



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

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## Building Policy 17. Demolition & Post-Disaster Reconstruction

### Previous Policies

This consolidated policy replaces and supersedes the following prior memoranda and policies:

- Building Memo 13: Replacing Structures within the Burn Area, December 28, 2017
- Building Policy 26: Demolition of Multiple Structures, June 17, 2024

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear, consistent procedures for:

- Demolition of structures requiring building permits;
- Demolition of multiple structures under a single permit;
- Replacement and reconstruction of structures damaged or destroyed by disasters or catastrophic events;
- Ensuring post-disaster reconstruction complies with current safety standards while recognizing lawful pre-existing development.

This policy is intended to support public safety, regulatory compliance, and efficient recovery following disaster events.

### Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Demolition:** The complete or partial removal of a structure or structural system, including foundations, or the complete removal of mechanical, electrical, or plumbing systems not associated with a structure.
- **Disaster or Catastrophic Event:** A declared or otherwise recognized event resulting in widespread structural damage, including but not limited to fire, flood, earthquake, landslide, or severe weather.
- **Replacement Structure:** A structure proposed to replace a lawfully existing structure damaged or destroyed by a disaster.
- **Pre-Disaster Structure:** A structure that was legally established prior to the disaster event.
- **Design Professional:** A California-licensed civil, structural, or geotechnical engineer, or architect, acting within their scope of practice

### Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Provide a consistent demolition permitting process
2. Allow efficiency when demolishing multiple structures on a single parcel
3. Establish clear requirements for post-disaster reconstruction in disturbed soils
4. Ensure rebuilt structures meet current life-safety standards

## Authority

The authority for this policy is contained in, but not limited to:

- Mendocino County Code (MCC) § 18.08.010 – Construction Permits and Inspection Fees
- California Building Code (CBC), Chapter 1
- Applicable California Environmental Health and Air Quality regulations

## Policy

### **1. Demolition Permits – General Applicability**

A demolition permit is required for the complete removal of any structure or structural system regulated by the Building Division.

Demolition permits apply to:

- Complete removal of a structure, including foundation systems
- Complete removal of mechanical, electrical, or plumbing systems not associated with a structure

A concrete slab foundation may be allowed to remain in place only if it does not violate any Mendocino County Planning, Building, or Environmental Health regulations

### **2. Demolition of Multiple Structures on a Single Permit – Submittal Requirements**

Demolition of multiple structures located on a single parcel may be permitted under one demolition permit and one permit fee, subject to the following submittal requirements:

1. All structures to be demolished must be identified on a single building permit application, including square footage and use.
2. A site map must be submitted showing all property lines, all structures on the property, and clearly identifying all structures to be demolished.
3. Structures must be located in the same immediate vicinity or adjacent to one another, with a maximum distance of 50 feet between structures.
4. All structures must be demolished concurrently.
5. A single final inspection shall verify demolition of all structures listed on the permit.

If the permit is not finalized at the initial inspection or correction notices require an additional inspection, a reinspection fee shall apply.

### **3. Demolition Clearance Requirements**

Prior to issuance of a demolition permit, the applicant shall submit a Mendocino County Air Quality clearance letter, when applicable.

The applicant shall maintain Construction Waste and Demolition Forms, to be collected at final inspection.

### **4. Post-Disaster Reconstruction – Permit Requirements**

Property owners who have lost structures as a result of a disaster or catastrophic event within Mendocino County shall be aware that, following debris removal and site clearing activities, a grading permit is required prior to the replacement of any fill material within areas that were excavated, disturbed, or altered during the removal of the previous structure.

This requirement applies regardless of whether debris removal was performed by a government agency, contractor, or the property owner.

To view the cleanup process for private residences, please visit the following link to the Department's Fire Recovery webpage:

<https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/planning-building-services/fire-recovery-info>

**5. Repairing a Structure Partially Damaged By Fire**

A permit shall be required for all repairs to fire damaged structures, no permit shall be issued without a plan review. The following materials shall be provided as part of the plan review process:

- A letter from a California Licensed Design Professional verifying the structural components to remain are adequate for continued use.
- Drawings identifying the damaged area / structural elements and construction details of the repairs are required to be approved by the California licensed design professional. Where fire damaged structural members are to remain the California Licensed Design Professional shall include information in the letter that they are adequate in strength.
- Where the California licensed design professional requires shoring of the damaged structure in the letter a separate permit for the shoring shall be required, otherwise all work to the damaged structure shall be issued under one permit. Note it is acceptable to secure the structure to protect or make safe, this includes boarding up of openings, adding furring or sheathing to roof or wall assemblies or other non-structural elements that will allow temporary securing or weather proofing of the structure until the permit is issued. Where water damaged materials (gypsum board & insulation) exist due to fire suppression operations, those items may be removed and properly disposed of to prevent further damage to the structure.

**6. Replacement Structures on Prior Foundation or Disturbed Soil Areas**

When a proposed replacement structure is to be constructed:

- Within the footprint of a previous structure, or
- Within areas where soil was excavated, disturbed, or otherwise impacted during foundation removal, debris removal, or site cleanup activities,

the applicant shall submit, at the time of building permit application and plan submittal, a compaction test report and letter of approval from a California-licensed design professional, including a civil, structural, or geotechnical engineer, that addresses:

1. Site conditions and soil suitability; and
2. Verification that the soils meet compaction requirements; and
3. Verification that the soils provide a minimum allowable bearing capacity of 1,500 pounds per square foot, unless an alternate value is justified by engineering analysis.

These materials shall confirm that the site conditions are suitable for the proposed replacement structure and that the work complies with applicable building and grading standards.

*This policy is effective as of the date of the signatures below.*

Policy Approved:   
Richard Angley, Chief Building Official

Date: 03-08-2026

Policy Approved:   
Julia Krog, Director

Date: 03-13-2026