EGLE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

Storm Recovery: Managing Storm Debris

Proper management of storm debris is important because it protects human health, safety, and our environment. Local officials, emergency response personnel, and residents can all benefit from understanding how to handle excess storm debris and being prepared. In this guidance, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) has outlined the regulatory requirements for managing storm debris. This guidance also provides important contact information and resources for local officials, emergency response planners, and residents to learn more about **using, recycling, burning, and disposing of storm debris**.

Where possible, recycling is the preferred method for managing debris.

Check out our Storm Debris Use Webpage at Michigan.gov/StormRecovery for a crafty way to put storm debris to use and help wildlife. To find recycling options:

- Contact your local waste provider to see what yard waste services they offer,
- Call your local municipality to find a drop off location.
- Search our map of registered composters at Michigan.gov/EGLECompost, the Michigan.gov/RecyclingDirectory (residential recycling directory), or Michigan.gov/RMMD (commercial recycling directory).

If recycling is not possible, explore other options highlighted in this guidance.

PLAN BEFORE THE STORM

Ideally, areas where solid waste is to be regularly stored and processed should be identified in each county's or region's solid waste management plan. These plans are soon to be updated to materials management plans. The plans are developed in coordination with EGLE materials management planning staff and local county planning staff. If additional capacity is desired for storm response, consider updating the Emergency Management Program, Emergency Operations Plan to include emergency debris staging areas or transfer site locations that can be used in the event of an emergency. It will facilitate an emergency authorization review in the event there is a need for emergency storm response. However, emergency approvals are not required to be in the approved solid waste or materials management plans.

EMERGENCY DISPOSAL AUTHORIZATIONS

EGLE's Materials Management Division (MMD) has the authority to issue emergency disposal authorizations to counties and municipalities recovering from a disaster or emergency.

Use the **Storm Recovery Emergency Solid Waste Authorization Request Form** to submit an official request for an emergency solid waste disposal authorization.

Complete a separate form for **each site location** needing an emergency authorization. The form will automatically route to staff needed to review the request.

If the request is **associated with an emergency declaration from the Governor**, submittal of the form will result in activation of the State Emergency Operations Center. To be eligible for Federal Emergency Management funding the Local Emergency Management Coordinator must submit the form and site map for each site using the Michigan Critical Incident Management System (MI CIMS). The Local Emergency Management Coordinator must submit a "Task Assignment" using MI CIMS and attach each e-mail from EGLE-Automated and each site map submitted to EGLE.

A request that **did not** result in an emergency declaration from the Governor may be initiated by county and municipal staff, solid waste disposal vendors supporting county and municipal operations, or both, using the Storm Recovery Emergency Solid Waste Authorization Request Form which will automatically be routed to EGLE, MMD, Solid Waste Section staff and the EGLE MMD Solid Waste District Office staff for review.

See the Storm Recovery Emergency Solid Waste Disposal Authorizations Webpage and guide for more details on the information needed for emergency authorizations.

Reasonable requests to expand services, hours of operation, materials accepted, or to make other operational changes to accommodate excess debris at existing transfer stations and landfills are reviewed by the MMD on a case-by-case basis. See our **Storm Recovery: Emergency Solid Waste Disposal Authorizations Guide** for more information on preparing for an emergency and submitting an emergency disposal authorization request.

For questions about emergency disposal authorizations, contact your EGLE, District Office, Solid Waste Program staff or the MMD, Solid Waste Section, at EGLE-MMD-SW@Michigan.gov or 517-899-5594.

LEARN BEFORE YOU BURN

Debris from homes and businesses **should not be burned**. This includes structural materials, roofing, insulation, siding, appliances, carpet, furniture, and other household items. "Open burning" is the burning of unwanted materials, such as paper, trees, brush, leaves, grass, and other debris whose smoke and other emissions are released directly into the air. During open burning, air pollutants do not pass through a chimney or stack, and/or the combustion of solid waste is not controlled. Air quality regulations may allow open burning of trees, logs, brush, and stumps on a limited basis. When burning trees logs, brush, and stumps, it must occur further than 1,400 feet from an incorporated city or village. The open burning cannot cause a nuisance, nor can it violate any other air pollution rules. Local laws often prohibit open burning of these

materials. To ensure it is allowed and the appropriate local permits are obtained, check with your local officials before open burning these materials. For questions about open burning, visit Michigan.gov/OpenBurning or call the Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278.

Illegal Burning of Demolition Waste

Waste regulations prohibit the open burning of grass clippings or leaves, or both, in any municipality that has a population of 7,500 or more. To be lawful it must be specifically authorized by local ordinance and the municipality must share the open burning ordinance with MMD within 30 days of enactment.

WOODY AND VEGETATIVE WASTE

Cutting, splitting, shredding, chipping, or mulching **untreated** wood and woody debris for reuse as fuel, in flower beds, etc., is one of the best options for handling excess wood and woody materials.

When handling storm-generated vegetative debris, like leaves, grass, plants and small branches, composting is the preferred option, unless you can use it to create wildlife habitat. For a map of EGLE registered composters, please go to Michigan.gov/EGLECompost and see the Compost Web Map, or search for composters at Michigan.gov/RecyclingDirectory or Michigan.gov/RMMD.

Emergency authorizations are not required for accumulating inert materials like trees, stumps, or other land clearing debris, so long as the debris remains on the site of origin or another site, with the approval of the owner. Trees, stumps, or other land clearing debris materials can also be buried so long as the following conditions are met:

- The debris is buried on the site of origin or another site, with the approval of the owner of the site.
- The debris is not buried in a wetland or floodplain
- The debris is placed at least 3 feet above the groundwater table as observed at the time of placement.
- The placement of the debris does not violate federal, state, or local law or create a nuisance.

Flood debris

Storm-generated woody and vegetative debris from a catastrophic event like a flood, tornado, infrastructure failure or extreme erosion can be disposed in a licensed solid waste landfill if EGLE has granted an **emergency disposal authorization**. For a map of licensed solid waste landfills, visit Michigan.gov/SolidWaste and open the **Materials Management Facility Web Map**. See details above for requesting an **emergency disposal authorization** for disposal of storm-generated woody and vegetative debris in a landfill. For questions about emergency disposal authorizations and composting of wood and woody or vegetative debris, please call EGLE District Office Solid Waste Program staff or call the MMD, Solid Waste Section at **517-899-5594**.

HOUSEHOLD AND NON-HAZARDOUS BUSINESS DEBRIS DISPOSAL

As a precautionary measure to protect public health, construction and demolition debris that are emergency or storm-related can be treated as potentially containing asbestos and maintained in a wet condition from demolition to disposal. Construction and demolition debris may be disposed in a licensed solid waste landfill. For more information on handling asbestos waste, visit Michigan.gov/EGLEAsbestos, or call the EGLE, Air Quality Division, Asbestos Program staff.

Appliances can be picked up and taken to a recycling center. To find a recycling center, contact your solid waste hauler, visit Michigan.gov/RecyclingDirectory or Michigan.gov/RMMD.

Non-hazardous solid waste from businesses and households should go to an authorized transfer station or licensed solid waste landfill. For a map of licensed solid waste landfills, visit Michigan.gov/SolidWaste and open the Materials Management Facilities Web Map. Where available, EGLE encourages households to manage household hazardous waste through a local household hazardous waste collection. To find local drop-off sites and a list of common types of household hazardous waste and their hazards, visit Michigan.gov/EGLEHHW. For questions about disposal of non-hazardous business and household debris, including construction and demolition debris, call EGLE District Office Solid Waste Program staff.

HAZARDOUS BUSINESS DEBRIS DISPOSAL

Business debris contaminated with hazardous waste must be managed as a hazardous waste. To find hazardous waste disposal options, go to Michigan.gov/HazardousWaste and open the Hazardous Waste Facilities Web Map found under "General Resources" heading after selecting "Hazardous Waste and Liquid Industrial By-Products Management."

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

- Pollution Emergencies: 800-292-4706
- Environmental Assistance Center: 800-662-9278
- EGLE, MMD, Solid Waste Section: 517-284-6588

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

- Michigan State Police (MSP) MIREADY for residents
- MSP Emergency Management and Homeland Security for public officials
- MSP Disaster Declaration Process Video
- MSP Local Disaster Debris Planning Handbook
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) All Hazards Waste Management Planning Tool (AHWMPT)
- U.S. EPA Disaster Debris Recovery Tool
- U.S.EPA Planning for Natural Disaster Debris guidance

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Individuals with disabilities may request this material in an alternative format by emailing EGLE-Accessibility@Michigan.gov or calling 800-662-9278.