

# Private Property Debris Removal: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated 2/8/2018

## 1. What do I do with mud, rocks, and other debris that is on my property?

For a list of locations where materials can be disposed, along with associated pricing, please consult the Waste Removal Options handout. This list is continuously updated as new locations become available, so please review on a regular basis.

The cost to dispose of these materials is typically less if materials can be separated by material type rather than mixed together. For example, facilities typically charge less for a load of soil only rather than a load of soil, rocks, and a damaged couch. As a result, you should try to separate materials by type on your property before hauling the material to a facility for processing or disposal.

A majority of this material is not considered hazardous. There are people interested in receiving soil and rocks. The County has developed a Material Exchange Website for people to post their interest in receiving different types of debris material. It is up to all interested parties to determine how the material is transported from one property to another. This will provide a cost-effective means of removing debris from your property.

## 2. I am interested in getting some soil or rocks to use on my property or for my business. How can I get these materials?

The County has developed a Material Exchange Website for people to post their interest in receiving different types of debris material. Please post the type of material you are interested in and your contact information at <http://sbcountymaterialexchange.com/> so property owners can contact you directly to arrange a sharing of the resource.

## 3. Why aren't there more places to take the debris locally?

Much of the debris does not need to be buried in a landfill, which typically has higher tipping fees to cover the cost for stringent regulatory and monitoring costs associated with managing material that could pose a threat to humans and the environment. As such, the County has reached out to a variety of companies that are interested in receiving dirt, rocks, and organics to determine their interest and cost for receiving these non-regulated materials. Unfortunately, there are no outlets for these types of materials locally and will require that a property owner hire a hauling company to deliver material to these sites.

The County continues to search for new opportunities or outlets for this material (including reaching out to Ventura County operations) and will be continuously updating its list.

In addition, the County has been searching for larger properties within the southern Santa Barbara County area that are zoned or would be appropriate for managing this type of material. A solution has not been found but the list will be updated if this effort is successful.

**4. I will be starting to remove debris from my property, either by myself or through a contractor. How can I do it safely?**

- Remember to wear protective gear during cleaning. Wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, rubber boots, and nitrile gloves.
- If there is potential for exposure to wet mud, a water-repellent bodysuit should be worn.
- If there is potential for eye exposure, goggles should be worn.
- If you are in an area where there is dried mud or dust, an N95 mask should be worn.
- For concerns about injuries sustained during mud clean-up, particularly wound exposure to mud, consult with your physician.

**5. I am starting to remove debris from my property. What guidelines should I follow to protect the built and natural environment?**

There are a variety of conditions that a property owner should be aware of and they are addressed under the following questions below.

**6. Can mud and debris removal equipment be parked or stored on private property?**

Yes. However, mud and debris removal equipment should never be parked or stored in areas of the property that could be impacted by future storms.

**7. Can I dump mud and debris in creeks or other water channels on my property?**

No. Mud and debris can never be dumped into creeks or other water channels. Doing so can add to any impacts from future storms and potentially cause flooding and debris flows.

**8. Can I dump mud and debris down storm drains or the sanitary sewer system?**

No. Mud and debris can never be dumped into storm drains or the sanitary sewer system. Doing so can cause these systems to fail. Dumping into storm drains will further add to any impacts from future storms and potentially cause flooding. Additionally, dumping into the sanitary sewer system is a violation of Montecito Sanitary District Ordinance No. 12 and the California Plumbing Code. Any violations of this ordinance and code will be subject to civil citations and criminal charges.

When cleaning the hardscape on your property, sweep mud and debris into a trash container or onto a landscaped area. This will help conserve water and not overload the local wastewater treatment facility.

If an area must be hosed down, divert water onto an unpaved portion of your property rather than letting the water drain off of your property and into the storm water drainage system.

**9. The storm drain or culvert is clogged with mud and debris. Who is responsible for cleaning this?**

- If the clog is on a private road, it is the responsibility of the homeowner or the Homeowners' Association (HOA) to unclog any storm drains or culverts.
- If the clog is on a public County road, contact the County Transportation Division at 805-568-3000.
- If the clog is on a highway (e.g. Highway 192), contact CalTrans at 805-549-3237.

**10. I am concerned about hitting or breaking a gas line or another utility line during the removal of mud and debris from my property. How do I avoid doing so?**

By law, homeowners are required to call 811 ("Dig Alert") before commencing any digging or material or debris removal that could compromise utility lines. Some utilities also have above-ground infrastructure that may be obscured by mud and debris. Homeowners should contact utility companies directly with any questions:

- SoCalGas 1-800-GAS-2200 (1-800-427-2200)
- Southern California Edison 1-800-250-7339
- Montecito Water District 1-805-969-2271
- Montecito Sanitary District 1-805-969-4200

**11. What should I do with household hazardous waste that I find while removing mud and debris?**

If you find household hazardous waste or containers that you suspect may contain household hazardous waste, separate that material from the mud and debris. These materials need to be disposed of separately. Set it aside at a location on the property where it will not be disturbed, preferably on an impervious surface such as plastic sheeting. County Public Health is organizing a separate collection program for this material in the next month.

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

**12. Where is my car? What should I do with vehicles that I find on my property that don't belong to me?**

If your car is missing, please call the California Highway Patrol with your vehicle's license and/or VIN at 805-477-4174 or 805-967-1234. If there is a vehicle that doesn't belong to you on your property and you need assistance, call 805-681-4342.

**13. How can I dispose of Electronics and White Goods such as washing machines, dryers, and refrigerators?**

These items can be taken to the County's South Coast Recycling & Transfer Station at 4430 Calle Real. You can visit [LessIsMore.org](http://LessIsMore.org) for more information or call 805-681-4345.

**14. Who do I contact if I find animal remains on my property?**

Contact Santa Barbara County Animal Services at 805-681-5285 to remove animal remains.

**15. What should I do if I find personal belongings of others or human remains while working on my property?**

With so much destruction, many people lost personal and meaningful belongings like photographs, jewelry, art, etc. Sadly, there are people who are also still identified as missing. If you discover anything on your property that falls into these two categories, please call law enforcement at 805-683-2724.

**16. I've heard of communities where the government provides a program to clean up private property. Is the County, State, or FEMA going to provide that program to Montecito property owners? If not, why not?**

There are many communities in California that were severely impacted by fires that partnered with the state and FEMA to assist with their recovery. These communities were eligible for debris removal assistance because burn debris is considered hazardous and presents a public health threat emergency. Samples of mud flow debris were collected from 10 areas in Montecito and, with the exception of short-term high bacteria levels, the constituents of the debris are not hazardous. As a result, there are limited opportunities for the state and FEMA to assist with the removal of mud flow debris from private property.

It is important to remember that different state and national agencies are continuing to assist us with clearing of the debris basins and creek channels to limit impacts from future rain events.

**17. Are there any volunteer groups available to help clear properties?**

Montecito residents who need help removing debris can call Santa Barbara County VOAD at 805-682-2226 to obtain volunteer assistance.