



Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection

FACT SHEET

Disposing of storm debris



The Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection (DEP) has specific guidelines for proper disposal of woody and vegetative debris left in the aftermath of severe storms.

Kentuckians should contact their local [solid waste coordinator](#) to learn if storm debris will be picked up curbside or if debris must be taken to a designated location.

Recycling is the preferred disposal method. Local governments are strongly encouraged to recycle debris by shredding or chipping for reuse as mulch. Those lacking the equipment should consider commercial shredders or seek help from other cities and counties.

Kentucky restricts [open burning](#). Burning is only permitted in limited circumstances and under specific conditions. Because of forest fire hazards, burning within 150 feet of woodlands or brush land remains illegal from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Feb. 15 through April 30. The burning of household trash other than uncoated paper products is illegal year-round.

If recycling is not feasible, cities or counties should identify staging areas where storm debris can be temporarily stored or burned. At a minimum, staging areas must be well away from residences and businesses. They also must be out of floodplains and away from sinkholes and drainage channels.

Local officials should contact the [regional office](#) of DEP with proposed staging areas. DEP staff will inspect the site to ensure it meets specific environmental criteria. Once a staging area is approved, material may be disposed using the following methods:

- Chip or shred for reuse. Use the material for landscaping or allow the public to take it for landscaping purposes; take it to a permitted composting facility; contact animal clinics/farms for use as animal bedding; contact industrial plants for use as supplemental fuel source; contact manufacturers who may be able to use it as raw materials; chipped material may also be used as ground cover or a soil amendment
- Storm-generated vegetative debris managed at a staging area may be disposed of in a permitted contained landfill or construction debris landfill.
- Use controlled burning. Local fire departments should oversee the burning and ensure there are adequate fire breaks. To minimize environmental impact, debris should not be burned until dry, at least on exterior surfaces. Small amounts of clean diesel fuel or kerosene, not to exceed five gallons, may be used to aid ignition. Storm-damaged building materials, appliances and furniture may not be burned.

[Residents who wish](#) to dispose of storm debris on their property should contact their local emergency operations center for instructions. Most counties address the handling of disaster debris in five-year solid-waste management plans submitted to DEP's Division of Waste Management. The guidance usually is in cooperation with the local department for emergency service.

Property owners should separate storm debris for curbside pickup or hauling by the local government to a central stage area or an appropriate landfill along these lines:

- **Woody and vegetative waste** – Recycling by shredding or chipping is encouraged. If recycling is not feasible, contact the local [solid waste coordinator](#) for additional disposal information. Local governments should contact a [Division of Forestry district office](#) and [Department for Environmental Protection regional office](#) for approval of burning of woody and vegetative waste.
- **White goods** – This includes refrigerators, stoves, water heaters, air conditioning units, and washer/dryers. Damaged appliances can be picked up by a hauler and taken to a recycling center or county staging area. Information on recycling centers is available on the Division of Waste Management's [recycling page](#). Freon must be recovered prior to crushing or recycling.
- **Construction and demolition debris** – Building materials – bricks, concrete, masonry, rock, wood or lumber, insulation – should be disposed of at a construction and demolition landfill or a contained landfill. A [landfill list](#) is online at the Division of Waste Management site.
- **Contained landfill/household garbage** – Garbage and all residential waste and household hazardous waste (pesticides, dried latex paint) should go to a contained landfill.

Special handling applies to:

- **Livestock carcasses** – Contact the Department of Agriculture's [Division of Animal Health](#), 502-564-3956, for information and assistance on proper disposal.
- **Abandoned and orphaned drums** – Don't attempt to dispose of a drum, since it may contain hazardous materials or waste. Note the location and contact either the local disaster services office or a DEP regional office.

Other sources of online storm-recovery information include:

- **The Kentucky Office of Insurance.** [After the Storm Has Passed: Settling Disaster Claims](#)
- **The American Red Cross.** [After a Disaster](#) -- tips to help keep you safe and speed your recovery after a disaster.



Damaged urban trees – The [Division of Forestry](#) can offer advice and/or contact information to address urban trees that have storm damage.

Division of Waste Management

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