



State of New Jersey

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Snow Removal and Disposal Policy

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines to all government agencies and private businesses regarding snow disposal site selection, site preparation and maintenance, and emergency snow disposal options that are acceptable to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

APPLICABILITY: These Guidelines apply to public agencies and private businesses disposing of snow in the State of New Jersey.

INTRODUCTION

Finding a place to dispose of collected snow poses a challenge to municipalities and businesses as they clear roads, parking lots, bridges, and sidewalks. While we are all aware of the threats to public safety caused by snow, collected snow that is contaminated with road salt, sand, litter, and automotive pollutants such as oil also threatens public health and the environment.

As snow melts, road salt, sand, litter, and other pollutants are transported into surface water or through the soil where they may eventually reach the groundwater. Road salt and other pollutants can contaminate water supplies and are toxic to aquatic life at certain levels. Sand washed into waterbodies can create sand bars or fill in wetlands and ponds, impacting aquatic life, causing flooding, and affecting our use of these resources.

There are several steps that communities can take to minimize the impacts of snow disposal on public health and the environment. These steps will help communities avoid the costs of a contaminated water supply, degraded waterbodies, and flooding. Everything we do on the land has the potential to impact our water resources. The purpose of these guidelines is to help municipalities and businesses select, prepare, and maintain appropriate snow disposal sites before the snow begins to accumulate through the winter.

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES

These snow disposal guidelines address: (A) site selection; (B) site preparation and maintenance; and (C) emergency snow disposal.

A. SITE SELECTION

The key to selecting effective snow disposal sites is to locate them adjacent to or on pervious surfaces in upland areas away from water resources and wells. At these locations, the snow

meltwater can filter in to the soil, leaving behind sand and debris which can be removed in the springtime. The following areas should be avoided:

- 1) Avoid dumping of snow into any waterbody, including rivers, the ocean, reservoirs, ponds, or wetlands. In addition to water quality impacts and flooding, snow disposed of in open water can cause navigational hazards when it freezes into ice blocks (item C. below for emergency situations).
- 2) Do not dump snow taken from roadways onto areas adjacent to a public water supply well or reservoir.
- 3) Avoid dumping snow in sanitary landfills. Snow meltwater will create more contaminated leachate in landfills posing a greater risk to groundwater.
- 4) Avoid disposing of snow on top of storm drain catch basins or in stormwater drainage swales or ditches. Snow combined with sand and debris may block a storm drainage system, causing localized flooding. A high volume of sand, sediment, and litter released from melting snow also may be quickly transported through the system into surface water.

Site Selection Procedures

- 1) It is important that the municipal Department of Public Works or Highway Department, work together to select appropriate snow disposal sites. The following steps should be taken:
 - a) Estimate how much snow disposal capacity is needed for the season so that an adequate number of disposal sites can be selected and prepared.
 - b) Identify sites that could potentially be used for snow disposal such as municipal open space (e.g., parking lots or parks).
 - c) Sites located in upland locations that are not likely to impact sensitive environmental resources should be selected first.

B. SITE PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE

In addition to carefully selecting disposal sites before the winter begins, it is important to prepare and maintain these sites to maximize their effectiveness. The following maintenance measures should be undertaken for all snow disposal sites:

- 1) A silt fence or equivalent barrier should be placed securely on the downgradient side of the snow disposal site.
- 2) To filter pollutants out of the meltwater, it is recommended that a 50-foot vegetative buffer strip should be maintained during the growth season between the disposal site and adjacent waterbodies.
- 3) Debris should be cleared from the site prior to using the site for snow disposal.
- 4) Debris should be cleared from the site and properly disposed of at the end of the snow season and no later than May 1.

C. EMERGENCY SNOW DISPOSAL

As mentioned earlier, it is important to estimate the amount of snow disposal capacity you will need so that an adequate number of upland disposal sites can be selected and prepared.

Under extraordinary conditions, when all land-based snow disposal options are exhausted, **and when an emergency declared by an appropriate governmental entity**, disposal of snow that is not obviously contaminated with road salt, sand, and other pollutants may be allowed in certain waterbodies under certain conditions. In these cases pre-approval is required by the NJDEP or the State Police on a case-by-case basis to municipalities and counties for the specific event.

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Authorizations can be requested thru the Department's Emergency Management Program (609-633-2168) or the New Jersey State Police, Emergency Operation Center (609-963 6900) during an emergency activation.

Use the following guidelines in these emergency situations:

- Dispose of snow in open water with adequate flow and mixing to prevent ice dams from forming.
- Do not dispose of snow in wetlands, shellfish beds, small streams, or drinking water reservoirs.
- Do not dispose of snow where trucks may cause shoreline damage or erosion.

For further information contact the Bureau of Nonpoint Pollution Control, Division of Water Quality, at 633-7021.