



Minnesota
Pollution
Control
Agency

Disaster Response Plan for Household Hazardous Waste Regional Programs

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Roles of MPCA and HHW programs in disaster recovery

Disasters create the unexpected need to extend an enormous amount of resources to communities and individuals within a very narrow time frame; this puts enormous stress on communities and local resources.

Disaster victims need officials equipped to help them recover quickly and safely, including the safe removal of solid and hazardous waste. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program help Minnesotans protect human health and the environment by providing guidance in the proper management of HHW in a disaster situation.

Emergency Response Team Responder

When disaster strikes, a community usually designates the fire chief or sheriff as the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander, in turn, may decide that the disaster area needs specific help with waste collection and disposal issues. If so, he or she will contact the MPCA.

The MPCA's Contingency Plan designates the lead Emergency Response (ER) Team Responder, who will:

- **Determine** what assistance the local Incident Commander needs from MPCA and other waste management programs.
- **Issue** an emergency declaration if needed.

- **Coordinate** emergency plans among MPCA divisions, local units of government, and other agencies to clearly communicate emergency information.
- **Assign** HHW Emergency Coordinator.

HHW Emergency Coordinator

The MPCA's ER Team Responder assigns an HHW Emergency Coordinator, usually another state staff person, the County Solid Waste Administrator (SWA), or the HHW Program Manager to coordinate HHW issues.

General duties of the HHW Emergency Coordinator

The HHW Emergency Coordinator reports to the MPCA ER Team Responder or the local Incident Commander. The HHW Emergency Coordinator's duties include:

- **Assist** with implementing and maintaining this disaster response plan.
- **Monitor emergency actions** and attend regular status meetings.
- **Monitor proper use** of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safety procedures.
- **Assist other agencies** as appropriate.
- **Coordinate** with MPCA ER Team Responder or local Incident Commander any contact with Department of Agriculture, Commissioners, police, emergency responders, and the general public.

- **Provide training and guidance** to direct staff to seek and secure hazardous materials.
- **Respect the authority of local officials and emergency response personnel.** The local unit of government is always in control.

Action steps for HHW Emergency Coordinator

In preparation for collection event, the HHW Emergency Coordinator should do the following:

- **Evaluate the damage/threat.** If a county or city waste management official has not been contacted, they can get connected with MPCA through the Minnesota Duty Officer who will link them directly to the ER Team Responder.
- **Contact** the local and neighboring SWA, HHW staff, Sentence-to-Serve, Department of Agriculture, and HHW disposal contractor. Make them aware of the disaster and ask if they could assist with clean-up efforts. Also inform them to check on tetanus immunizations (available at Red Cross station at disaster site).
- **Check with local officials** at status update meeting (held every morning and evening at/near disaster site) and choose a HHW collection date for homeowners (usually within a week or two following disaster).
- **Inform local government contacts and volunteers** of place, date, and time of HHW collection event (allow time for briefing and skill assessment).
- **Encourage local government contacts and volunteers to bring** pick-up trucks, trailers, carts and two-way radios if possible to assist with HHW cleanup. Workers should wear steel-toed boots if possible.
- **Lay out collection strategy.** Map out HHW collection zones and consolidation points, incident Command Center, Red Cross station, etc. Make copies of map grid to distribute to volunteers.
- **Publicize cleanup** through public service announcements in local media (newspapers, radio, and television). Draft event flyers, posters and distribute to residents. Place posters in prominent places.
- **Decide prior to collection event** if hazardous waste will be accepted from businesses classified as Very Small Quantity Generators.
- **Notify the HHW contact** at the MPCA if you accept business waste at the disaster collection event.

Duties on day of HHW collection event

On the collection day, the HHW Coordinator should:

- **Brief** volunteers, emphasizing PPE use, proper waste handling methods, respecting HHW, and recognizing signs of heat stress and fatigue.
- **Divide volunteers into teams** of two or three and dispense maps, PPE, containers, and equipment.
- **Assign a team to each area** indicated on the grid map. Canvas homes and lots, seeking uncontrolled HHW to collect.
- **Consolidate collected waste** at a specified HHW collection site or mobile unit.
- **Schedule an HHW pick-up time** with the regional HHW program or contact the state-authorized HHW disposal contractor.
- **Document all expenses and weight** of HHW collected as a result of the disaster event.
- **Weigh the business waste** at the time of acceptance (if you decide to accept business waste) and provide an invoice for each business. The Federal Emergency Management Agency may later reimburse the businesses for this expense.

General supplies

The HHW Coordinator will need the following to successfully perform required duties:

- **Local maps**
- **Cell phones**
- **Office equipment:** fax machine, computer, printer, or copier (to make flyers, etc.).
- **HHW mobile collection unit** (acquire through the Regional HHW Program Manager).
- **IDs** for volunteers to gain entrance to disaster area. National Guard roadway blocks will recognize state employee business cards.
- **Event collection equipment** will be with the HHW mobile unit or the HHW disposal contractor.
- **5-gallon pails**
- **Fluorescent bulb boxes**

For more information

For more information on disaster response, contact:

Minnesota Duty Office	800-422-0798
MPCA	800-657-3864
Department of Agriculture.....	800-697-3986