



# FEMA

## RECOVERY POLICY - RP9523.12

**I. TITLE: Debris Operations – Hand-Loaded Trucks and Trailers**

**II. DATE:** May 1, 2006

**III. PURPOSE:**

To describe the criteria the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will use to reimburse applicants for eligible debris removal accomplished with trucks and trailers loaded physically by hand, rather than with mechanical equipment.

**IV. SCOPE AND AUDIENCE:**

The policy is applicable to all major disasters and emergencies declared on or after the date of publication. It is intended for all personnel involved in the administration and execution of the Public Assistance Program, including applicants.

**V. AUTHORITY:**

Sections 403 and 407 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5206, as amended.

**VI. BACKGROUND:**

A. Debris removal companies under contract with local governments have frequently supplemented their vegetative debris removal operations by hiring subcontractors who modify their trucks and trailers by extending sidewalls with plywood or other materials to increase the vehicle's load capacity. Because of the tenuous nature of these improvements, operators typically load these vehicles physically by hand. The inefficiencies associated with loading these trucks or trailers by hand, instead of using mechanical equipment, effectively negates the increased capacity advantages of these vehicles. Hand loading cannot achieve compaction levels comparable to mechanically loaded vehicles. Further, the unit cost for transporting debris is based on mechanical loading of trailers and trucks.

B. FEMA performed studies throughout the State of Florida following the four devastating hurricanes in 2004 and determined that a mechanically-loaded vehicle had a weight-to-volume ratio at least twice that of hand-loaded vehicles. In other words, vehicles of the same measured capacity that were loaded by mechanical equipment and reasonably compacted carried at least

