

The Virgin Islands Consortium

STEP Program Update: 50 Percent Of Debris Removed From St. Croix; 30 Percent From St. John And 20 Percent From St. Thomas

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Debris removal is underway for those enrolled in the Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power (STEP) program, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced today. According to the release, FEMA and the USVI have extended the STEP program until March 31, 2019, and an extension for debris pickup/removal has been requested and is currently under review.

The Department of Public Works (DPW), which manages the STEP debris removal process, has removed approximately 50 percent of debris from St. Croix, approximately

30 percent from St. John and approximately 20 percent from St. Thomas, according to the release.

FEMA said contractors are responsible for preparing neighborhoods for debris collection. This includes: lumber and galvanized debris only, separating and properly placing debris in the right-of-way area for pickup and removal by the DPW. Going onto private property is strictly prohibited by the DPW.

“FEMA continues to support the territory in this debris removal effort as it is a massive undertaking and a key component of the recovery process,” said Jacqueline Heyliger, U.S. Virgin Islands Recovery director. “We must continue to restore our residences and local communities amid ongoing challenges while we focus on the operation of separation, collection, pickup and recycling debris for final off-island removal.”

DPW and contractors continue to work on this debris removal task, FEMA said. For general inquiries and for more information about people with disabilities or access for those who have functional needs, contact the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority (VIHFA) on St. Croix at (340) 772-4HFA (4432), St. John/St. Thomas at (340) 777-4HFA (4432), or visit vihfa.gov. Be ready to provide an EHRVI Applicant Identification Number.

The STEP program is funded through FEMA’s Public Assistance program, but it is administered by the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority under the Emergency Home Repairs VI program (EHRVI). EHRVI allows people to live in their homes while repairs are being made. To contact (EHRVI) call 844-813-9191, 855-378-0799, email info@ehrv.com or visit ehrv.com/