

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Joint Field Office

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FEMA

March 6, 2006

The Honorable Gene Taylor
United States House of Representatives
701 Main Street, Suite 215
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401

Re: Concrete Slabs
Hurricane Katrina, FEMA-1604-DR-MS

Dear Congressman Taylor:

This is in response to your recent inquiry regarding the eligibility of concrete slabs. Under the Public Assistance Program, debris removal from the public right of way is an eligible cost for reimbursement if removed by an eligible applicant who has legal authority/responsibility to perform such work. However, debris removal from private property is usually the responsibility of the owner but if placed on the right of way can be removed by the local government.

In past disasters, the Public Assistance Program has taken the position that a slab is not an immediate threat to the public even during the demolition of structures. In addition, slabs placed/pushed to the right of way were considered ineligible debris.

During Hurricane Katrina, it was determined that debris was so widespread that it was in the public interest to remove debris from private property. This was outlined in FEMA's disaster specific guidance. If the concrete slab is intact in its original location on a piece of property, it is not an immediate threat to the health and safety of the public and therefore ineligible (unless it is undermined and hanging, or broken up into many pieces and now a potential health and safety threat).

For this disaster, it has been determined that FEMA will reimburse the local government for removing concrete slabs that have been placed/pushed to the right of way by the homeowner until June 30, 2006.

If this office can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

James N. Russo
James N. Russo

Federal Coordinating Officer/
Disaster Recovery Manager
FEMA-1604-DR-MS