



# Florida Department of Environmental Protection Guidance for Establishment, Operation, and Closure of Disaster Debris Management Sites (DDMS)

October 5, 2024

## General Information

1. Pursuant to 403.7071, Florida Statutes (F.S.), solid waste generated as a result of a storm event that is the subject of an emergency final order issued by the Department of Environmental Protection (Department) must be managed with field authorizations for disaster debris management sites (DDMSs). These DDMSs may be used for the temporary storage and management of storm-generated debris, including the chipping, grinding, or burning of vegetative debris.
2. Field authorizations for DDMSs may only be issued by the Department subsequent to an Executive Order by the Governor declaring a state of emergency and an Emergency Final Order<sup>1</sup> by the Secretary of the Department authorizing DDMSs. In addition, DDMSs must be authorized by the Department in order for the owner/operator of the DDMS to receive public assistance funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
3. Field authorizations may be issued prior to or following a site inspection by Department personnel or a delegated local program for DDMSs. Such staging areas are to be used for temporary storage of Hurricane-generated debris and chipping, grinding, or burning of Hurricane-generated vegetative debris.
4. Requests for authorization of DDMSs should be made by a local, state or federal government official responsible for disaster debris management within the jurisdiction (e.g., county, city, DOT District, school district, etc.) where the DDMS is located. Such DDMSs do not need to be owned by the government but must have oversight by the government with jurisdiction (or its designated contractors). The government that requested the DDMS will have ultimate responsibility for compliance with statutes and rules. The Division of Emergency Management (DEM) may begin using a DDMS in advance of a field authorization from the Department as long as the site meets the criteria provided in this guidance document, as applicable. Within 10 days, DEM shall provide the documentation required in paragraph 7 to the Department. Should additional time be required, DEM may request a time extension from the Department.
5. The Department strongly encourages local, state and federal government officials responsible for disaster debris management (government official) to use the Department's pre-authorization process to establish and pre-authorize new DDMSs or to complete annual pre-authorization of previously pre-authorized DDMSs. Typically, the Department sends out reminders each year, before the start of hurricane season.
6. DDMS authorizations may include specific conditions for operation and closure and may include a required closure date which extends past the expiration date of the issued Emergency Final Order.

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<sup>1</sup> Emergency Final Orders can be obtained from the Department's website at the following address: <https://floridadep.gov/hurricane>. The Emergency Final Orders also include information on the management of domestic wastewater residuals.

### Process for Pre-Authorization of New DDMSs

- The government official submits a request to the Department for a new DDMS. If the local, state or federal government (ex., Leon County, Duval County Schoolboard, FDOT) already has one or more existing DDMSs, evaluation of a new DDMS may be requested through the Department's Business Portal at the following link: <http://www.fldepportal.com>. If the local, state or federal government does not have any existing DDMSs, then the initial request may be submitted via e-mail to their local DEP District or delegated County office.
- In either case, the requestor will be asked to provide the information identified in Item 7 below, for each proposed DDMS.
- The local DEP District or delegated County will review the information, request clarification if necessary and may conduct an inspection of the proposed site(s);
- Upon approval, the local DEP District or delegated County will issue a pre-authorization letter for each DDMS.
- In the event of an Emergency Final Order that includes the county where the DDMS(s) is/are located, the government with responsibility for the DDMSs must notify the local DEP District or delegated County regarding which pre-authorized DDMSs it intends to use.
- The local DEP District or delegated County authorizes each of the identified DDMSs by issuing a Field Authorization.

### Process for Annual Pre-Authorization for Existing DDMSs

- On an annual basis, government officials are asked to review their existing DDMSs. This can be accomplished through the Department's Business Portal at the following link: <http://www.fldepportal.com>
- The government official must provide any necessary updates for each DDMS through their local District or delegated County contact, including information in Item 7, below, not previously provided;
- The government official identifies the DDMSs that it would like to have pre-authorized for that year.
- Once the DDMSs are selected and submitted, the portal will issue a pre-authorization letter for each DDMS.
- In the event of an Emergency Final Order, the government official must notify the local DEP District or delegated County regarding which pre-authorized DDMSs it intends to operate.
- The local DEP District or delegated County activates each of the identified DDMSs by issuing a Field Authorization.

### Process for Field Authorization of DDMSs

- Field authorizations may be requested by contacting the local DEP District or delegated County subsequent to an Executive Order by the Governor declaring a

state of emergency and an Emergency Final Order by the Secretary of the Department.

- Verbal requests will only be accepted in an emergency situation and must be followed by a submittal of the information in Item 7.
  - Records of all field authorizations are created and maintained by Department or delegated County staff. These records and all submitted supporting documentation are stored in Oculus, the Department's publicly accessible document management system.
7. The following information must be provided with all new DDMS requests. For previously approved DDMSs, this information must be provided, if not previously submitted, and/or updated as appropriate.
- a. A map that illustrates the site layout and key features on or near the property. The map should show, as applicable:
    - Site boundary and boundary of the area within the site that will be used for debris management and processing;
    - Structures, such as paved areas or buildings;
    - Sensitive features on the property or nearby, including wetlands, water bodies, potable wells, etc.
    - Debris management area(s) that are labeled as to the nature of the debris that will be placed there;
    - Processing area(s); and
    - Traffic flow, including entrance, exit and roadways within the site.
  - b. A plan for operation of the DDMS. The plan should describe, as applicable:
    - Function of the site – management of debris, processing of debris, or both;
    - Type of processing that will be conducted;
    - Types of wastes that will be managed;
    - Process for managing unexpected or unauthorized waste;
    - Entities that are authorized to bring debris to the site;
    - Location where site records will be kept; and
    - Days and hours of operation.
  - c. The location of the DDMS including the address and, if possible, its latitude and longitude or directions from major roadways.
  - d. The name, telephone number, and e-mail address of the site contact/manager.
  - e. If the proposed DDMS location is not owned by the government requesting the DDMS, provide a copy of a lease/approval for use as a DDMS by the legal owner of the property.
  - f. Report any evidence of federally or state-listed wildlife observed or reported on the site. If federally or state-listed species have been observed, describe coordination with either the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and/or the Florida Fish and

Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff and actions taken as a result of that coordination. If state-listed species have been observed, confirm that all appropriate FWC rules, guidelines, and permitting requirements for that species have been followed. Species specific guidelines are available at:

<https://myfwc.com/conservation/value/fwcg/guidelines/>  
<https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/wildlife/species-guidelines/>

Requests for technical assistance requests on general fish and wildlife can be emailed to [ConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com](mailto:ConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com).

### Location of DDMSs

8. If possible, it is advisable to test the soil, groundwater, and/or surface water at a proposed DDMS prior to receipt of storm debris to establish pre-existing conditions.
9. DDMSs for debris other than yard trash and uncontaminated vegetative debris must not be located within 500 feet of a potable water well, unless otherwise approved by the Department. DDMSs for yard trash and uncontaminated vegetative debris must not be located within 100 feet of a potable water well, unless otherwise approved by the Department.
10. DDMSs for debris other than yard trash and uncontaminated vegetative debris must not be located within 200 feet of a natural or artificial body of water, unless otherwise approved by the Department. DDMSs for yard trash and uncontaminated vegetative debris must not be located within 50 feet of a natural or artificial body of water, unless otherwise approved by the Department.
11. DDMSs should not be located on the right-of-way of any public highway, road, or alley, unless otherwise approved by the Department on a case-by-case basis.
12. In no case shall a DDMS be located in a water body or wetlands.
13. If prehistoric or historic artifacts, vessel remnants, or any other physical remains that could be associated with Native American cultures, early colonial or American settlement, or maritime history are encountered at any time within the project area, the project should cease all activities involving disturbance in the immediate vicinity of such discoveries. The owner or operator, or other designee, should contact the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Compliance and Review Section at (850) 245-6333, as well as the appropriate authorizing agency. The project activities should not resume in the vicinity of the discovery without verbal and/or written authorization from the Department of State.
14. Compliance with state laws regulating the take of fish and wildlife is the responsibility of the owner or operator of a DDMS. Please refer to Chapter 379, F.S., and Chapter 68A-27, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) for definitions of "take" and protections for fish

and wildlife listed species. FWC staff are available to provide technical assistance on wildlife surveys, potentially affected state-listed species, or decision support information if state-listed species are observed on site. If listed species of fish and wildlife are observed at a DDMS, please call the FWC Regional Species Conservation Biologist (see <https://myfwc.com/license/wildlife/protected-wildlife-permits/contacts/>), the FWC Wildlife Alert Hotline (888) 404-3922 or \*FWC or #FWC on a cellphone, or email [Tip@MyFWC.com](mailto:Tip@MyFWC.com). Requests for technical assistance or site inspections can be emailed to [ConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com](mailto:ConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com).

### Operation of DDMSs

#### 15. DDMSs should have:

- a. Stormwater controls, such as silt fences, to prevent discharge of contaminated runoff into water bodies where such discharge may cause violations of Department standards (example: turbidity);
- b. Control methods for the offsite migration of dust, wood chips or other debris residuals from vehicular traffic and from the handling of debris and ash;
- c. Access control to prevent unauthorized dumping and scavenging; and,
- d. Spotters to correctly identify and segregate waste types for appropriate management.

16. All reasonable steps must be taken to minimize the release of contaminants from the disaster debris at the DDMS. If contaminants are released into the environment, the entity operating the DDMS must take immediate steps to contain the release and notify the Department within 24 hours.

17. The owner or operator of each DDMS should keep records of the amount and type of waste received, waste sent off-site for disposal or recycling, and waste left on-site. Such records can be very valuable for demonstrating that the DDMS has been operated in accordance with applicable regulations and orders. These records should be kept at a location designated by the site manager and made available for review by Department staff upon request.

18. Only construction and demolition debris, land clearing debris, yard trash, vegetative debris, or Class III waste may be stored at a DDMS. Class I waste (such as household garbage, putrescible waste, or mixed wastes containing these materials) must be removed from a DDMS and disposed of as soon as practicable to prevent odor, vectors and sanitary nuisances. Again, spotters should be used at the DDMSs to correctly identify and segregate waste types for appropriate management. The following instructions must be used, as applicable:

- a. Class I wastes, including all mixed wastes, must be disposed of at a Class I landfill or, except for asbestos-containing materials, in a waste-to-energy facility that is authorized to accept such wastes.

- b. Non-recyclables and residuals generated from segregation of disaster debris must also be disposed of in a Class I landfill or waste-to-energy facility.
- c. Metals or other non-combustible materials segregated from the ash residue may be disposed of in a permitted lined landfill that is authorized to accept such wastes.
- d. Uncontaminated yard trash may be disposed of in permitted lined or unlined landfills, permitted land clearing debris facilities, permitted construction and demolition debris disposal facilities, or permitted or certified waste-to-energy facilities authorized to accept the material.
- e. Uncontaminated yard trash and clean wood may be processed and managed at a registered yard trash processing facility in accordance with applicable rules.
- f. Construction and demolition debris that is mixed with other disaster debris need not be segregated from other solid waste prior to disposal in a lined landfill. Construction and demolition debris that is either source-separated or is separated from other disaster debris at an authorized DDMS, may be managed at a permitted Class III landfill or construction and demolition debris disposal or recycling facility upon approval by the Department of the methods and operational practices used to inspect the waste during segregation.
- g. Unsalvageable refrigerators and freezers containing solid waste such as rotting food that may create a sanitary nuisance may be disposed of in a Class I landfill; provided, however, that chlorofluorocarbons and capacitors are removed and recycled to the greatest extent practicable using techniques and personnel meeting the requirements of 40 CFR Part 82.
- h. Boats must have all hazardous materials, batteries, and petroleum products removed prior to any debris processing, and all engines and bilge areas must be thoroughly cleaned, drained, and/or removed prior to arrival at a DDMS. Once these items have been removed, the remaining debris must be disposed of at a Class I or Class III landfill. Grinding debris from the dismantling of a boat, where unconfined particulate emissions or public nuisances are created, is prohibited.
- i. Burning of storm-generated yard trash, other vegetative debris, and untreated wood from construction and demolition debris is allowed in air curtain incinerators (ACIs) if the conditions of the appropriate Emergency Final Order are followed. The following additional information is provided for operation of ACIs:
  - i. The ACI burn area should have a minimum setback distance of 50 feet from the debris piles, any wildlands, brush, combustible structure, or paved public roadway, and 300 feet from the nearest occupied building, unless otherwise specified by the local Fire Department.

- ii. Pursuant to 403.7071, F.S., within 10 days after commencing ACI burning of storm-generated yard trash, other storm-generated vegetative debris or untreated wood from C&D debris, the local government shall notify the Department in writing describing the general nature of the materials burned, the location and method of burning, and the name, address, and telephone number for the local government representative concerning the work.
  - iii. Ash residue generated from the combustion of storm-generated vegetative debris in accordance with the requirements of the Emergency Final Order may be disposed of in an appropriately permitted disposal facility.
  - iv. Alternatively the ash residue from the combustion of storm-generated vegetative debris in accordance with the requirements of the Emergency Final Order may be placed in or on soils to provide a beneficial use in any areas approved by the Department and local government officials except in wellfield protection areas, wetlands, or water bodies. The rate of application of the ash should be addressed when seeking approval from the Department or local government officials. The use of the ash residue in this manner must be considered beneficial rather than disposal.
  - v. As required in the Emergency Final Order, ash from the combustion of other disaster debris shall be disposed of in a Class I landfill.
  - vi. Smoke from open burning with an air curtain incinerator shall not cause a public nuisance. DDMS operators should review the Division of Air Resource Management's [Post-Storm Guidance on Open Burning at a DDMS](#) for site selection criteria to identify appropriate locations for open burning activities.
  - vii. Operation of an air curtain incinerator shall be done in accordance with applicable regulations and the Division of Air Resource Management's [Post-Storm Guidance on Air Curtain Incinerators](#).
- j. Open pile burning of storm-generated vegetative debris must receive prior authorization from the Florida Forest Service.
- i. Piles should have a minimum setback of 300 feet from registered Source-Separated Organics Processing Facilities (SOPF) and any occupied buildings, 100 feet from any paved public roadway, and 50 feet from any wildlands, brush or combustible structure.
  - ii. Ash resulting from this burning may be disposed or used as described above for ACIs.
  - iii. Open pile burning of any debris is prohibited at DDMSs located at permitted landfills, unless otherwise/specifically approved by the Department.

- i. Smoke from open pile burning shall not cause a public nuisance. DDMS operators should review the Division of Air Resource Management's [Post-Storm Guidance on Open Burning at a DDMS](#) for site selection criteria to identify appropriate locations for open burning activities.
- viii. Open pile burning shall be done in accordance with applicable regulations and the Division of Air Resource Management's [Post-Storm Guidance on Open Pile Burning](#).
- k. Chipping and/or grinding of uncontaminated disaster-generated vegetative debris is encouraged to help reduce the volume of the material. The Department recommends the following guidelines for the temporary storage and management of the volume reduced material:
  - i. In accordance with National Fire Protection Association<sup>2</sup>, mulch and chip piles should not exceed 25 feet in height, 150 feet in width, and 250 feet in length. A clear space of not less than 15 feet shall be maintained between piles and exposing structures, yard equipment, or stock, and piles should be subdivided by fire lanes having at least 30 feet of clear space at the base around each pile. These piles should not be compacted.
  - ii. Smoking should only be allowed in designated areas well away from the combustible material.
  - iii. Possible uses of the size reduced material include: (1) a soil amendment where it is disked into the soil or mixed with potting soil; (2) as mulch for weed control, moisture retention, soil temperature control, erosion control, or slope stabilization; (3) fuel; (4) feedstock for composting operations; (5) animal bedding material; and (6) pulp wood.
  - iv. Use of the size reduced material as a soil amendment must be at normally accepted agronomic rates as determined by industry practice. Recommendations for appropriate application rates by the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences<sup>3</sup> may be used and can be obtained from the local IFAS Agricultural Extension agent.
  - v. Upon request and approval by the Department, vegetative debris may be placed in or on soils to provide a beneficial use pursuant to Chapter, 62-709, F.A.C. The rate of application of the mulch should be addressed when seeking approval from the Department or local government officials. The use of mulch must be considered beneficial rather than disposal. Mulch must not be placed in water bodies or wetlands.

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<sup>2</sup> NFPA 1, 31.3.7.2, 31.3.6.5.4, 31.3.6.4.3

<sup>3</sup> The web address for IFAS is <http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/>



- I. Class I waste containing household garbage and rotting food may attract Florida black bears and increase the potential for negative human-wildlife interactions. If a DDMS site is located in an area with abundant bears, then the site manager should follow FWC recommendations on how to avoid human-bear conflicts, available on the bear management website at:  
<https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/wildlife/bear/managing/>  
Contact [ConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com](mailto:ConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com) for information on bear abundance and other technical assistance.

### Closure of DDMSs

19. DDMSs are temporary locations that can be used for the duration of an Emergency Final Order or as otherwise approved by the Department. The following guidelines apply to the closing of temporary DDMSs:
  - a. Owner/operators of the DDMSs must contact the Department prior to closing a DDMS to discuss and coordinate what will be required for closure including environmental sampling, if needed.
  - b. All disaster debris must be removed by the expiration of the Emergency Final Order, unless otherwise approved by the Department.
  - c. Requests to beneficially use ash from burning uncontaminated vegetative debris and mulch produced from processing uncontaminated vegetative debris on-site, may be made in writing to the Department. The Department will consider these requests on a case-by-case basis.
  - d. Areas that were only used to manage uncontaminated vegetative debris, or ash from burning solely vegetative debris, will not require any environmental sampling after the debris or ash is removed unless there is reason to believe that the area may have become contaminated (e.g., significant visible staining or known contaminant releases in the area).
  - e. Areas that were used to manage mixed debris or ash from burning mixed debris will normally require environmental sampling after the debris or ash is removed unless there is reason to believe that no contamination of the area occurred (e.g., the area is paved with asphalt or concrete and there is no visible evidence of staining or known contaminant releases). See Attachment 1 for details on environmental sampling.
  - f. The Department must be informed in writing when all closure activities at the DDMS are completed. If environmental sampling was conducted as part of the closure activities, then the closure notice should include the results of this sampling, unless otherwise approved by the Department.

- g. The area used for or affected by the operation of the DDMS must be fully restored upon cessation of the use of the area.
- h. Failure to comply with the conditions of the DDMS authorization or failure to adequately close by the required closure date may result in enforcement actions by the Department.

## Attachment 1

### Florida Department of Environmental Protection Sampling Protocols for Disaster Debris Management Site (DDMS) Closure

- If required, initial soil sampling shall be analyzed for the following:
  - Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) metals as defined in 40 CFR 261.24, Table 1\*, using USEPA Test Methods 6010 and 6020
  - Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's), using USEPA Test Method 8260
  - Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOC's), using USEPA Test Method 8270

Note: If the analyses above exhibit concentrations above the applicable leachability-based soil CTLs, then the following additional analyses should be completed: direct leachability testing by USEPA Test Method 1312, Synthetic Precipitation Leaching Procedure (SPLP) extraction, or USEPA Test Method 1311, Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP) extraction if the contamination is derived from used oil or similar petroleum products, followed by the appropriate analyses of the leachate. In addition, sampling of groundwater for RCRA metals, VOC's, and SVOC's may be required depending upon the results of soil samples. The same USEPA Test Methods used for soils listed above shall be used for groundwater.

- Initial sampling collection shall be conducted in accordance with 62-160, Florida Administrative Code and the Department's Standard Operating Procedures for field activities or equivalent procedures:

<https://floridadep.gov/dear/florida-dep-laboratory/content/dep-laboratory-quality-assurance-manual-and-sops>

<https://floridadep.gov/dear/quality-assurance>

- Sampling must be taken from the suspected contaminated area(s) of the site or at the discretion of the Department.
- The following sampling frequency is based on the area(s) of debris management or storage that require sampling:
  - Less than 1/3 acre: 3 samples
  - Between 1/3 acre and 1 acre: 4 samples
  - Greater than 1 acre: 4 samples plus 1 sample for each additional 1/2 acre of area

\*40 CFR 261.24, Table 1 defines Toxicity Characteristic Contaminants as Arsenic, Barium, Cadmium, Chromium, Lead, Mercury, Selenium and Silver