or complete collapse is imminent, and that collapse poses an immediate threat to the public. For demolition to be eligible under Category B it must meet the following criteria:

- Must be in the public interest;
- Eliminate immediate threat to lives, public health, and safety; and
- Must be a result of the declared incident.

DEMOLITION OF PRIVATE STRUCTURES

Pre-approval from FEMA is not required for the Applicant to begin demolition work; however, for the Applicant to receive PA funding, FEMA must determine that the work is eligible.

- The applicant must notify FEMA that Demolition of Private Structures will be conducted and the type of property on which the demolition work is being conducted (e.g., privately-owned residential or commercial property).
- For destroyed structures that are deemed eligible for demolition, the issue identified on page 108 of the PAPPG, version 4 which states: “If more than one wall of a structure is standing and not in immediate danger of collapsing, FEMA considers the removal of that structure to be demolition and not debris removal ...” is now superseded by the Public Assistance [Wildfire Policy Guidance Memo](#) issued on Oct. 17, 2022. It is no longer the

¹ *Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide*, FP-104-009-2, at 128 - 130 (June 1, 2020).

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determining factor in categorizing removal of a destroyed structure as debris verses demolition.

- The determination that a structure is destroyed and/or in immediate danger of collapsing must be made by the authority having jurisdiction in coordination with a qualified individual.²

Demolition of commercially owned structures is generally ineligible as it is expected that the commercial enterprises retain insurance that addresses the cost of demolition. However, in very limited, extraordinary circumstances, the FEMA Regional Administrator may provide an exception regarding work eligibility for demolition activities. In such cases, the applicant must meet the PAPPG requirements for debris removal from private property.

Additionally, removal of the debris resulting from demolition of a structure may not be placed in or on the public right of way, doing so is considered an ineligible activity, and may jeopardize funding for the demolition work.

² A licensed engineer or architect or an individual that the authority having jurisdiction designates to make such decisions.