

Partnerships and Progress: A Unity of Effort to Clean Up Texas

Release Date: October 25, 2017

AUSTIN, Texas – Hurricane Harvey left a giant mess with a giant price tag. The whole community continues to pull together to perform a giant cleanup from one of the costliest disasters in state history.

Texans can see the progress made by local, state and federal partners—from the pace of curbside pickups to the number of cleaned up neighborhoods. While it takes time to round up a massive amount of storm debris spread across **300** miles of Texas, a significant amount has already been collected.

The scope of debris covers a wide range, such as:

- **BEACHES**—On Sept. 23, more than **5,000** volunteers picked up **40** tons of trash from **55** miles of Texas beaches during Adopt-a-Beach Day—organized by the Texas General Land Office (GLO), promoted by the Galveston Bay Foundation and held at **13** sites along the upper coast.
- **ROADS**—As of Oct. 1, just **37** days after Hurricane Harvey made its first landfall, more than **500** roadways had reopened after being cleared of water and debris, according to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). During the height of Harvey, TxDOT's DriveTexas.org website handled more than **5** million online visits to check road conditions, find alternate routes and see road closures in near real time.
- **COAST**—On Oct. 6, the GLO, in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard, announced plans to remove **300** displaced and sunken boats damaged in coastal waters as a result of Hurricane Harvey. Owners who are still missing a vessel should call **877-458-9377**.
- **LANDFILLS**—By Oct. 6, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) had approved **189** temporary debris management sites to handle massive quantities of debris. Field observers from TCEQ continue to visit and monitor staging areas and landfills to ensure compliance with environmental guidelines.



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- **HOMES**—As of Oct. 23, more than **23,000** Harvey survivors have called the Cleanup Assistance Hotline: **(844) 965-1386**. To date, more than **188** volunteer groups have completed **16,000** requests to muck and gut flood-damaged homes.

The money and the technical know-how needed to remove debris and clean up Texas come from many sources. Examples include:

- The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) offers low-interest disaster loans to businesses of all sizes (including landlords), nonprofits, homeowners and renters to cover uninsured/uncompensated losses or damage from Harvey—including the cost of debris removal. Apply online at disasterloan.sba.gov/ela. To date, the SBA has approved more than **\$1.4 billion** in disaster loans for Texans.
- Farmers, ranchers, foresters and livestock producers may be eligible for emergency loans through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its Farm Service Agency (FSA) to cover certain losses due to Harvey, such as crops and livestock. Those with questions should go online to fsa.usda.gov or visit an FSA office or USDA service center.
- Towns, cities, nonprofits and government agencies seeking reimbursement for their Hurricane Harvey expenses must first submit their Requests for Public Assistance forms to the Texas Division of Emergency Management. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will reimburse eligible jurisdictions for **90** percent of eligible and approved costs of debris removal, as well as emergency protective measures and the repair and replacement of disaster-damaged infrastructure.
- FEMA has obligated **\$220 million** in expedited funds for debris removal. In addition:
 - FEMA continues to provide technical assistance to the state and local communities on debris-related issues.
 - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is providing technical assistance and engineering support for debris removal to FEMA. The Corps is also working with local governments to assist them with assessing their debris removal needs.
- If requested by local governments, TxDOT may clear debris that poses a threat to public health and safety in those communities that have exhausted all other resources and/or don't have the ability to contract for debris removal services.



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- Due to the magnitude of debris generated by Harvey, FEMA agreed to reimburse eligible applicants for the one-time removal of storm debris from industrial and commercial sites and houses of worship, under certain conditions with prior approval.
- As an incentive, eligible jurisdictions can earn additional funding for recycling material throughout their debris removal operation. Those earnings will not be deducted from any FEMA funding.

As of Oct. 23, the various jurisdictions working on the Harvey clean-up in Texas had picked up around **7.9 million** cubic yards of storm debris using contracted labor, existing staff, workers on loan from neighboring communities and the TxDOT. Examples of their progress and timelines include:

- By Oct. 4, the city of Port Arthur in Jefferson County had collected more than **159,000 cubic yards** of storm debris out of an estimated total **1 million** cubic yards.
- The city of Sugar Land completed debris cleanup on Oct. 5, reporting nearly **2,000** cubic yards of storm debris in two full sweeps and spot collections.
- On Oct. 6, Texas Governor Greg Abbott presented **\$50 million** to the city of Houston to assist with urgent debris removal funding. The money came from the state's disaster relief fund. For updates on Houston's debris removal efforts, go online to HoustonRecovers.org. By Oct. 11, the city of Houston picked up **1 million** cubic yards of Harvey debris and completed its first pass of storm debris collection.
- By Oct. 16, TxDOT had collected **10 million** cubic feet of debris—or the equivalent of 186 football fields—from the hardest hit areas on the coast from Corpus Christi to Beaumont.
- Aransas County—which includes the hard-hit city of Rockport and the town of Fulton—had picked up more than **1.1 million** cubic yards of debris by Oct. 23.
- The city of Dickinson in Galveston County plans to make its final curbside pickup of storm debris Oct. 25.



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Cleanup from Harvey clearly requires a unity of effort by local, state and federal partners to achieve a shared goal. Due to the size of the disaster, debris collection and disposal could take as long as a year to complete. Recovery officials remind the public that debris removal involves slow-moving heavy equipment. Motorists and pedestrians need to give crews plenty of room to work.

For more information on Hurricane Harvey and Texas recovery, visit the [Hurricane Harvey disaster web page](#), the [FEMA Harvey Facebook page](#) at www.facebook.com/FEMAHarvey/, the [@FEMARegion6 Twitter account](#), and the [Texas Division of Emergency Management website](#) at www.dps.texas.gov/dem/.



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