



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Haley Barbour
Governor

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Charles H. Chisolm, Executive Director

**Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
Hurricane Katrina Disaster Debris Management Response
Vegetative Debris Disposal
(September 3, 2005)**

Emergency authorization is hereby granted to affected city and county governments in Clarke, Copiah, Covington, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Lincoln, Marion, Newton, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Scott, Simpson, Smith, Stone, Rankin, Walthall, and Wayne Counties and to affected State and Federal emergency response agencies in coordination with the affected local governments listed above for the management, burning, chipping or other volume reduction efforts for vegetative debris, in compliance with the following emergency siting and operating guidelines established by the MDEQ. Additional approval is not required from MDEQ prior to conducting the vegetative debris management actions as described in this document for city and county governments in the affected counties listed above. MDEQ will work with other affected local governments in counties not named above to obtain written authorization from the MDEQ for emergency debris management sites. This guidance only applies to the management and disposal of vegetative debris. Vegetative debris includes downed trees, limbs, leaves, stumps, and other natural vegetation. MDEQ will issue additional separate guidance on the management of other disaster related debris.

This authorization shall take effect immediately and the continuation of the authorization for each county listed above shall be reviewed in the future by MDEQ, subject to the future emergency recovery conditions in each county.

Requirements for Temporary Storage and Staging sites for Vegetative Debris

MDEQ recognizes that local governments will need storage and staging areas for vegetative debris to be managed on a temporary basis prior to transport to sites for ultimate disposal. MDEQ grants authorization to local governments to

establish temporary vegetative debris storage sites at locations with convenient access and entry for drop off and collection.

1. MDEQ encourages vegetative debris to be removed for disposal from such temporary sites at least every 90 days, where possible.
2. Local governments should take steps to prevent disposal of other unauthorized emergency debris at temporary vegetative debris storage sites.
3. Temporary vegetative debris storage sites shall be operated in a manner that precludes open burning and other public health and environmental impacts.
4. MDEQ requests that a fire lane or separation distance be established around the vegetative debris pile.

Siting Requirements for Vegetative Debris Burn and Chip Sites

The local governments in those counties described above, are authorized to establish emergency disposal sites subject to the following siting criteria for any vegetative debris burn and chip sites:

1. For those sites selected as emergency burn sites for vegetative debris the following state Air Regulations apply and must be considered when selecting and operating a burn site. Proposed sites that do not meet these requirements should not be selected by local governments:
 - Open burning without a forced-draft (air curtain burner and/or industrial fan) air system must not occur within 500 yards of an occupied dwelling.
 - Controlled burning using a forced-draft air system must not occur within 100 yards of an occupied dwelling.
 - All burning (both open and controlled) is prohibited within 500 yards of a commercial or private airport property or any area associated with airport flight operations.
2. Emergency burn sites should be located in a manner to prevent spread of fires to areas outside the controlled burn area. Unless otherwise approved by MDEQ, any selected site must have an appropriate separation distance of 100 yards (300 feet) between the vegetative debris burn areas and all surrounding brush, forestry, structures, and other debris piles to prevent additional fire hazards.
3. The Department recommends that local governments that select sites on 16th Section Land for emergency burn or chip sites coordinate with the appropriate local school district officials and the Mississippi Secretary of State's Office.
4. The Department encourages that, where possible, temporary burn and chip sites be owned or controlled by the city and/or county government. 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 government or other authorized agent of the local government. 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.

5. Within 48 hours of opening an emergency vegetative debris site, the city or county should submit a written notification to the MDEQ, which contains the following information
 - a description of the nature of the disposal operations (e.g. burn site, chip site, other processing or volume reduction site, etc.)
 - a description of the physical address which identifies the temporary disposal location and GPS coordinates, if available;
 - a description of any extraordinary conditions of operation not addressed in this guidance; and
 - a local contact person and that person's contact information (where possible).

The notification can be mailed or faxed to MDEQ at the P.O. Box 10385, Jackson, MS 39289-0385 or fax number 601-961-5703/601-961-5785 to the attention of the Solid Waste Division.

Operating Requirements for Emergency Burn and Chip Sites

1. An emergency burn and chip sites may only accept natural vegetative debris, such as trees, tree limbs, leaves, and stumps that are the result of damage from Hurricane Katrina, except where otherwise authorized by the MDEQ.
2. A site attendant shall be present at all times that open burning, chipping or other processing is being conducted. For emergency burn sites, appropriate fire control equipment shall also be available on-site at all times that open burning is occurring.
3. For emergency burn sites, the site operator may use **only** fossil fuels, e.g. diesel, kerosene, to ignite the fire. **Do not use tires, asphalt shingles, and other similar materials.**
4. A separation distance of fire lane of at least 100 yards (300 feet) shall be maintained between the burn area and other surrounding brush, forestry, structures and other non-vegetative debris piles, unless otherwise approved by MDEQ.
5. Adequate security and monitoring shall be established and maintained to prevent uncontrolled access and disposal.
6. Incoming waste loads containing non-vegetative debris and other unauthorized wastes shall not be unloaded at the vegetative debris site. Such wastes shall be redirected to an appropriate permitted disposal facility. It is the responsibility of the operator to remove and properly dispose of any unauthorized, non-vegetative wastes, which were inadvertently or illegally disposed at the site. For information on where non-vegetative debris may be disposed, contact the Solid Waste Division at 601-961-5171 for assistance or the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency at 601-960-9047.

7. The MDEQ reserves the right to inspect the burning operations at all reasonable times. Furthermore, should the responsible parties, including local governments, landowners and/or contractors fail to adhere to the restrictions outlined above or other pertinent laws, regulations or ordinances, additional operating conditions may be required or the burning authorization terminated by the MDEQ.
8. The local fire department shall be notified upon commencement of debris burning activities (where such communication is possible). The local government may employ other appropriate local ordinances regarding vegetative debris, such as burn bans or other limitations where determined necessary.

Closure Requirements for Emergency Burn and Chip Sites

Within 60 days of the closure of an emergency burn or chip site, all ash and unburned vegetative debris shall be removed from the site and disposed at a permitted solid waste management facility. Ash, upon appropriate sampling and characterization, may be available for beneficial use.

Within 180 days of completion of processing at a chip site, all chips and mulch shall be removed for beneficial uses. Unprocessed wood wastes at a chip site must be removed to an appropriate disposal site.

The local government shall notify the MDEQ upon closure of the site.