



*Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Guidance for Establishment, Operation, and Closure of  
Disaster Debris Management Sites  
October 4, 2016*

General Information

1. The Department of Environmental Protection (Department) understands that in addition to other requirements by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), disaster debris management sites (hereinafter called “management sites”) must be authorized by the Department in order for the owner/operator of the management site to receive Public Assistance funds from FEMA. Field authorizations for management sites may be issued by the Department prior to or following a site inspection by Department or delegated county personnel for management sites to be used for temporary storage and processing of disaster debris. Field authorizations for management sites 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 debris management sites.
  
2. Field authorizations for management sites may be requested by providing oral or written notice to the Department containing the following information, unless previously provided for site pre-authorization:
  - A description of the management site design. For example, is the management site an open field or paved? Is it near bodies of water or potable wells? What areas would be used for managing debris and for processing?
  - Plans for operation of the management site. For example, will it be used for managing only or also processing? What wastes will be managed and what are the anticipated operating hours and days of the week when the site will be open? Who can bring wastes to the site? If processing occurs, what type is expected?
  - The location of the management site including the address and, if possible, its latitude and longitude or directions from major roadways.
  - The name, address, and telephone number of the site manager.
  
3. The Department prefers that requests for authorization of management sites be made by solid waste officials in the county or city where the management site is located. Such management sites do not need to be owned by the local government

---

<sup>1</sup> Emergency Final Orders can be obtained from the Department's website at the following address: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/em/info.htm>. The Emergency Final Orders also include information on the management of domestic wastewater residuals.

but must have county or city (or its designated contractors) oversight and management. The Department may consider approving the private operation of management sites on a case-by-case basis.

4. The owner or operator of each management site 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 management site 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.

#### Location of Management Sites

5. If possible, it is advisable to test the soil, groundwater, and/or surface water at a proposed management site prior to receipt of storm debris to establish pre-existing conditions.
6. Management sites 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. Management sites 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.
7. Management sites 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. Management sites 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.
8. In no case should a management site be located in a water body or wetlands.
9. 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 authorizations.

## Operation of Management Sites

10. Management sites should have:
  - 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);
  - Some method to control the offsite migration of dust, wood chips or other debris residuals from vehicular traffic and from the handling of debris and ash;
  - Some type of access control to prevent unauthorized dumping and scavenging; and,
  - Spotters to correctly identify and segregate waste types for appropriate management.
11. All reasonable steps must be taken to minimize the release of contaminants from the disaster debris at the management site. If contaminants are released into the environment, the entity operating the management site must take immediate steps to contain the release and notify the Department within 24 hours.
12. Only construction and demolition debris, land clearing debris, yard trash, vegetative waste, or Class III waste may be stored at the management site. Class I waste (such as household garbage, putrescible waste, or mixed wastes containing these materials) must be removed from the management sites and disposed of as soon as practicable to prevent odor, vectors and sanitary nuisances. Again, spotters should be used during waste pickup and/or at the management sites to correctly identify and segregate waste types for appropriate management. The following management options for the disaster debris must be followed:
  - 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.
  - Non-recyclables and residuals generated from segregation of disaster debris shall also be disposed of in a Class I landfill or waste-to-energy facility.
  - Uncontaminated yard trash may be disposed of in permitted lined or unlined landfills, permitted land clearing debris facilities, or permitted construction and demolition debris disposal facilities.
  - Uncontaminated yard trash and clean wood may be processed at a registered yard trash processing facility.

- 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 management site, may be managed at a permitted 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.
  - 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 must be removed and recycled to the greatest extent practicable using techniques and personnel meeting the requirements of 40 CFR Part 82.
13. Burning of disaster-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:
- 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.
  - As required in the Emergency Final Order, ash residue from the combustion of vegetative debris may be disposed of in a permitted disposal facility, or may be land spread in any areas approved by local government officials except in wellfield protection areas, wetlands, or water bodies.
  - As required in the Emergency Final Order, ash from the combustion of other disaster debris shall be disposed of in a Class I landfill.
14. Open pile burning of disaster-generated vegetative debris must receive prior authorization from the Florida Forest Service. Ash from this burning may be disposed or used as described above for ACIs.
15. 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 managing the volume reduced material:
- In accordance with National Fire Protection Association<sup>2</sup>, mulch and chip piles should not exceed 18 feet in height, 50 feet in width, and 350 feet in length. Piles should be subdivided by fire lanes having at least 25 feet of clear space at the

---

<sup>2</sup> NFPA 230, "Standard for the Fire Protection of Storage"

base around each pile. These piles should not be compacted.

- Smoking should only be allowed in designated areas well away from the combustible material.
- 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.
- 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> (IFAS) may be used, and can be obtained from the local IFAS Agricultural Extension agent.
- The use of mulch must be considered beneficial rather than disposal. Mulch must not be placed in water bodies or wetlands.

### Closure of Management Sites

16. Management sites for disaster debris are temporary locations that can be used for the duration of the Emergency Final Order or as otherwise approved by the Department. The following guidelines apply to the closing of temporary management sites:
  - Owner/operators of the management sites must contact the Department prior to closing a management site to discuss and coordinate what will be required for closure including environmental sampling, if needed.
  - All disaster debris must be removed by the expiration of the Emergency Final Order, unless otherwise approved by the Department.
  - Mulch produced from processing uncontaminated vegetative debris may be left on-site if prior approval is obtained from the Department. The Department will consider these requests on a case-by-case basis.
  - 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).

---

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

- 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).
  - When environmental sampling for soils and groundwater is needed, it should typically include at least one soil sample and one groundwater monitoring well in areas showing significant visible staining or areas believed to be impacted by the managed waste or ash. Unless otherwise approved by the Department, these samples should normally be analyzed for total RCRA metals, volatile organic compounds, and semi-volatile organic compounds using approved EPA methods. The Department can also require other approaches to conducting environmental sampling at management sites on a case-by-case basis.
17. The Department must be informed in writing when all closure activities at the management site 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.