

## Emergency Debris Management Guidelines for County and Municipal Governments

The following information is to assist public officials in making decisions about emergency debris management. There are several key considerations in the decision process:

- the need for rapid removal,
  - potential reimbursement by the Federal Government,
  - protection of public health and the environment, and
  - future liability.
- tree debris;
  - appliances and automobiles;
  - rock, concrete, solidified asphalt and brick (not regulated as solid waste);
  - household hazardous waste. Chemicals should not be piled but stored neatly and segregated. Examples of household hazardous waste are:

### Immediately Following an Emergency Event

Each community should set up one or more staging areas where citizens or cleanup crews can take debris. Staging areas must be registered and approved by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Contact your local DEQ office to obtain site approval. Your local office can be found on our website at: <https://tinyurl.com/44r4ywu4> or by calling (405) 702-6100.

Staging areas must be located on publicly-owned property or access agreements must be completed with private landowners for use of the staging area. When feasible, debris should be segregated into separate areas:

- co-mingled Construction/Demolition Waste. This includes damaged components of buildings and structures including lumber, gypsum wallboard, glass, insulation, roofing material, furnishings and fixtures, floor coverings, etc;

You may want to consider labeling the piles to prevent confusion as volunteer cleanup crews begin to sort through the debris.



## Options for Debris Disposal

### Co-mingled Construction/ Demolition Waste

Co-mingled construction/demolition waste must not be burned and must be taken to a DEQ permitted landfill. A list of permitted disposal sites may be found on our website at <https://tinyurl.com/y7mdt5sy> or by calling the Land Protection Division at (405) 702-5100.

### Tree Debris Options

1. Chipped and used as mulch or may be landfilled. Additional information may be found in DEQ fact sheet “Wood Chip Guidance.”
2. Direct disposal at a DEQ permitted landfill.
3. Burned, with the following restrictions:
  - If the burn site is either located within counties having a population greater than 500,000 (currently Oklahoma and Tulsa Counties) or is in non-attainment for air quality standards, the burn must be conducted in an air curtain incinerator.
  - All burn sites must be located at a site registered and approved by DEQ. See the fact sheet “Open Burning and You.”
  - The burn location should be as far as possible from area residences. A minimum of 500 feet is required.
  - Ensure there are no petroleum pipelines on or near the burn site to avoid explosion hazards.
  - Minimize the amount of dirt and other non-combustible materials to achieve the most efficient burn.
  - Have someone on site at all times, along with fire-fighting equipment.
  - Control the burning so that the smoke does not create a traffic hazard.



- Unless the site is located in a flood plain, residual ash may be buried in the burn pit or spread at the site and mixed with soil.

### Appliances and Automobiles

Once Freon has been removed, appliances should be recycled. Appliances should have doors taped shut or removed during staging. Once automotive fluids have been removed and properly disposed, automobiles should be recycled or salvaged.

### Rock, Concrete, Solidified Asphalt and Brick

Rock, concrete, solidified asphalt and brick are not regulated waste and may be reused as building material or used as clean fill material. If the material is co-mingled with other waste or has been painted or treated, it must go to a DEQ permitted landfill.

### Household Hazardous Waste

Where possible, household hazardous waste should be segregated from the waste stream and disposed in an approved manner.

### Special Waste

When possible, e-waste such as computers, monitors and televisions should be segregated for recycling.

## Emergency Debris Management Sites

Emergency debris management sites include: (1) sites for staging waste for later disposal; (2) sites for chipping or burning tree and vegetative debris only; or (3) sites, in extreme situations and with additional requirements and approvals, for burying (not burning) co-mingled construction waste in rural areas. Burying waste may cause future environmental problems and liabilities.

DEQ can assist communities in establishing emergency debris management sites. Contact your local DEQ office for assistance.

## Additional Considerations

Landfill disposal weights should be recorded and retained for proof of potential local cost share match. In all debris management activities, measures should be taken to minimize dust generation.

This guidance does not supersede any state, federal or local regulations.

## Local DEQ Offices

Our field offices serving your area can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/44r4ywu4> or by calling (405) 702-6100.

## Permitted Solid Waste Facilities

Permitted landfills, transfer stations, construction and demolition landfills, and other active solid waste sites can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/y7mdt5sy>

or call the DEQ Land Protection Division at (405) 702-5100.