FEMA Public Assistance – 406 Mitigation: Roads and Bridges (Category C)

DR-4856-CA

406 Mitigation Examples

Stabilize Road Embankments

- Reinforce slopes with geotextile or riprap to prevent erosion and landslides after vegetation loss.

Upsize Culverts

- Realign, upsize, or install multiple culverts under roadways that were washed out to improve drainage.

Improve Flow under Bridge Crossing

- Replace multi-spans with single, elevate, increase length, relief opening, low-flow crossing.

Construct Erosion and Scour Countermeasures

- Install riprap, increase footing depths, install flow deflectors, construct bridge wingwalls.

Strengthen Foundation and Bridge Deck/Substructure

- Replace combustible substructure materials with noncombustible materials such as steel or concrete.

Reduce Debris Damage

- Install debris deflectors, replace timber pier structure with a concrete column to protect against debris impact.

Background & Purpose

When roads or bridges are damaged in a declared disaster, FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program can fund repairs and restoration under **Category C**. Section 406 mitigation (PA-funded hazard mitigation) can also be added to those repairs to protect against future natural disaster damage-provided it is related to protecting the damaged elements and meets cost-effectiveness.

Core Mitigation Themes for Category C (Roads & Bridges)

- **Mitigation Objective:** Address future damages from natural disasters that render roads and bridges impassable and take steps to prevent or minimize damage to these facilities.
- **Bridges:** Evaluate every level of the structure and how it works with the environment. Improve flow under the bridge crossing, construct erosion and scour countermeasures, hardening bridge foundations and bridge deck/substructure, increase support for bridge deck.
- **Roadways:** Improve the road wholistically. Hardening the road surface, reinforcing the paved surface. Replace low traffic impervious surfaces with permeable pavement alternatives. Construct shoulder protection from erosion.

Common Pitfalls for Category C (Roads & Bridges)

- **Legal Responsibility:** Must be roads and bridges publicly-owned by applicant, where an eligible applicant has legal responsibility.
- **Disaster-Related Damage:** Roads and bridges necessitate detailed maintenance reports to identify damages and differentiate them from deferred maintenance.
- **Federal-Aid Routes:** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) can restore public roads and bridges through the Emergency Relief (ER) and rebuild roads and bridges more resiliently through the Betterment Program. FEMA cannot provide Public Assistance (PA) funding if another federal agency is authorized to restore facilities damaged in a major disaster.

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Practical Tips for Success

Document Pre-Disaster Condition

- Photos, inspection reports, maintenance records all help confirm which damages are disaster-related vs. pre-existing.

Scope of Work Clarity

- Separate the repair scope from 406 mitigation scope in your project description.
- Provide necessary engineering or hydrological studies for any capacity changes.

Cost Effectiveness & Reasonableness

- Use Appendix J measures if possible.
- If not in Appendix J, do a short BCA or coordinate with FEMA on cost-effectiveness.

Ask Early, Ask Often

- If you think an improvement qualifies as 406 mitigation, flag it to your FEMA/Cal OES PA contacts right away.

Funding Eligibility Dates

- January 8, 2025 – Major Disaster Declaration (DR-4856-CA)
- January 15, 2025 – Public Assistance Categories C-G Approved (permanent work)
- July 8, 2026 – 18 Month Permanent Work Deadline

Resources

- Public Assistance Program & Policy Guide-PAPPG v5 effective January 6, 2025
    - ***Disaster-Related Damage:*** *Pgs.187-194*
    - ***Appendix J.II. Transportation Facilities:*** *Pg. 315*
- Building Code and Floodplain Administration and Enforcement- FEMA Policy FP 204-079-01
- Public Assistance Companion Guide-Disaster Recovery Reform Act: Section 1206

Contact Us

Cal OES Public Assistance: disasterrecovery@caloes.ca.gov

406 Mitigation Process Timeline

1. Initial Damage Assessment: Inspect damaged areas and document disaster-related damage with photos, inspection reports, and maintenance records.

2. Project Planning: Define Scope of Work (SOW) for repairs and identify potential mitigation measures.

Select mitigation strategies like culvert upsizing or slope stabilization.

3. Application Preparation: Complete FEMA PA forms and compile all necessary documents, such as damage assessments, engineering plans, and cost estimates.

4. Submission & Review: Submit application by deadline; FEMA reviews for eligibility and compliance.

5. Approval & Funding: Receive funding allocation for approved repairs and mitigation activities.

6. Project Implementation: Begin repairs and mitigation while adhering to approved plans.

7. Monitoring & Reporting: Track progress and submit regular updates to FEMA/Cal OES.

8. Project Closeout: Conduct final inspections and submit final documents for reimbursement and closeout.