



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
HALEY BARBOUR, GOVERNOR  
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
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## MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

### Flood Debris Clean-Up Guidance for the Public

May 20, 2011

In the coming weeks, residents and business owners in the flood impacted areas along the Mississippi River and other associated flood areas will be returning to their homes and businesses to begin clean up efforts. In many cases, the debris in houses or businesses that needs to be cleaned up may contain hazardous materials or contaminants mixed with other nonhazardous debris items. Nonhazardous wastes and debris will generally need to be disposed at a municipal solid waste landfill or a class I rubbish disposal site or recycled at a legitimate recycling facility. Household hazardous materials may need to be managed and collected separately from other debris for disposal. While cleaning up the flood debris, the MDEQ requests that residents follow these general guidelines:

- Generally, most structural components and contents of a home or building that have been contacted by flood waters will need to be disposed. Structural components will include sheetrock/drywall, carpeting, wood components, electrical components, flooring, doors, and other physical parts of the structure. The contents of homes and buildings will include household furnishings, appliances, electronics, clothing, food items and other personal items. Personal items contacted by flood waters such as medications, cosmetics, and other similar personal grooming items should not be used and should also be disposed.
- Residents should NOT burn flood debris from houses, businesses and other structures. Open burning of such structural type debris is prohibited by state and federal laws and regulations.
- It is recommended that residents wear protective clothing and gloves when handling flood debris as it may have become contaminated by raw sewage and/or hazardous chemicals released by the flood waters.
- If there is standing water in an area where residents are removing debris, be cautious as there may be sharp objects or other hazards exposed that are not visible.
- If cleaning up a building that has been significantly flooded, be on the lookout for snakes and rodents that may have taken refuge in your house during the flood. Snakes tend to find high and dry hiding spots, such as an attic or the top of ceiling tiles, while rodents are more prone to be found in the walls and attic spaces.

- If a building or structure was built prior to or during the 1970s, some building materials -- pipe insulation, electrical insulation, flooring, ceiling ties, roofing materials, and siding -- may contain asbestos. Caution should be used in demolishing and/or renovating these structures so as to not crush or grind up the asbestos containing materials. (See MDEQ's guidance on asbestos and lead paint).
- Residents may be advised to segregate debris according to how the items will be disposed or recycled. Each community will be provided direction by the local government on how the clean up and collection of flood debris will occur in that community.
- Residents should dispose of the debris in the manner that is developed for your community. This may mean hauling the debris directly to a permitted landfill or to a local flood debris staging or collection site or placing the debris near the public road for collection. Additional information will be forthcoming in your community about how debris will be managed and collected.
- Collect and contain household hazardous waste materials (such as those listed below) in their original container, if possible, or in a plastic bin or tub for disposal at a household hazardous waste collection site or event. Do not mix these materials in the same container. If a household hazardous collection site or event is not being held in your area, please contact the MDEQ solid waste staff to help you find an appropriate method of disposing of the material. Household hazardous wastes would include the following types of household items:
  - Antifreeze
  - Fuels (gasoline, propane, diesel, kerosene, etc.)
  - Fuel Containers or Canisters
  - Motor and Hydraulic Oils
  - Paints, stains, and varnishes
  - Paint thinner
  - Solvents
  - Other cleaning supplies and chemicals
  - Pesticides, herbicides, and other farm/lawn chemicals
  - Household thermostats and thermometers

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality  
 Solid Waste Management Programs  
 P.O. Box 2261, Jackson, MS 39225  
 Phone: 601-961-5171  
[www.deq.state.ms.us](http://www.deq.state.ms.us)