

Frequently Asked Questions for Property Owners who elect NOT to participate in the Government-Run Debris Removal Program and Ineligible Properties

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

1. 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 property owner's expense and must meet or exceed the program standards set by local, state, and federal agencies. An approved Opt-out Application and Eaton & Palisades Fire Debris Removal Permit are required prior to commencing debris removal. The work must be done to the 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.

2. I have elected to opt-out of the Government-Run Debris Removal Program, what application do I submit for debris removal?

Property owners who elect to opt-out of the Government-run Debris Removal Program must submit a "Los Angeles County Local Fire Debris Removal Program Application" (available at the following website: recovery.lacounty.gov). Once the opt-out application is submitted, you will need to apply for a "Eaton & Palisades Fire Debris Removal" permit through the County's EPIC-LA system (epicla.lacounty.gov). A copy of the completed opt-out application and supporting documentation is required for the County to issue approval to proceed with debris removal.

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?

An Eaton & Palisades Fire Debris Removal Permit will be required before clearing a fire damaged structure from a property. You will need to apply for an Eaton & Palisades Fire Debris Removal permit through the County's EPIC-LA system (epicla.lacounty.gov). A separate demolition permit will not be required. Los Angeles County Public Works is coordinating with each affected jurisdiction to review and issue permits for the Eaton & Palisades Fire Local Fire Debris Removal Program. There will be no permit application fees required for an Eaton & Palisades Fire Debris Removal Permit.

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

Once you have completed the application process through EPIC-LA, a permit will be issued; however, if there are elements of your application that are missing, you will have to provide the necessary information to proceed with the work.

5. 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?

No, property owners whose residential structure(s) and/or accessory structure(s) sustained partial damage as a result of the 2025 wildfires do not need to complete the Local Fire Debris Removal Program but are still subject to the Management of Los Angeles County Wildfire Debris. 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:

- Any structure with minimal fire damage where other portions of the structure have not been exposed to fire.
 - where vertical and horizontal structural elements (i.e., stud walls, beams, joists, rafters, trusses, etc.) remain intact, and
 - when a demolition permit is not required to repair the non-structural damage.

6. What are the requirements for fire debris removal, disposal, and recycling?

Appropriately licensed contractors must remove, transport, and dispose of all fire ash and debris, hazard trees, metals, and concrete from the site properly in a manner that does not create a nuisance at the site or to the public. Since this material is considered Hazardous under state regulations, only contractors with a HAZ endorsement may be utilized for fire debris removal. All waste must be disposed of at an approved Solid Waste Facility from the list provided by Public Works.

7. How do I remove cars and other vehicles from the property that have been destroyed by the fire? Who can I 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. Property owners are advised to contact their local California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office for steps to document vehicle status prior to disposal. A Statement of Facts form (REG 256) can be accessed from the DMV website (<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/forms/>) in order to document that the vehicle was burned/damaged by wildfire. Vehicle owners may submit the completed form to either 1)

their local DMV office, 2) fax it to the Technical Compliance Section (TCS) directly at 916-657-6763 or 3) mail their completed form to:

Department of Motor Vehicles, Technical Compliance Section
P.O. Box 94869 MS C271
Sacramento, CA 94269-0001

For additional assistance, please refer to the following list: <https://fire.lacounty.gov/wpcontent/uploads/2024/01/Active-ER-Company-List-12.21.23.pdf>.

If property owners opt-in to the Government-run Debris 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. My property was “Deferred to Phase 2” by the EPA for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW): What is considered HHW? Where do I dispose of HHW and Electronics (E-waste)?

Household hazardous waste (HHW) is waste 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.

Properties deferred to Phase 2 by the EPA may not have had any HHW removed during Phase 1. All HHW should be identified, segregated, and disposed of at an HHW disposal facility by a certified hazardous materials/waste contractor. Confirmation of the proper disposal of HHW will be required to obtain a debris removal permit through EPIC-LA.

The County does not endorse any companies to provide household hazardous materials/waste removal services. Owners are encouraged to visit the California Department of Consumer Affairs Contractors State License Board for general information regarding contractors: http://www.cslb.ca.gov/Media_Room/Disaster_Help_Center/.

9. How do I dispose of asbestos?

All asbestos must be abated before debris removal can begin. Asbestos or asbestos-containing materials (ACM) require assessment by a Certified Asbestos Consultant (CAC). Asbestos and ACM must be removed by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor.

A copy of the Asbestos Report from a CAC must be provided showing no asbestos onsite to obtain your debris removal permit through EPIC-LA.

Cal/OSHA Asbestos Consultant Database: [Division of Occupational Safety and Health](#)
Contractors State License Board: [A Consumer’s Guide to Asbestos](#)

10. Do I need to test my soil? What are the guidelines and processes for obtaining soil clearance?

Once the burn ash and debris are removed, the upper 6 inches of soil from the ash footprint is to be removed to a level of visibly clean. Soil testing is not required, however, if adequate proof of cleanup is not provided, then confirmation of soil testing may be required prior to rebuild permits being issued.

11. What is considered a Hazard Tree? How will I know if Hazard Tree removal is required on my property? What are my options for removing hazard trees 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 the fire that their structural integrity is compromised and pose an immediate threat of falling onto a public right-of-way or public improved property such as a road or government facility.

Removal of a Hazard Tree is the responsibility of the property owner.

12. How do I dispose of burned bushes and vegetation?

Burned vegetation can be removed by property owners. If small enough, burned vegetation can typically be disposed of in your regular trash, call your local waste hauler to confirm requirements and/or schedule a bulky item pick up or excess green waste. Larger items or volumes too large for regular trash service should be disposed of by taking the material to a certified waste disposal facility.

13. 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 foundations remain in place, approval from the Los Angeles County Building and Safety or the City Building Official will be required prior to reusing the foundation as part of the building permit for new structures. The building official may require foundations to be removed at the property owners' expense prior to issuing a building permit.

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

After permit issuance and implementation of the removal work, the property owner must submit a certification showing that all work has been completed as specified. Upon the County's review, the property owner and their contractor will receive a confirmation of completion through the EPIC-LA system. The work must be completed in accordance with the program standards set forth by the County and State by **June 30, 2025**.

15. 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-run Debris Removal Program or the property owner obtains permission from the County to carry out a private cleanup of the property. Clean-up of debris without prior authorization may impact your ability to obtain building permits to rebuild.

16. 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 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.

19. I have completed my fire debris removal. When can I start the rebuilding process?

The rebuilding process can start after confirmation of completion through the EPIC-LA system has been sent to the owner and contractor. For properties within the Los Angeles County Unincorporated Areas, the rebuilding process will first require plan approval from the Department of Regional Planning. Thereupon, a building and/or grading permit application can be made with the Department of Public Works (Building and Safety Division), and agency referrals will be provided. Once the building and/or grading plan is approved and all agency referrals are satisfied, the building and/or grading permits can be obtained to start rebuilding.

For properties that are not within the Los Angeles County Unincorporated Areas, please contact your local building official for details.

20. 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 from the Building Permit Viewer website at <http://pw.lacounty.gov/bsd/bpv>. For more information, please contact your local building official for details.

