



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
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GOVERNOR  
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
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**Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)  
Emergency Debris Management Guidance  
December 24, 2014**

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has developed this guidance in response to the severe weather that recently occurred in the State. Where a severe weather event results in the urgent need for additional public solid waste management facilities, affected local governments may request emergency approval for a temporary emergency debris management site. The Mississippi Nonhazardous Solid Waste Management Regulations allow the MDEQ to issue such an emergency approval for a temporary debris management site or facility for immediate operation, subject to stipulated operating conditions.

This document provides guidance to affected local governments (including cities, counties and other local and State government organizations) on selecting temporary emergency debris sites for the purpose of staging and chipping of vegetative debris or for the temporary storage of building and structural debris and other related solid wastes. This document also provides information on how to request authorization for such emergency sites from the MDEQ. MDEQ may also consider proposals for an emergency disposal site for the burial of the vegetative debris on a case-by-case basis, where adequate local disposal capacity and other suitable disposal options do not exist. Local governments interested in pursuing debris burial or other debris management options should contact the MDEQ Solid Waste Management Programs for specific guidance at 601-961-5171.

**Selecting Temporary Emergency Debris Storage and/or Chipping Sites**

1. In evaluating potential emergency debris sites proposed by the local government for the temporary storage or chipping of vegetative debris or the storage of structural/building debris, the following location restrictions apply and should be considered when selecting a site:
  - a) **STORAGE/CHIPPING SITES:** Sites which stage or store vegetative or building debris or which process vegetative debris into chips or mulch shall maintain at least a 500 foot setback distance between the debris storage or processing areas and any occupied dwelling.
  - b) All debris management sites should have a 250 foot setback distance between the debris storage and/or processing areas and the nearest property line.

- c) All debris management sites should have a 250 foot setback distance between the debris storage and/or processing areas and the nearest state water body (e.g. lakes, rivers, creeks, streams, etc.).
- d) Debris management sites should not be located in wetlands or in low lying or flood prone areas.
- e) Debris management sites should not be located in close proximity to public drinking water supply wells or individual private drinking water wells.
- f) Sites with any pre-existing environmental problems, illegal dumping problems, or other similar conditions should be avoided.

Sites that do not meet these requirements should not be considered for management of storm debris.

- 2. Sites should be large enough in area to comply with the location restrictions outlined in this guidance document and to accommodate the estimated quantity of vegetative or structural debris. Incoming debris and waste materials should be limited to a reasonable and manageable height. Where debris is simply brought to a site for storage, local governments should consider placement of appropriately sized dumpsters or roll-off containers at the location to facilitate storage and transport. To prevent fires or spontaneous combustion, processed or chipped vegetative debris piles should not exceed stockpiled heights of twelve (12) feet of wastes or of processed vegetative material.
- 3. If a local government chooses to consider the use of 16<sup>th</sup> Section property for a temporary emergency debris management site, such action must be properly coordinated with the appropriate local school district officials and the Mississippi Secretary of State's Office, prior to requesting authorization for the site from MDEQ. Documentation of such coordination must be provided with the local government's request.
- 4. MDEQ encourages that, where possible, temporary sites be owned or controlled by the affected city, county or state government entity. In the event that the property selected is owned or controlled by a private interest, the responsibility for obtaining the proper access to the site will be with the local/state government or other authorized agent of the local/state government entity. Responsibility for the operation and closure of the site shall fall jointly with the local government, the private property owner or other authorized agent of the local government subject to the terms of site operating agreements. Any sites requested for authorization which are owned or controlled by a private interest must have the written approval of the local government in the form of a city or county letter, and must have the written approval of the property owner.

### **Requesting Authorization for a Temporary Emergency Debris Storage and/or Chipping Site**

- 1. Local governments impacted by such a disaster and faced with the need to manage large quantities of vegetative or building debris should submit a written request to MDEQ for authorization to operate a temporary emergency debris management site. The request should:

- Provide written confirmation that the affected local government has determined that the conditions from the storm require the use of a temporary emergency management site(s) for the storm debris. This information would include estimates of the amount and types of storm debris in the jurisdiction, the lack of available permitted landfills or other solid waste disposal facilities in the impacted areas and the type of facility needed.
  - Describe the type of operations that will be conducted at the site such as debris chipping or temporary storage and the wastes that will be brought to the site for chipping or storage. Such wastes could include vegetative debris such as trees, limbs, leaves and other vegetation; building and structural debris such as brick, wood, siding, metal sheeting, roofing materials, furniture, and other materials. In order to develop a site to store or manage household garbage or household hazardous wastes or chemicals, the local government should contact MDEQ for further guidance.
  - Include a site map, physical address and directions which identify the temporary site location. Where possible, the MDEQ requests that GPS coordinates be provided of the site;
  - Include a description of the site's ability to comply with the location restrictions identified in this guidance;
  - Include an estimate of the time necessary to start and complete all emergency operations, including final clean up and closure of the site;
  - Include a written statement from the site property owner(s) acknowledging concurrence with the use of the property as an emergency debris management site;
  - Include a description of the manner in which the site will be operated and the name and contact information for any debris contractors that may be operating the site on behalf of the local government;
  - Include a description of the plans for final disposal or for beneficial use of all debris, chipped wood and any other solid wastes brought to the site; and
  - Include the name of a contact person and contact information (phone numbers, mailing addresses, etc.) of a person responsible for the proper operation of the site.
2. A request for emergency authorization should be transmitted by the affected local government to the MDEQ Solid Waste Management Programs by fax at 601-961-5785 or by mail or delivery to one of the following addresses:

By U.S. Mail:

MS Dept. of Environmental Quality  
 Solid Waste Management Programs  
 P.O. Box 2261  
 Jackson, MS 39225

By Courier or Delivery Service:

MS Dept of Environmental Quality  
 Solid Waste Management Programs  
 515 East Amite Street  
 Jackson, MS 39201

By Email:

Mark\_Williams@deq.state.ms.us  
 Billy\_Warden@deq.state.ms.us  
 Trent\_Jones@deq.state.ms.us

3. Upon receipt of the request, MDEQ may conduct an inspection of the site to ensure that the surrounding areas will not be adversely impacted by the proposed operations.

4. If the request for authorization is approved, the MDEQ will issue a letter of temporary authorization to the local government or local government agent responsible for the emergency debris site. This letter of temporary authorization will outline the operating requirements, time limitations, closure requirements and any other guidelines that may apply. The MDEQ reserves the right to inspect the temporary site at all reasonable times. Furthermore, should the responsible parties, including local governments, landowners and/or contractors fail to adhere to the restrictions outlined in the MDEQ's letter of authorization or other pertinent laws, regulations or ordinances, additional operating conditions may be required, or operations may be terminated by the MDEQ.
5. It is the responsibility of the operator to remove and properly dispose of any household garbage, hazardous chemicals, or other prohibited wastes which are inadvertently or illegally placed at the site. If the operator has questions regarding the acceptability of any debris or waste material, contact the MDEQ Solid Waste Management Programs, at 601-961-5171, for assistance.