

## **NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION EMERGENCY DEBRIS PLANNING FACT SHEET**

Recent natural disasters, such as Hurricane Irene, the October 2011 Nor'easter, and the June 2012 Derecho, have challenged New Jersey municipalities and counties to safely and timely collect, stage, and transport offsite the large amount of vegetative and waste debris generated by these events. These and other recent disasters point out the need for local and county agencies to review regularly and revise, if necessary, their emergency debris management plans. The Department believes all debris management plans at a minimum should address the following areas:

- General Debris Handling and Waste Prioritization
- Pre-Approved Temporary Staging Areas for Vegetative and Waste Debris
- Emergency Debris Removal & Transportation Contracts
- Communications and Information Resources for local officials, residents & businesses
- Personnel Training

In addition to the information provided below, FEMA has numerous municipal debris removal guidance documents at the following web site:

[http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/debris\\_main.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/debris_main.shtm)

### **A. General Debris and Waste Handling & Prioritization**

Depending on the severity of the disaster, it will not be possible to address the pickup and disposal of all generated debris in a timely manner in addition to regular garbage pick up activities. Every municipal and county debris management plan should, therefore, focus first on clearing the debris that hinders immediate lifesaving and emergency response actions and that poses an immediate threat to health and safety. Once such debris is addressed, other debris can be removed, segregated, temporarily staged (if necessary), and then transported to a disposal facility. County/Municipal debris management plans should consider the order in which this non-emergency waste will be collected and alert residents of any expected delay in garbage collection (see also "Garbage Delay Fact Sheet included).

Residents need to be advised that waste materials should be separated by type to facilitate prompt removal. It is especially important to properly separate out and bag putrescible materials (for example, food wastes and other waste that cause odors and/or attract insects, rodents and other animals) so that they may be picked up on a priority basis. Additionally, household hazardous waste and e-waste (for example TVs and computers) must be separated from other wastes so that they may be handled in an environmentally safe manner. Lastly, waste and debris should not be placed in the road, block mailboxes, electric and water meters, fire hydrants, storm drains, or areas prone to flooding. Residents should also be made aware that during the debris removal process they may experience increased traffic and noise.

Waste separation at the debris management area is important to minimize odors and rodent or other vector problems, and to protect the workers and the public who may come in contact with waste materials. Coordination with the county Office of Emergency Management (OEM), county

household hazardous waste program, and county & local health departments is essential and all parties should participate in the planning process.

In addition, materials which can be recycled such as tree branches, certain construction and demolition debris, and white goods should be separated from those that must be disposed of as waste. This will facilitate the flow of these materials to recycling facilities and reduce the burden on solid waste disposal operations. Separation of waste by type may also reduce costs, as generally waste disposal costs more than recycling.

## **B. Debris Management Areas**

Municipalities and counties should identify in advance of an emergency appropriate debris management areas that can be used to stage and/or process excess materials. Please be aware that the use of such areas must comply with FEMA requirements in order to receive FEMA reimbursement, including NJDEP approval of those areas. NJDEP has a pre-approval process to assist towns and counties to select the appropriate sites in advance of emergencies, which is explained in the next section, "Obtaining Pre-Approval of Debris Management Areas." Identification of debris management areas should be appended to both the municipal and county OEM planning documents for reference. This will allow post-emergency/recovery clean-up efforts to begin early and proceed in an efficient manner. For towns with no appropriate areas for managing debris or towns with small populations, it is essential to identify appropriate regional debris management areas that can be used and agreed upon by all parties before an emergent situation arises.

Debris management areas should only be located at sites which can be secured and under no circumstance should they be located within a flood hazard area. Prior approval from the local Office of Emergency Management, the local Fire Marshall, and the Pinelands Commission, if applicable, are necessary for a debris management area to be approved by the Department. Additional considerations for siting a debris management area are as follows:

- Putrescible solid waste debris, some types of construction and demolition debris (such as wallboard, gypsum, and sheetrock),hazardous waste debris, including household hazardous waste, and e-Waste must be stored on a paved area or in containers. The entire debris staging area does not have to be paved, but the areas for staging/storing these types of solid waste and hazardous waste debris must be paved;
- Vegetative debris, white goods (ie refrigerators, washers and dryers), masonry debris (concrete, brick, and block), and construction and demolition wood waste do not need to be stored on a paved area;
- Avoid managing waste in other environmentally sensitive areas and historic/archeological sites;
- Avoid choosing debris management areas near residences, schools, and hospitals. Local tolerance of impacts from noise, dust, and traffic significantly diminish over time;

- Use public lands first to avoid costly leases. Use private land only if public sites are unavailable;
- Look for sites with good ingress/egress to accommodate heavy truck traffic and that have a site configuration that will allow for an efficient layout;
- Consider siting a debris management area on a closed municipal landfill, if available. Please note that additional approvals may be necessary from the Bureau of Landfills & Hazardous Waste Permitting; and
- Conduct a baseline environmental survey before debris operations begin so the site can be returned to those conditions at the conclusion of the debris operations. The baseline environmental survey should document physical features, historic significance, and environmental sampling (soil and water). Digital photos can be helpful and are recommended.

### **C. Obtaining Pre-Approval of Debris Management Areas**

The temporary storage of debris (waste and vegetative) may not be conducted without approval from the Department's Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Program. Therefore the DEP recommends seeking an approval for a debris management area in advance of a storm event.

To obtain a pre-approval of a debris management area, the following information must be provided:

- Location of the site, including street address and what the site is normally used for
- Certification that the areas used to stage/store putrescible solid waste debris, wallboard, gypsum, and sheetrock, and hazardous waste debris (including household hazardous waste and e-waste) are paved. Areas used for staging vegetative debris, white goods, masonry debris, and construction and demolition wood waste do not need to be paved.
- Certification that the Debris Management Area is secured and not located within a flood hazard area or a Pinelands Management Area. If the staging area is to be located within a Pinelands Management Area, prior approval from the Pinelands Commission must be obtained.
- Anticipated height of debris storage and maximum volume of storage area
- A description of the processing activities that will be conducted at this site. Processing (ie chipping and shredding) of vegetative debris is permitted at debris management areas provided all processing equipment has a valid Air Pollution Control Permit and the municipality or county has a dust management plan containing measures to be implemented if dust is generated during processing. Processing, with the exception of non-mechanized processing systems, of solid waste or household hazardous waste is not permitted at debris management areas. Removal of refrigerants from white goods is allowed at debris management areas, in accordance with applicable regulations.
- Documentation of endorsement by the county Office of Emergency Management
- Approval by the local Fire Marshall

- For properties not owned by the county or municipality, documentation of an agreement with the property owner for use of the property.
- Contact information for the individual responsible for the debris management area

The above information should be sent to the following address:

Mary Jo Aiello, Director  
Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Program  
P.O. Box 420  
Mail Code 401-02C  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
(609) 633-9839 (fax)

Use of a debris management area can only occur when both an Executive Order has been signed by the Governor declaring a state of emergency in the county in which the debris management area is located and an Administrative Order has been signed by the Department's Commissioner allowing the relaxation of certain Solid Waste Management Rules. Without these documents, use of a debris management area constitutes an illegal solid waste disposal facility under the Solid Waste Management Rules and subjects the county or municipality to appropriate enforcement action.

Upon signature of the above documents, counties and municipalities with pre-approved debris management areas may begin using them to manage debris generated by the emergency in accordance with their Department approval. They need only notify the Department prior to starting debris management operations at the site. This notification may take the form of an e-mail to [solidwasteemergencies@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:solidwasteemergencies@dep.state.nj.us) or a fax to (609) 984-0565 *and must include* an estimate of the length of time the debris management area will be in operation. Since time is of the essence during an emergency event, there is no need to wait for acknowledgement of your notification from the Department prior to using a pre-approved debris management area. The Department will follow-up in a timely manner with each county or municipality that provides a notification.

If a county or municipality does not obtain pre-approval of a debris management area and needs to temporarily manage debris subsequent to an emergency event, the above information must be submitted to the Department and written approval must be obtained prior to the debris management area being utilized. Under no circumstances can debris be managed at a site without Departmental approval.

Due to the nature of putrescible solid waste, pre-approved debris management areas used for the storage of putrescible solid waste may only be operated for an initial period of 7 days. Additional operational time beyond the initial 7 day pre-approval may be requested of the Department.

Debris management areas for vegetative debris, white goods, masonry debris, construction and demolition wood waste, e-waste, and hazardous waste may be operated under a pre-approval for a period of 60 days. At the end of the 60 day period, all debris and waste must have been

removed to an appropriate recycling or disposal facility. If additional storage time is required, approval from the Department must be obtained prior to the expiration of the 60 day pre-approved period. Debris management areas that are allowed to operate beyond the initial 60 day pre-approved period may be required to implement storm water control measures such as containerizing certain wastes, covering non-containerized wastes, and containment and perimeter controls (i.e. sediment fencing, hay bales, absorbent booms, etc.) for the entire site.

#### **D. Debris Removal & Transportation Contracts**

It is often necessary during an emergency that generates significant quantities of debris to utilize additional transportation equipment and/or debris removal services. A municipality or county should inventory its governmental vehicles that can be put into service to assist in debris removal and disposal. Additionally, contracts with emergency debris contractors for removal services should be reviewed and amended if necessary to ensure that such services will be available, especially if the emergency event is regional in nature. Contracts covering waste transportation should only be made with companies that use or are licensed solid waste transporters. This is not required for contracts for recyclable materials transport. Lastly, it is important to know if the contractor is also obligated to assist other municipalities or counties to determine if they will have adequate capacity to respond to all calls for assistance during an emergency.

The Department maintains a list of licensed solid waste transporters that is available on the Licensing and Registration web site <http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/hwr/regislic/lru.htm>. Choose the report titled "Report - Registered Solid Waste Transporters and Capabilities" from the drop-down listing of available resources at the bottom of the web page.

#### **E. Communications and Information Resources**

Municipal/county debris management plans should address how communication between all levels of government and emergency responders will be handled and where additional information can be obtained.

It is especially important to consider how information will be shared with residents during the initial stage of debris response. Such communication is necessary to alert residents of possible delays in garbage collection and the need for separation of and proper placement of debris.

The Department's Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Program maintains an e-mail account for solid and hazardous waste emergencies. Any correspondence with the Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Program can be conducted via that e-mail account at [solidwasteemergencies@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:solidwasteemergencies@dep.state.nj.us). All official correspondence from the Department concerning relaxation of rules during an emergency event will be sent out from this e-mail address. In addition, all information regarding an emergency event will be posted on the Department's web page at [www.state.nj.us/dep](http://www.state.nj.us/dep).

## **F. Personnel Training**

All personnel conducting debris operations must be trained, at a minimum, on items such as identification of hazards and proper use of personal protective equipment. Additional training specific to the job duties of all personnel must be conducted to ensure the health and safety of the staff and residents using the site.

## **G. Recordkeeping**

To be reimbursed by FEMA you must maintain records of the amount of debris removed and the facilities it was sent to. FEMA will not reimburse without information regarding the destination facilities, including identification numbers. In addition, you must be able to provide FEMA with documentation of approval from the Department for your debris management operations.