



Recovering and Rebuilding After Natural Disasters

Properties impacted by a recent natural disaster can begin the rebuild/repair process by taking the steps below. Note this is not an exhaustive list but highlights key actions.

Photograph damage to structures, utilities, vehicles & personal items for insurance claims

Contact your insurance provider immediately to initiate the claim process if you have not already done so.

Before Cleanup Begins

Expect lingering hazards such as unstable structures, damaged utilities, compromised fuel tanks, exposed chemicals, etc. Materials in the fire zone may be contaminated and cause health issues. If sifting through ash for personal items, use protective gear such as a properly fitted N95 or P100 mask, gloves, booties, long-sleeves, and pants, and follow [Northern Nevada Public Health guidance](#). Nevada Dept. of Environmental Protection is available to provide guidance 24/7 on hazardous materials at (888) 331-6337.

Permits for Demolition, Repairs and Rebuilds

The Washoe County Building Program issues building and demolition permits for properties in unincorporated Washoe County (outside the cities of Reno and Sparks). Permit applications and plans are submitted online at www.onenv.us. Permits to demo/rebuild/repair properties affected by a natural disaster will be prioritized for processing and review. You can obtain information on building permits or schedule a meeting via www.washoecounty.gov/building. We are available M-F, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

For the smoothest and most efficient permitting and construction processes, it is recommended to start by hiring a Nevada licensed design professional (ex. engineer, architect, etc.) to prepare all plans and required submittal documents, as well as a licensed contractor for the construction and debris removal. Contractors and design professionals will also assist with permit submittal, providing the opportunity for the fastest timeframes from submittal to issuance through to final inspection and Certificate of Occupancy.

Demolition (Demo) Permit Requirements

Demo permits are required for damaged or destroyed structures and utilities. These permits help ensure your safety, including safe disposal protocols for hazardous materials (ex. toxic residue, asbestos, and ash contaminated with heavy metals). They also may be required for insurance claims processes. Demo permits can either be included on a rebuild/repair permit or can be pulled in advance.

Note that permitting requirements are different based on whether the permit is pulled by an owner residing in the home or if the permit is for a rental or non-residential structure.

For residential structures with the owner residing in the home (i.e. owner/builder), demo permits must include:

- A demo permit application (visit www.washoecounty.gov/building, then click on Residential Projects, then Demolition Permit Application)
- Plans indicating the extent of the demo
 - For a complete loss, this can be a site plan or simple aerial photo showing the structure that has been lost
 - For a partial loss, this should include floor plans and elevations/sections. Structural details and other information may be required. Contact the Building Program for more detail based on your specific circumstances.
- Details on how utilities will be addressed (ex. water, sewer, electrical, gas, etc.)
 - For a complete loss, a simple site plan can show where electrical is terminated and where other utilities have been capped (ex. at the property line, in the foundation, etc.)
 - For a partial loss, the site plan should also show where the utility lines run.
 - These plans can be supplemented by notes on the same sheet that provide a narrative description.
- Indicate if any grading will be done during the demo
 - This information can generally be provided in a note format; however, if more than 50 cubic yards of cut or fill is planned, additional information will need to be provided and our team can give you more details based on the scope of grading proposed.
 - Note that FEMA recommends 3-6 inches of soil be removed below the ash, although this is not required.
- Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH) will require what is called an Acknowledgement of Asbestos Assessment (AAA) during this process, in addition to a Notification of Demolition.
 - Although NNPH does not require asbestos testing on residential demos, NV OSHA may if others are hired to complete the work (NV OSHA can be reached at 775-688-3700).
 - Whether or not asbestos testing is specifically required, the AAA is still required for all demos. The AAA is free for single-family residential structures.
 - If material on site tests positive for asbestos, a licensed abatement contractor should be used for removal.
 - A Notification of Demolition is required prior to removal of ash and debris and includes a fee paid directly to NNPH.
 - Full details about these steps are available at <https://www.nnph.org/programs-and-services/air-quality/Asbestos.php>
 - Lists of inspectors who test for presence of asbestos, and local asbestos removal contractors, are also available through the link above.

State law allows owner/builders to complete work themselves on homes within which they reside; however, anyone hired to complete the work must be licensed contractors.

For non-residential structures, or residential structures not occupied by the property owner, demo permits must:

- Include the information above and also be prepared and submitted by licensed design professionals or the contractor who will be completing the work.

- Licensed contractors must complete all work.
- Demo permits for non-residential structures will require asbestos testing.
- Demo permits for non-residential structures will be routed to multiple agencies for review, who may require additional information depending on the specifics of the business and extent of the on-site damage.

Required documents* for residential repair/rebuild permits may include but are not limited to:

- Complete written application
- Complete plan set including civil, architectural, structural, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing drawings
- Structural calculations and geotechnical reports
- Energy compliance (REScheck) and Mechanical Calculations (Manual J, S, and D)
- Truss calculations certification and Special Inspection documents
- If the property is served by a septic system, please contact David Kelly or Latricia Lord of NNPH for more information at 775-328-2434.

*Required documents will vary depending on the scope of work being permitted. For more information, visit www.washoecounty.gov/building/Residential_Projects, then click on "Applications and Handouts."

Permit Submittal

When submitting for a Washoe County building permit for a demo/repair/rebuild after a natural disaster:

- Submit electronically at www.onenv.us
- Indicate the disaster that affected the property and whether the submittal is for a rebuild or repair (EX. HAWK FIRE REBUILD, HIDDEN VALLEY FLOOD REPAIRS, etc.) in the application name and at the beginning of the description.
- After submittal, notify Washoe County Permit Services Coordinator Jake Osborn at josborn@washoecounty.gov so that your application can be prioritized.

Permitting Process

- Upon receiving notification of a disaster demo/repair/rebuild permit submittal, the permit services coordinator will ensure that the submittal gets assigned for processing on the next business day.
- Once the initial processing is complete, the assigned permit technician will notify the primary contact about next steps in the permitting process. This may include payment of initial fees, to provide any missing documentation, or to update documents so the reviews can be completed. Once initial fees are invoiced and payment is made, the plans will be routed to the necessary agencies for review (ex. Engineering, Northern Nevada Public Health, Truckee Meadows Fire, etc.). Review of these submittals will be expedited.
- When all reviews have been completed, the primary contact will be notified whether the plans have been approved or if items need to be corrected. If corrections are required and updated plans submitted, this process will continue until the plans are approved by all agencies.
- The permit will be issued once all approvals are given, any other outstanding items are addressed, and the balance of permit fees are paid.
- Once the permit is issued, construction can begin according to the approved plans.

Key Contacts and Information (Permits, inspections and re-building support)

- Washoe County Building Permit Services Coordinator, Jake Osborn, (775) 328-2123
- Washoe County Building Manager/Official, Shawn Huff, (775) 328-2021
- Washoe County Planning & Building Division Director, Kelly Mullin, (775) 328-3619
- NNPH Air Quality Management Division (asbestos questions), (775) 784-7200
- NNPH Environmental Health Services (septic questions), (775) 328-2434
- Forms and general building permit information: www.washoecounty.gov/building
- To obtain copies of prior building plans that may be available, submit a public records request to washoe311@washoecounty.gov or via www.washoecounty.gov/311

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