

# **Managing Debris from the May 2013 North Texas Tornadoes**



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# **Managing Debris from the North Texas Tornadoes**

## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide clear guidance on options for managing and disposing of debris from the tornadoes in the North Texas area on May 15, 2013.

Large volumes of debris are generated following disaster events such as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and explosions. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has developed this guidance to assist local jurisdictions in managing and disposing of debris associated with the cleanup of areas affected by the tornadoes.

During cleanup and recovery efforts following a severe event, large volumes of various types of debris will need to be disposed of. Debris includes:

- Trees, brush, and other vegetative matter;
- Building/construction waste (sheet rock, roof shingles, treated wood, plastics, etc.);
- Other municipal solid waste (including putrescible waste and special waste); and
- Hazardous waste

## **2.0 Disaster Declarations**

Events such as tornadoes can be declared a disaster area by the Governor of Texas and the President of the United States. A Disaster Declaration will be specific to the area affected.

Depending on the scope and the category of assistance authorized by a federal declaration, a city or county may be able to obtain financial and technical assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for managing the debris. The FEMA website, <http://www.fema.gov>, has information about eligibility and how to apply for Public Assistance.

## **3.0 Sorting and Stockpiling Debris Prior to Disposal**

Various state and federal regulations apply to the disposal of specific types of debris. The TCEQ recognizes that under the difficult conditions following a severe event, full compliance with these regulations may significantly delay the removal of debris from affected areas. With this in mind, wastes should be sorted to the maximum extent possible prior to disposal. Options for disposal of segregated debris are discussed in Section 4, below.

## **4.0 Options for Management of Segregated Debris**

Numerous options are available for management of segregated debris. The table on pages 3, 4, and 5 "Options for Management of Segregated Debris," summarizes disposal options for these materials.

### ***4.1 Construction-Demolition Debris Disposal***

Construction-demolition waste is defined in TCEQ rules [30 TAC 330.3(33)] as "waste

resulting from construction or demolition projects: includes all materials that are directly or indirectly the by-products of construction work or that result from demolition of buildings and other structures, including, but not limited to, paper, cartons, gypsum board, wood, excelsior, rubber, and plastics."

Construction-demolition waste should be disposed of in a permitted Type I, Type I -AE, Type IV, or Type IV-AE MSW landfill. Clean wood and other materials (e.g., metals, bricks, rock, glass, etc.) can also be recycled or reused.

#### ***4.2 Household Hazardous Waste Collection***

Household hazardous waste (HHW) that is no longer usable should be disposed of properly. The county, city, businesses and residents in the affected area can segregate for later collection all potentially hazardous substances. Those normally found in homes include:

- paints, thinners and turpentine, furniture strippers, wood preservatives, stains and finishes;
- pesticides, insecticides, flea collars and sprays, roach and ant killers, rat and mouse poisons, and herbicides;
- oven, toilet, drain, and rug and upholstery cleaners;
- bleaches, disinfectants, mothballs, ammonia-based and powdered cleansers, and swimming pool chemicals (i.e. chlorine tablets, muriatic acid, etc.);
- floor and furniture polish;
- household and automobile batteries; and
- automotive products, including antifreeze, transmission and brake fluids, motor oil, and gasoline wastes.

This material should be segregated, as residents and businesses remove debris from their property. These HHW should be stored in a safe place for later disposal. Normally, municipal landfills are able to accommodate the small quantities of hazardous wastes generated by households without threat to the environment. However, the extent of the tornados may have increased the volume of household hazardous waste to levels that may be unsuitable for landfilling.

Usually counties, cities, businesses and residents collect the household hazardous waste and have a staging area to store the waste for collection and disposal by an emergency response contractor. If this occurs and anyone wishes to have the household hazardous waste collected, a county, city, or business can contact their local Disaster District Office (list available online at [www.dps.texas.gov/dem](http://www.dps.texas.gov/dem)) and inform them that they have a need to arrange for the TCEQ emergency response contractor to pick up the collected household hazardous waste.

If you have any questions regarding household hazardous wastes issues or you are a public official in the city or the affected county, please contact your local Disaster District Office or the TCEQ Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Office at 817-588-5700.

#### ***4.3 Non-Household Hazardous Waste Disposal***

If drums or other containers of hazardous or unknown wastes are identified in the affected area, you can call the TCEQ's 24-hour Spill Response hotline at 1-800-832-

8224.

#### **4.4 Animal Carcass Disposal**

Animal carcass issues have not been reported for the tornados in North Texas. See Table 1 below for information. If additional information is needed about carcass disposal, call the TCEQ Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Office at 817-588-5700.

#### **4.5 Outdoor Burning**

Outdoor burning is the least desirable method of reducing the volume of debris from a disaster, as there is no control over how much or how quickly it is allowed to burn and lacks any type of environmental control. Environmental evaluations, air quality monitoring, and implementing control measures to limit impacts to the public and environment should be conducted. Close monitoring is needed to ensure that only clean woody debris are burned.

To find an appropriate landfill near you, go online to [www.tceq.texas.gov/response/tornados](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/tornados) or call the TCEQ Debris Hotline at 800-687-7057.

**Table 1. Options for Management of Segregated Debris**

<b>Waste Type</b>	<b>Examples of Waste Type</b>	<b>Disposal Option</b>
Vegetation	Trees, Brush	Preferred: Recycle Option: Type IV MSW Landfill Option: Type I MSW Landfill Option: Outdoor burn using an ACI, if possible
Clean Lumber	Lumber, siding, plywood and similar wood materials that have not been painted, stained or chemically treated	Preferred: Recycle Option: Type IV MSW Landfill Option: Type I MSW Landfill Option: Outdoor burn using an ACI, if possible
Animal Carcasses	Non-diseased Poultry, cattle, domestic animals	Preferred: On-site Burial/mounding Preferred: MSW Type I Landfill Option: Outdoor burn, using an ACI if possible Option: Off-site disposal using a renderer or a commercial waste incinerator
	Diseased poultry, cattle	Preferred: Outdoor burning using an ACI, if possible. Coordinate with local authorities and firefighters

<b>Waste Type</b>	<b>Examples of Waste Type</b>	<b>Disposal Option</b>
Household or Commercial Waste	Putrescible waste	MSW Type I Landfill
	Garbage, refuse, rubbish	MSW Type I Landfill
White Goods	Refrigerators	Preferred: Recycle Option: MSW Type I Landfill
	Stoves	Preferred: Recycle Option: MSW Type I landfill
	Washer/Dryers	Preferred: Recycle Option: MSW Type I landfill
Construction or Demolition Waste	Asbestos containing debris - shingles, siding, insulation, tiles	MSW Type I Landfill w/ Special Waste Authorization
	Painted/stained/treated wood	Preferred: MSW Type IV Landfill Option: MSW Type I Landfill
	Roof shingles	Preferred: Fuel source for cement kilns with appropriate air authorization Option: MSW Type IV Landfill Preferred: MSW Type I Landfill
	Sheet rock	Preferred: MSW Type IV Landfill Option: MSW Type I Landfill
Batteries		Preferred: Recycle (Lead-acid batteries are not allowed in MSW landfills). Option: HHW Collection Event
Household Hazardous Waste	Cleaning products	Option: HHW Collection Event Option: MSW Type I Landfill Option: Permitted HW facility
	Paints, Solvents	Option: HHW Collection Event Option: MSW Type I Landfill Option: Permitted HW facility
	Pesticides	Pesticide Collection Event
	Automotive products	Option: HHW Collection Event Option: MSW Type I Landfill Option: Permitted HW facility

<b>Waste Type</b>	<b>Examples of Waste Type</b>	<b>Disposal Option</b>
	Electronics: VCRs, Computers, TVs, etc.	Preferred: Recycle Option: HHW Collection Event Option: MSW Type I Landfill Option: Permitted HW facility
	Compressed Gas Containers	Recycle
	Tires	Pick-up by authorized Scrap Tire Transporter or delivery to authorized processing or end-use facilities.