



Los Angeles County Public Works

900 South Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, CA 91803-1331
Telephone: (626) 979-5370 • Website: lacounty.gov/recovery

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For Property Owners who elect NOT to participate in the Government-Sponsored Fire Debris and Hazard Tree Removal Program

Property owners who are ineligible or elect not to participate in the Government-Sponsored Fire Debris and Hazard Tree Removal Program must participate in the Los Angeles County Local Fire Debris Removal Program.

1. I have elected to opt-out of the Government-Sponsored Fire Debris and Hazard Tree Removal Program, what application do I submit for debris removal?

Property owners who elect to opt-out of the Government-sponsored Program must submit a “Los Angeles County Local Fire Debris Removal Program Application” (available at the following website: lacounty.gov/recovery) and Workplan to the County for approval before January 31, 2021.

2. What is the Los Angeles County Local Fire Debris Removal Program?

The Local Fire Debris Removal (Opt-out) Program is private property debris removal performed by the property owner (or hired contractor) at the homeowner’s expense and must meet or exceed the program standards set by local, state, and federal agencies. An approved Workplan and applicable permits (such as a demolition permit) are required prior to commencing debris removal. The work must be done to standards of all applicable ordinances and other regulations so that community and environmental health and safety risks are adequately addressed. Documentation on adequate clean-up and proper disposal will be required. Please refer to **Attachment A - Fire Debris Removal Plan and Demolition Permit Process Flowchart**.

3. Do I need a demolition permit before clearing my fire damaged structure? Who issues the permits for debris removal for applicants who elect to opt-out? Do I have to pay for permits? If so, how much do permits cost?

Please contact the Building and Safety – Antelope Valley Office located at 355 A East Avenue K-6 Lancaster, CA 93535 at (661) 524-2390 or email at dpw-bsd_antelopevalley@lacounty.onmicrosoft.com to verify if a demolition permit is required before initiating fire debris clean-up of a fire damaged structure. Their office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If a permit is required, Building and Safety will assess the fees and issue the permits for debris removal.

4. How long does it take to receive a permit once my opt-out application is submitted?



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A few days to a few weeks, depending on the size and complexity of the property and completeness of the application and workplan.

5. Does the County have a list of certified companies to remove debris?

No. The County does not endorse any companies to provide debris removal services. Owners are encouraged to visit the California Department of Consumer Affairs' Contractors State License Board website at: http://www.cslb.ca.gov/Media_Room/Disaster_Help_Center/ for general information regarding contractors.

The County has prepared a list and map with the locations of the franchised waste haulers, Construction and Demolition Recycling Facilities, Inert Waste Facilities, and Municipal Solid Waste Facilities in Los Angeles County at the following website as an additional resource for property owners lacounty.gov/recovery.

6. Is there an expedited process to remove debris if I opt-out of the government program?

While every effort will be made to expedite permits, each application and workplan must be reviewed for completeness. There is no guarantee that opting-out will be any faster than the government-sponsored program.

7. What if my property only sustained partial or minor structural damage, do I still need to complete the Local Fire Debris Removal Program? What is considered a partially burned or damaged structure?

Property owners whose residential structure(s) and/or accessory structure(s) sustained partial damage as a result of the Bobcat Fire or Lake Fire are subject to Los Angeles County's Bobcat Fire and Lake Fire Debris Removal Emergency Ordinance. All related demolition work and fire debris removal work must be performed according to the guidelines to protect public health and the environment.

A partially burned or damaged structure means the following:

- A structure with minimal fire damage where portions of the structure have not been exposed to fire
- Where vertical and horizontal structural elements (stud walls, beams, joist, rafters, trusses, etc.) remain intact
- A demolition permit is required



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If your property falls in this category, please submit a Partially Burned or Damaged Structure Application (**Attachment B**). You may contact (626) 979-5370 or email bobcatfire@pw.lacounty.gov or lakefire@pw.lacounty.gov for additional information.

7. Can the County remove cars from the property that have been destroyed by the fire? If not, who can residents call to remove the cars from the property?

Property owners who opt-out will have to hire a private company to remove the vehicles along with other fire debris. If property owners opt-in to the Government-Sponsored Fire Debris and Hazard Tree Removal Program and have a structure eligible for debris removal, damaged vehicles on the property will be removed as part of the clean-up.

8. Can burned bushes and vegetation be removed?

Yes, burned vegetation can be removed by property owners. If small enough, burned vegetation can be disposed in your regular trash, or with a call to your waste hauler as a bulky item or excess green waste. Larger items or volumes too large for regular trash service should be disposed by taking the material to a certified waste disposal facility or calling a qualified waste hauler. For a list of certified franchise waste haulers please visit <https://pw.lacounty.gov/epd/swims/TrashCollection/docs/AuthorizedCommercialWasteHaulers.pdf>.

9. What is considered a Hazard Tree? How will I know if Hazard Tree removal is required on my property?

For the purpose of Hazard Tree removal on private property, a "Hazard Tree" shall mean wildfire-damaged trees that have been so damaged by fire that their structural integrity is compromised and pose an immediate threat of falling onto debris removal crews, falling onto a public right-of-way or public improved property, or obstructs access to the debris clearance site.

10. What are my options for removing hazard trees on my property?

Removal of Hazard Trees is mandatory. Property owners may either sign-up for the Government-Sponsored Fire Debris and Hazard Tree Removal Program or participate in the Local Fire Debris Removal Program. To participate in the Government-Sponsored Program, property owners must submit a Right-of Entry (ROE) Form to determine eligibility for the program. Property owners who want to identify and remove their own trees must submit a Local Fire Debris Removal Program application, completed work plan, and Inspection Access Form so an inspector can confirm Hazard Trees removal is



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complete. See **Attachment C - Hazard Tree Removal Guidelines** for additional information.

11. I have elected to opt-out of the Government-Sponsored Fire Debris Removal Program, but I have burned trees, am I still eligible for Hazard Tree removal through the Government-Sponsored Fire Debris and Hazard Tree Removal Program?

Yes. If you believe you have trees on your property that are dead or likely to die within five years as a result of the fire, you should submit a ROE Form to the County. A certified arborist will determine whether any trees on your property present a threat to the public right-of-way (i.e. roadways and/or public infrastructure, fire hydrants, water meters, etc.)

12. What is considered Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)? Where do I dispose of HHW and Electronics (E-waste)?

Household hazardous waste (HHW) is waste from houses that poses a threat to public health, animals, or the environment. HHW includes chemicals that are ignitable, toxic, corrosive, or reactive. Examples include pool chemicals, car batteries, antifreeze, used oil and filters, solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, propane tanks, disinfectants, aerosols, paint, and bleach.

Property owners may take HHW and E-waste to Antelope Valley Environmental Collection Center. This center is located at 1200 W. City Ranch Road in Palmdale and is open to the public on the first and third Saturday of each month, from 9 am until 3 pm unless otherwise stated. To confirm their schedule and for more information on where to dispose of HHW, visit CleanLA.com.

13. How do I dispose of appliances (white goods)?

Property owners can dispose these appliances at a permitted landfill or contact their waste service provider to see if burned appliances are accepted for bulky item pick-up.

14. How do I dispose of hazardous waste (e.g., asbestos, lead, and other materials classified as hazardous waste)

Hazardous waste materials are required to be handled by certified hazardous waste haulers. The County does not endorse any companies to provide hazardous waste debris removal services. Owners are encouraged to visit the California Department of Consumer Affairs' Contractors State License Board website at:



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http://www.cslb.ca.gov/Media_Room/Disaster_Help_Center/ for general information regarding contractors.

15. How do I dispose of treated wood debris and railroad ties?

Treated wood material including creosote-treated wood and railroad ties should not be placed in yard waste bins designated for vegetative landscape debris. Property owners or contractors should contact disposal facility for special handling instructions.

16. How do I know my property is clear of fire debris and I can start the rebuilding process?

After implementation of the approved work plan and final inspection by the Building Official, the property owner must submit a certification showing that all work has been completed as specified. Please refer to **Attachment D – Debris Clean-up Completion Certification Form**. The work must be completed in accordance to the program standards set forth by the County and State by **March 15, 2021**.

17. How can I access or get copies of my building permit records?

The County maintains building permit records for properties located in the unincorporated area. You can download permit data form the Building Permit Viewer website at <http://pw.lacounty.gov/bsd/bpv>. For more information please see the Permit Records Search Document or contact your local building official for details.

18. Can I reuse my building foundation if my structure was damaged by the fire?

Existing footings and slabs in fire damaged buildings and structures are not typically permitted to be reused due to the intense heat and fire that the foundation is exposed to. If a homeowner or contractor proposes to reuse the existing foundation, in addition to submitting a debris removal workplan, an engineering report/plan prepared by a licensed civil engineer, structural engineer, or architect must be submitted. For additional information please see **Attachment E - Concrete Slabs and Foundations Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines**.



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19. Do I need to test my soil? What are the guidelines and process of obtaining soil clearance?

Yes, property owners must hire a Certified Soil Consultant to perform soil testing and analysis. See **Attachment F - Public Health's Guidelines for Soil Testing and Clearance Process**.

20. How do I maintain my pool impacted by smoke and ash contamination, or fire damage?

Please refer to the Los Angeles County's Public Health guidelines for Swimming Pools Impacted by Fire, Smoke, and Ash can be found on their website at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/docs/GuidelinesForSwimmingPoolsDamagedDueToWildfires.pdf> For more information, please contact the Environmental Health, Recreational Waters Program at (626) 430-5360 or rhealth@ph.lacounty.gov.

21. I have already cleared debris, do I still need to comply with the Local Fire Debris Removal Program requirements?

Yes, the Declaration of a Local Health Emergency and Order prohibits the removal of fire ash and debris unless it is part of the Government-Sponsored Fire Debris Removal Program, or the property owner obtains permission from the County to carry out a private cleanup of the property. See **Attachment G - Public Health's Requirements for Properties Cleaned Prior to Obtaining County Permission** for more information.

22. Are there any exemptions from the requirements of the Local Fire Debris Removal Program?

Yes, properties that do not have destroyed or damaged structures and no hazard trees are exempt from the Local Fire Debris Removal Program requirements. Property owners who believe they are exempt are encouraged to submit an "Exemption from Local Program Requirements for Minor Burn Debris Removal and Clean-Up" form (see **Attachment H**) to the County for review and approval to ensure there is no hold on future building permits.

Property owners may begin clean-up which includes removal of burned or damaged personal items and burned vegetation and landscape debris once their Exemption from Local Program Requirements form is approved by the County. In addition, debris from burned fences and structures less than 120 square feet in size where a demolition permit is NOT required by the Local Building Official may be exempt from the Local Program Requirements.