

Private Property Debris Removal: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated 2/1/2018

1. What do I do with mud and debris that is on my property?

Mud and debris can be set aside in an area on the property for now. Doing so will minimize the amount of mud and debris being deposited in landfills and traffic congestion in the impacted areas. The County is currently developing a debris removal plan and will communicate this plan to the community in the coming weeks. Mud and debris should never be piled in a location (such as creek beds or other water channels) that will cause an impact in future storms.

Property owners removing mud and debris through private contractors can consult Public Work's [Waste Removal Options](#) handout for information on facilities accepting mud and debris.

The cost to dispose of these materials is typically less if materials can be separated by material type rather than mixed. For example, facilities typically charge less for a load of soil only rather than a load of soil, rocks, and a damaged couch.

2. Mud and debris remain on my property after street clearing. Does the County plan to remove that mud and debris from my property?

Right now, the County is prioritizing all available resources on clearing sediment and debris from stream channels, debris basins and public roads.

3. I'm a landscaper hired to remove the mud from a property. Do I need a permit? If so, where do I get it? If not, where do I dump the mud and debris?

Unless it changes the topography of the property, removal of mud and debris from a property does not require a grading permit.

If the property owner chooses to remove mud now with the assistance of landscapers and other private contractors, please consult Public Work's [Waste Removal Options](#) handout for information on facilities accepting mud and debris.

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The County is currently developing a debris removal plan and will communicate this plan to the community in the coming weeks.

4. I have some mud and debris on my property that I am cleaning myself. What is the best way to do this?

- When cleaning 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.
- 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, then 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. 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.

6. I am ready to start removing mud and debris now and have made arrangements for removal with a private contractor. Do I have to obtain a mud and debris removal permit or inform the County of my plans?

Unless it changes the topography of the property, removal of mud and debris from a property does not require a grading permit.

The County supports homeowners and their decision to begin debris removal through private contractors. Please consult the Public Work's [Waste Removal Options](#) handout for information on facilities accepting mud and debris.

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.

9. The storm drain or culvert is clogged with mud and debris. Whose 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. Large boulders are on my private property. Who is responsible for removing these?

The property owner is responsible for removal of large boulders on private property. Please consult Public Work's Waste Removal Options handout for information on haulers and facilities accepting boulders.

The County is considering coordinating a materials exchange program as there may be property owners and contractors interested in boulders and other materials from the mud and debris flow. Please consult the website www.CountyofSB.org for more information as it becomes available.

11. What do 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. The County is developing a plan or system for receiving and disposing of those materials.
- Household hazardous waste is waste from houses 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 filters, solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, propane tanks, disinfectants, aerosols, paint, and bleach.

12. 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