



State of Illinois
Pat Quinn, Governor

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Lisa Bonnett, Director

Fact Sheet

Storm Debris in Disaster Areas

Dealing with Debris

Tornado debris can cause serious pollution problems and potentially result in ill health effects. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) has developed this fact sheet to outline what you can do to ensure that the waste and debris are disposed of in a safe and environmentally sound manner. Please follow these guidelines to dispose of the debris.

Any questions about which materials can be landfilled, burned or recycled will be answered promptly by calling:

Landfill waste material – 217-524-3300

Open burning waste – 217-782-2113

Immediate emergency – 800-782-7860

Outdoor chemical contamination – 217-782-3637

Recycling Tornado Waste

Household appliances, also known as “white goods,” can be recycled by taking them to a local scrap dealer, who will remove potentially harmful components. For information on scrap dealers in your area check the yellow pages or call a local appliance retailer.

Tires must be disposed at a registered commercial processing facility. Units of local government may accumulate used and waste tires recovered via storm cleanup. It is important to drain all used tires of standing water and to store them in a manner that prevents the further accumulation of water. Contact the Illinois EPA at 217/785-8604 for further information and possible assistance.

In addition, we encourage other recyclable materials to be separated and recycled such as glass, metal debris and plastics.



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Household Hazardous Waste Disposal

Household hazardous waste (HHW) and other chemical products should be disposed of properly to avoid health and pollution risks. HHW should be placed in plastic bags and left with traditional household garbage at the curb for normal collection.

Sealed Drum and Propane Tank Disposal

Sealed drums, propane tanks and other pressurized gas cylinders with unknown contents should not be handled by untrained persons. Please notify the Illinois EPA Office of Emergency Response at 217-782-3637 or Illinois Emergency Management Agency at 800-782-7860.

To dispose of propane tanks, contact the nearest propane distributor. Propane tanks have serial numbers that will allow for identification of tank owners and locations.

Landfilling Tornado Waste

You may dispose of the following items in your local landfill: lumber, plastic sheeting, shingles, insulation, animal carcasses, grain, animal feed, food, carpet, furniture, metal debris and machinery. Additionally, you may want to check with the operator of your local landfill to see if trees, branches, brush and other debris similar to landscape waste may be temporarily accepted there for disposal and, if so, for how long. Landscape compost facilities may also accept this type of material as long as it is not mixed with other types of storm debris.

Burning Tornado Waste

Trees, limbs, brush, shrubs, and plant debris:

- Burned on site where generated: No Permit Necessary
- At community sites under supervision by unit of local government: No Permit Necessary

Agricultural Waste (bags, cartons, dry bedding, structural materials and crop residue):

- Burned on site where generated: No Permit Necessary

Clean wood building debris, and lumber:

- Permit is necessary from Illinois EPA: Permit Needed

If Permit is Required:

Complete an Open Burning Permit Application Form found at: <http://www.epa.state.il.us/air/permits/openburn/index.html>

General Conditions for the Open Burning of Disaster Debris:

- 1) Coordinate the burn with the local Fire Protection District;
- 2) Conduct the burn when the wind is blowing away from roadways, railroad tracks, airfields, and populated areas;
- 3) Provide on-site supervision of the burn location;
- 4) Burning should occur only from approximately 9 am to 6 pm to achieve the best natural smoke dispersion conditions.

Asbestos-containing materials and tires – burning not allowed under any circumstances!

Drinking Water Concerns After the Tornadoes

Public Water Supplies: Be sure to listen to special announcements about local boil orders that may be in effect regarding public water supplies. If a boil order has been issued for your water supply, boil your water for five minutes. Water used to make ice, brush teeth, or wash dishes must also be boiled. As an alternative to boiling water, bottled water and juices can be used for drinking purposes.

Private Wells: Your local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health regional office will provide you with information and assistance in testing your well. Additional tips on safety of private wells may be found at: <http://www.epa.state.il.us/well-water/index.html>.

Is there a concern about oil from electrical transformers on downed power poles leaking into the environment?

Yes. After storms, electrical transformers on downed power poles have the potential to leak oil into the environment. Some transformers still contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which are persistent and toxic environmental pollutants. If you see downed transformers, please alert local officials who can then contact the appropriate electrical utility company about disposal or cleanup. If you observe leaks from a transformer, you may contact an Illinois EPA Regional office during business hours at <http://www.epa.state.il.us/land/regions/> or call Illinois Emergency Management Agency at 800-782-7860 or 217-782-7860 any time.

What about electronics waste?

A new law went into effect at the beginning of 2012 that bans most electronics items from landfills. You will find information on the link <http://www.epa.state.il.us/land/electronic-waste-recycling/index.html>, and you may see a list of retailers that take certain electronics at <http://epadata.epa.state.il.us/land/eWaste/crr-list.asp>.

Electronics Banned from Illinois Landfills as of January 2012	
Televisions	Monitors
Printers	Computers (laptop, notebook, tablet, desktop)
Electronic Keyboards	Facsimile Machines
Videocassette Recorders	Portable Digital Music Players
Digital Video Disc Players & Recorders	Video Game Consoles
Small Scale Servers	Scanners
Electronic Mice	Digital Converter Boxes
Cable Receivers	Satellite Receivers
Cell phones	