Victorian Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements

Tip Sheet 2: Removal of debris from residential properties to make them safe & habitable (Category A - Clause 4.2.2 (e))

## Introduction

Victoria's Natural Disaster Financial Assistance (NDFA) scheme is available to Delivery Agencies including local councils, to relieve some of the financial burden that may be experienced following a disaster in accordance with the [Australian Government’s Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA)](https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/Documents/Natural-Disaster-Relief-and-Recovery-Arrangements/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-2018.pdf). The DRFA does not cover all costs resulting from a disaster.

This Tip Sheet relates to Clause 4.2.2 (b) under Category A of the DRFA for the **removal of debris from residential properties to make them safe and habitable**. Category A is intended to help individuals who have been directly affected by an *eligible disaster* and are unable to meet their immediate emergency needs.

**Examples of costs associated with the removal of debris from residential properties to make them safe & habitable**

Some costs which are associated with the removal of debris from residential properties to make them safe and habitable and therefore, preventing displacement, are eligible for reimbursement. The only exception to this is if a residential property, such as a holiday home, is damaged and there is hazardous waste (such as asbestos) on that property, which is preventing other residents from returning to their principal place of residence.

This measure is not intended to cover non-essential debris removal activities occurring beyond the immediate vicinity of a residential property (i.e. the residential block), therefore debris located beyond the immediate vicinity of a residential property is ineligible, unless it can be demonstrated that it has been removed initially from the immediate vicinity of a residential property. For rural properties, the residential component is the area clearly identifiable as residential and not used for farming purposes (i.e. residential premises and immediate surroundings).

Examples of costs eligible and ineligible associated with the removal of debris to make them safe and habitable are included in Tables 1 and 2, respectively:

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| Table 1: Eligible Costs |
| **Clean-up activities inside and immediately outside a home** including the removal of damaged furniture, whitegoods, building material debris (such as tiles, bricks, and broken glass) and spoiled perishable food. |
| Removal of **septic waste**. |
| Removal of fallen trees and green waste as well as the removal of trees (i.e. tree stumps) which have become dangerous as a direct result of the disaster (refer Figure 1) below. |
| **Removal of dead animals (including livestock such as cows and sheep) if it occurs within the residential component of a rural property, or within the area immediately surrounding** the main access to the house (i.e. driveways), or where it could potentially present a health and safety threat to residents living in the house (i.e. by contaminating drinking water). For rural properties, the residential component is the area clearly identifiable as residential and not used for farming purposes (i.e. residential premise and immediate surroundings). |
| **Removal of disaster related debris** (such as mud). |
| **Removal of hazardous material (such as asbestos) which has been exposed** as a direct result of the eligible disaster. Hazardous material located beyond the residential block which is causing potential health and safety risks for the household, is also eligible to be removed (Refer Figure 1).  |
| **Clearing roofs, blocked drains, guttering and downpipes** |
| Establishment of **temporary dump sites for disposing of disaster related debris** (includes establishment, operation, and decommissioning costs). |
| **The engagement of contractors or the hiring of skips, transportation and disposal costs for the debris** including any temporary dump sites to accommodate debris removal, the hire of additional specialised cleaning machinery, the replacement of consumable items (i.e. chainsaw chains and fuel) and extraordinary staffing costs (i.e. overtime and allowances waived – for example, if a local council allows households to dispose of their disaster related debris free of cost at a council owned dump site. Costs associated with **mulching (excluding any sale costs if sold)** is also eligible. |

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| Table 2: Ineligible Costs |
| The **removal of a tree or debris (including tree stumps) where it is unclear** if a tree was falling in the immediate vicinity of a residential property or where it is unclear as to the location of the debris. |
| **Sheds or similar structures**, and **backyards** of residential properties. |
| **Non-residential properties** such as community assets, parks, cemeteries, and commercial properties. |
| **Kerbside waste picked up** as per normal council arrangements i.e. weekly. |
| Removal of debris located **beyond the immediate vicinity of a residential property** including debris associated with livestock such as cows and sheep. |
| The **rebuilding of fencing on a residential property** including costs associated such as fuel for generators and volunteer organisations engaged to undertake the works. |

Delivery Agencies are required to provide supporting documentation that clearly illustrates how the debris is impacting and therefore, not allowing the impacted individual or household to return to live in their home for each residential property. Photos and/or residential property site drawings are best to capture this information for each residential property or other evidence that an invoice that clearly indicates each of the residential properties assisted and the location of the debris and how the debris is impeding access or preventing the impacted household in returning to live in their home.

Figure 1 shows the residential area that is considered eligible for clean-up activities and the fall arc for eligible and ineligible trees including the impact on primary access.

Figure 1



## Key time limits

The following table presents the time limits for works completion and claims lodgement for eligible works under the DRFA.

Table 3: Key time limits

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| Claim type | Works completed | Claims lodgement  |
| Removal of debris from residential properties to make them safe and habitable | **Within 3 months** from the eligible disaster occurring. Subject to the severity and nature of a disaster, further time may be required for the removal of debris from residential properties to make them safe and habitable and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests for an Extension of time (EOT) is required to be lodged in the CMS two weeks prior to the end of the allowable time limit. | Regular claims are to be submitted. All claims including supporting documentation are to be submitted as expenditure is incurred throughout the financial year and no later than the 31 July (one month after the end of the financial year) |

## Claims requirements

Delivery Agencies are required to provide the following supporting documentation associated with the removal of debris from residential properties to make them safe and habitable, as specified above to support their claims, **in the Administering Authority’s Claims Management System (CMS).** The required documents outlined in Table 4 are to be uploaded in the Claims module of the CMS when lodging a claim. **All supporting documentation lodged are to be structured and cross referenced to allow third party verification. This will facilitate the timely processing of claims and the State and Commonwealth audit review process.**

Table 4: Documents to be lodged into the CMS

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| **Supporting documentation required** | **File type and name** |
| Claim Lodgement Declaration Form - **Form ID V Form D-DEC** | V Form D-Dec.pdf or V Form D-Dec.xlsx |
| Claim form - **Form ID V Form A-Relief Recovery**Claim form provided must reconcile to the final amount in the claim lodgement declaration form. | V Form A-RR.xlsx |
| **Proof of expenditure/General Ledger** (providedfrom the Council’s financial system) including a detailed general ledger/transaction report displaying all expenditure incurred for eligible activities, being claimed within a specific financial year. General ledger provided must reconcile to the final amount in the claim lodgement declaration form.In the case where works on an invoice is only being partially claimed, the General Ledger should reflect the full invoice amount. The invoice should show the works which are being claimed, with the claimed amount entered on the claim form. Delivery Agencies should refer to How To Sheet 1: Examples of Best Practice Claim Forms for Category A & B Counter Disaster Operations for examples of a Delivery Agency can provide best practice examples of claim forms, general ledger and invoices relating to Category A or Category B CDO expenditure. | Zipped folder: **Financials.zip** |
| **Invoices to include:** * Reference to the disaster event (including the eligible event name (AGRN) if that is available, descriptions of works/activities and dates when undertaken.
* Source documents (e.g. contracts, purchase orders, emails or other supporting information) supporting the invoice to be available for sampling upon request.
* Where invoices do not fully outline the link to the event and/or the works/activities undertaken, source documents are to be provided when lodging that claim.
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| **Photographic evidence** Delivery Agencies are required to provide supporting documentation that clearly illustrates how the debris is impacting and therefore, not allowing the impacted individual or household to return to live in their home for each residential property. Photos and/or residential property site drawings are best to capture this information for each residential property or other evidence that an invoice that clearly indicates each of the residential properties assisted and the location of the debris and how the debris is impeding access or preventing the impacted household in returning to live in their home.Delivery Agencies may also provide copies of secondary impact assessment reports illustrating the location of the debris on the residential property as evidence.Post disaster photo filesDelivery Agencies should refer to the [*How To Guide 2: Photographic Evidence*](https://www.vic.gov.au/drfa-resources-guidelines-and-forms#category-b) for advice on how they should provide photographic evidence from July 2024. to maximise reimbursement of expenditure associated with undertaking emergency works.Photo reports/files should be presented in subfolders within the zipped folder, grouped by address with metadata intact and are to be assigned a unique photo ID that corresponds with the reference to the photo within the relevant claim form. For photos that do not contain the metadata, a separate folder should be provided for the original photo files containing the metadata, within the address folder. | Zipped folder: **Photos.zip** |
| **Payroll** Payroll reports for extraordinary payroll costs (overtime). Timesheets to be available for sampling upon request. | Zipped folder: **Payroll.zip** |
| **Reports and additional supporting paperwork** Other examples of source documents that may be provided include customer service requests, agendas, minutes of meetings, any reports developed on particular works/activities being undertaken, copies of handout materials etc. | Zipped folder: **Reports/additional supporting documents.zip** |

## Funding contributions

Funding assistance provided to Delivery Agencies for early relief and recovery activities and counter disaster operations undertaken as a direct result of an eligible disaster event are outlined in the table below.

**Table 5: Funding contributions**

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| Assistance type | Delivery Agencies (with no insurance arrangements in place) |
| Removal of debris from residential properties to make them safe and habitable | 100% of approved works For these amounts to apply the total state expenditure for the eligible event must be more than $240,000.Where the event has not been notified to the Commonwealth, Delivery Agencies are required to incur the first $100,000 in eligible expenditure prior to receiving assistance under the NDFA.  |

## Further information

For further information, refer to the:

* [*How To Sheet 1: Best Practice Examples – Category A and B CDO*](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements-drfa-claims/victorian-drfa-how-to-sheet-1-category-a-b-cdo-best-practice-examples)which provides best practice examples on claim forms, general ledger and invoices for Category A and B CDO expenditure; and the
* [*Victorian DRFA Guideline 3: Claims and eligibility for relief and recovery activities (Category A) and counter disaster operations (CDO) – Category A & B*](file://G:\NDFA\NDFA%20Working%20Documents%20for%20DTF%20Website\2024\mockup%20of%20new%20GLs%20tip%20sheets%20etc\Cat%20A%20and%20Cat%20B%20CDO%20-%20February%202024\Victorian%20DRFA%20Guideline%203:%20Claims%20and%20eligibility%20for%20relief%20and%20recovery%20activities%20(Category%20A)%20and%20counter%20disaster%20operations%20(CDO)%20–%20Category%20A%20&%20B.)*.*

## Document details

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