

Flood



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH
701.328.5166 701.328.5210
701.328.5188
www.ndhealth.gov/flood

INFORMATION

Proper Waste Disposal Before the Flood

Household Waste

Household garbage, including food waste, should be securely bagged and stored for proper disposal when conditions permit. Toilets and other plumbing fixtures should be used only if they drain properly.

Household Hazardous Waste

Household hazardous materials include solvents, paints, gasoline and similar fuels, electronics, pesticides, fertilizers, household chemicals, oil, lead-acid batteries, acids and bases (e.g., drain cleaners), mercury devices (fluorescent bulbs, thermostats), and explosive materials (e.g., ammunition). When a flood is forecast, it is best to remove these materials from homes or other structures to avoid contaminating the water or rendering the materials useless.



After the Flood

The North Dakota Department of Health provides the following guidelines for disposal of household and potentially hazardous materials after a flood.

DO NOT MIX the following waste materials:

- Materials that quickly spoil (fruits/vegetables, meats, dairy products, small animal carcasses, diapers, sanitary products, contaminated medicines).
- Household hazardous waste and electronics.
- Scrap metal, appliances, water heaters and furnaces.
- Other inert or inactive materials (demolition materials, clothing, furniture and other bulky items).

Household Waste

Waste materials that quickly spoil should be separated from other waste or debris, contained in heavy-duty

plastic bags and/or secure garbage cans, and placed in a designated area for separate collection. Containment prevents release of this waste to the environment and exposure to vectors (disease-carrying insects, rodents).

Food Wastes

Food may be unsafe because of damaged containers or because the refrigerator/freezer was without power. Take these steps to dispose of food waste:

- Do not keep food that may be spoiled or contaminated, including food from refrigerators/freezers (e.g., condiments, pickles, jelly, meat, milk, juices).
- Dispose of damaged dried food packages.
- Do not keep spoiled or contaminated medicines.
- **When in doubt, throw it out!**

Appliances

Take the following steps to clean refrigerators and freezers:

- Remove everything from the refrigerator or freezer.
- Use paper towels or rags to wipe up spills and leaks and dispose of them with the food waste.
- Wash out the refrigerator or freezer with a strong bleach solution. Use 1½ cups of bleach in 1 gallon of water. (**Note: Never mix bleach and ammonia. The fumes are toxic.**) Use latex or rubber gloves if you have sensitive skin.
- Wash out the appliance with warm, soapy water.
- To remove odors, wipe out the appliance with a mixture of water and baking soda, or place a box of baking soda inside. You also may want to air out appliances for a few days before restarting and using them. Secure doors in an open position to provide air flow, and keep children away.
- Appliances that cannot be cleaned and repaired and other scrap metal materials should be recycled.

Furniture, Carpet, Books, Nonrecyclable Paper

Place together for collection and disposal.

Demolition Debris

Place together for collection and disposal. Be aware some demolition materials may contain lead paint and/or asbestos. For information about the proper handling of asbestos and lead-based paint, contact the department's Division of Air Quality.

Concrete and Brick

Stockpile for recycling.

Branches and Clean, Nontreated Wood

Separate to be ground for mulch.

Household Hazardous Waste

If hazardous materials were not removed prior to flooding, an investigation should be conducted to locate any leaking or damaged containers. If materials within the property could be dangerous, the property owner or response personnel should cordon off the area until the site can be cleaned up.

Look for leaking or damaged containers of:

- Cleaning products (oven, drain and toilet cleaners).
- Lawn and garden products (pesticides, fertilizers).
- Automotive products (oil; antifreeze; batteries; transmission, brake and starter fluids).
- Workshop/painting supplies (adhesives, glues, paint, stains, finishes, thinners, strippers, solvents).
- Flammable products (propane tanks, kerosene, heating oil, diesel fuel, gas/oil mixture).
- Other products (fluorescent lights, lead-acid batteries, mercury thermometers or thermostats).

If you have any materials of concern, take the following steps:

- Place in more secure containers, if possible.
- Absorb spilled materials with kitty litter and place in a plastic bag or durable container.
- Label the containers with the following information: (a) contents, (b) owner's name and (c) condition of the contents.
- Do not mix chemicals or products. (e.g., Do not mix latex paint with oil-based paint.)

Usable materials that are properly labeled, placed in a secure location and separated by waste type can be evaluated later for proper reuse.

Hazardous household waste materials can be taken to a designated collection site. Contact local officials to determine if your community has such a site. If a collection program is not available, this waste may be disposed of in a permitted municipal solid waste landfill. Do not burn the waste or pour any waste down the sanitary sewer or into a septic tank. Used automotive fluids can be taken to a service station or other collection point for disposal.

Because electronics often contain metals such as lead, cadmium and chromium that can contaminate water and soil, they must be disposed of properly. Check with your local collection site for guidelines specific to your community. See *Disposal of Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics* at www.ndhealth.gov/flood.

For more information about pre- and post-flood waste disposal, see *Guideline 1 – Emergency Waste Management and Disposal*, which can be found at www.ndhealth.gov/wm/Publications.

Livestock

Under normal situations, the department prefers dead animals be managed by renderers or disposed of at permitted municipal solid waste landfills. A list of these facilities is available at www.ndhealth.gov/wm or by calling the department's Division of Waste Management.

In some emergency circumstances, transportation to a permitted landfill may not be feasible or may pose a threat of spreading disease. In these cases, the department may work with the North Dakota Department of Agriculture to issue variances for one-time disposal events. For more information, see *Guideline 14 – Emergency Waste Disposal Variance Notification: Dead Or Diseased Livestock*. This publication and the "Emergency Waste Disposal Variance Notification" form can be found at www.ndhealth.gov/wm/Publications.

Assistance

Check with your local waste hauler or community emergency officials for guidelines specific to your community for disposal of flood-related waste. For other questions or assistance, call your local public health unit or the North Dakota Department of Health:

Waste Management – 701.328.5166

Water Quality – 701.328.5210

Air Quality – 701.328.5188