

# **Alabama Emergency Management Agency and Federal Emergency Management Agency Debris Removal Quick Guide**

The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), Public Assistance (PA) Program, is providing this information early to **avoid jeopardizing applicants' eligibility for reimbursement** from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for debris removal and disposal.

Debris includes, but is not limited to, vegetative debris, construction and demolition debris, sand, mud, silt, gravel, rocks, boulders, and vehicle and vessel wreckage. Debris must be separated for proper handling, transport and disposal of hazardous materials and toxic waste (e.g., asbestos containing materials, lead-based paints, household chemicals).

## **1. The Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide** (FP 104-009-2 / June 2020) states:

- a. **Debris Removal** may be eligible for removal activities such as clearance, removal, and disposal, if the removal is in the public interest based on whether the work:
  - i. Eliminates immediate threats to lives, public health, and safety;
  - ii. Eliminates immediate threats of significant damage to improved public or private property;
  - iii. Ensures economic recovery of the affected community to the benefit of the community at large;
  - iv. Mitigates risk to life and property by removing Substantially Damaged structures and associated structures and appurtenances as needed to convert property acquired using HMGP funds to uses compatible with open space, recreation, or wetlands management practices. Such removal must be completed within 2 years of the declaration date unless extended by the FEMA Assistance Administrator of the Recovery Directorate.
- b. FEMA may reimburse reasonable costs associated with debris removal, such as overtime labor, disposal fees, monitoring costs, equipment costs, material costs, or contract costs. Contracts must comply with Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (FP 104-009-2 / June 2020).

## **2. Eligibility Requirements**

- a. You must be an **Eligible Applicant** as defined in the Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (FP 104-009-2 / June 2020) and have the legal responsibility, to be reimbursed for debris removal.
- b. Debris was generated by the disaster event and is located on your improved property or right-of-ways.

## **3. Permitting and Documentation Requirements**

- a. Debris volume (preferred unit of measure cubic yards).
- b. Source documentation (e.g. timesheets, work logs, equipment use logs, receipts, and load tickets, monitoring logs, contracts, mutual aid agreements, GPS coordinates).
- c. Only vegetation and untreated wood may be burned. All other materials should be disposed of in a permitted landfill or approved facility by the AL Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)-Solid Waste Branch.
- d. If using a **temporary staging area**: see ADEM Guidance "Storm Debris Cleanup" memorandum, May, 14, 2018 on handling storm-generated debris for additional information.

e. If **burning debris**:

- i. Only vegetation and untreated wood may be burned. See ADEM Air Quality Control Rule 335-13-1.03 for further guidance. Open burning of other construction materials is not permitted. All other materials should be disposed of in a permitted landfill or approved facility by the AL Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)- Solid Waste Branch.
- ii. **A burn permit may be required and must be obtained** from the **AL Forestry Commission** and authorization from the ADEM Air Division **PRIOR to initiation of burning**. For information on obtaining a burn permit, contact your local county office. See ADEM “Guidelines for Open Burning of Natural Disaster Debris” 2021.
- iii. Storm debris stockpiled at a central location away from its origination, for the purpose of burning, will need a variance to rule 335-13-1.03 granted by **AL Forestry Commission and ADEM prior to burning** suchpiles.

#### 4. Handling Debris

- a. Chipping or grinding is the preferred method for disposing of storm generated vegetative debris.
- b. Segregate waste types (e.g. vegetative, construction and demolition (C&D), white goods, household hazardous waste, electronic waste, animal carcasses, sand and mud, etc), if possible.
- c. Disposal of animal carcasses must be compliant with Alabama department of Agriculture and ADEM rules for handling, solid waste, and air quality.
- d. Demolition of structures may require an emergency project notification. Contact the ADEM Special Services Section/Air Division (334-271-7861) [airmail@adem.alabama.gov](mailto:airmail@adem.alabama.gov) and/or the ADEM Waste Programs Branch (334-274-4201) [landmail@adem.alabama.gov](mailto:landmail@adem.alabama.gov) .
- e. If collecting or handling asbestos materials, hazardous waste, or prohibited waste items, contact the ADEM Waste /Remediation Division District Office (334-271-7730) [landmail@adem.alabama.gov](mailto:landmail@adem.alabama.gov).

#### 5. Picking Locations for Debris Management Sites (DMS), Temporary Staging and Reduction Sites (TDSR), and Final Disposal Site

As FEMA must ensure that the Applicant’s debris removal operations avoid impacts to such resources as floodplains, wetlands, federally listed threatened and endangered species and their critical habitats, and historic properties (including archaeological sites and above-ground resources) the temporary establishment and expansion of non-hazardous debris sites:

- a. MUST NOT be placed in floodplains, wetlands, endangered species critical habitat, or in archaeologically sensitive areas.
- b. MUST BE staged a minimum of 100 feet from property boundaries, surface waters, wetlands, structures, wells, and septic tanks with leach fields.
- c. CAN BE staged at licensed transfer stations, maintenance yards, on existing hard-topped or graveled surfaces (e.g. parking lots, roads, athletic courts).
- d. CAN BE staged and reduced within the footprint of permitted landfills or established materials pits.

***If you are not certain if the staging area meets these criteria, please contact the FEMA Integration Environmental Historic Preservation Representative for Alabama at AEMA.***

## 6. Point of Contact

To coordinate your debris removal operations or for more information, please **contact Bailey Dykes (334-271-7756) or Cala Obenauf (334-271-7824)** with the ADEM Waste Approval Section.

## 7. More Information Online

Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (FP 104-009-2 / June 2020) may be found at:  
<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/111781>

AL Department of Environmental Management solid waste handling information is available at:  
<http://www.adem.state.al.us/programs/land/default.cnt>

AL Department of Environmental Management hazardous waste handling information is available at:  
<http://www.adem.state.al.us/programs/land/default.cnt>



Alabama Department of Environmental Management  
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## Guidelines for Open Burning of Natural Disaster Debris (2021)

1. These guidelines apply to the open burning of debris resulting from **catastrophic natural events**.<sup>\*</sup> Generally, open burning of this debris must be approved by an authorized city or county official in whose jurisdiction the proposed burn site is located.
2. Open burning, including selection of sites, should be coordinated and supervised by city or county officials (public health officers, city/county engineers, solid waste coordinators, and emergency management officials) within their jurisdictions.
3. **Only vegetation and untreated wood** may be burned. All other materials should be disposed of in a permitted landfill or a site approved by the ADEM-Solid Waste Branch.
4. Information from the county or city (if applicable), beginning burning date, estimated ending date, contact details and GIS location of the proposed burn site should be e-mailed to [drb@adem.alabama.gov](mailto:drb@adem.alabama.gov). A form for use is available at the aforementioned e-mail address or by telephoning (334) 271-7879.
5. Guidelines for open burning sites:
  - As distant from occupied dwellings and businesses as possible (recommended distance 1000 ft).
  - Burning is best conducted during clear weather and prevailing wind direction should be considered to minimize nuisance smoke.
  - Material to be burned should be as dry as possible and maintained to prevent long-term smoldering.
  - Burning may commence or vegetation added to a fire only between 8:00 am & 3:00 pm. Existing fires may burn beyond 3:00 pm.
  - The use of portable air curtain incinerators is encouraged and should be considered if one or more of the following situations exist:
    - a. Extended 24-hour burning is necessary.
    - b. Accelerated burning is desired.
    - c. Smoke is or may become a problem.
6. In situations where governmental officials or their contractors are unable to provide removal of vegetative debris for area residents, individual property owners who cannot meet **all conditions** listed in the footnote below may request to open burn this debris on their property if it is approved by their local governing body. Contact Don Barron at (334) 271-7879 prior to burning to discuss requirements.

*\* The Department does not require a notification if the burning of natural disaster debris is to be conducted in a manner consistent with the following conditions allowed by ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2):*

*(1) The debris is burned on the property on which it originates. (2) The burn pile is not within 500 feet of an occupied dwelling located on other property. (3) The burning is controlled in a manner that does not cause a traffic hazard. (4) Only vegetation and untreated wood is burned. (5) Initial burning must not commence before 8 a.m. and no additional fuel added after 3 p.m. (6) Burning is conducted during favorable weather conditions and not conducted during a "Drought Emergency" declared by the Governor. (7) The fire shall be attended at all times. (8) The burning will not take place from May 1 - October 31 in any of the following counties: Baldwin, DeKalb, Etowah, Jefferson, Lawrence, Madison, Mobile, Montgomery, Morgan, Shelby, Russell or Talladega.*



# Proposed Site Information For Open Burning Of Natural Disaster Debris

Prepared by ADEM - April 2021 (Call 334-271-7879)

Date of Natural Disaster: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed start date: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated end date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location (GIS): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Portable air curtain incinerator to be used? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Responsible Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Responsible Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number of Responsible Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Responsible Official: \_\_\_\_\_