



## SOP 2.14 HHW Response following a Disaster Event

In the initial phases of responding to a natural disaster, Program staff shall confirm contacts and coordinate efforts with local, state, and federal agencies involved with debris and hazardous waste (HW) collection and management. This SOP provides guidance whenever an incident requires clean-up following a tornado, flood, or other man-made or natural disaster to minimize hazards to human health or to the environment. The designated staff responsible for implementing or leading HW cleanup following an emergency incident is the **Program Manager**. This person shall be properly trained and experienced to lead cleanup efforts, recognize their unique role in the [Incident Command System \(ICS\)](#) response and support local emergency response teams, if needed.

### 1. Preparing for emergency incidents

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Preparation prior to an emergency incident will reduce stress and workload should a disaster occur. Educate the public to take the following steps prior to disaster events:

1. Remove and properly dispose of unwanted chemicals long before an emergency.
2. Store HW in sealable plastic tubs or containers.
3. Store HW on high shelves or on upper home floors to avoid flood waters.

### 2. Incident follow-up procedures

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**2.1 Communicate.** Full communication shall be maintained throughout the clean-up efforts with the event ICS and other agencies (e.g., fire departments, hazmat teams, FEMA, city and county health and Solid Waste (SW) officials). Typically, the HHW clean-up response level efforts are directed using this classification system: **ICS > MPCA Emergency Response staff > MPCA SW or HHW staff > County SW or HHW staff.**

**2.2 Determine whether to offer a HHW collection event.** In severe disasters, SW debris and HHW collection sites will be established by ICS. Expect these sites to receive significant quantities of SW and HW. MPCA staff will work with local HHW Program to determine the if the impacted community would benefit from a HHW collection event, and if so, what method to utilize. MPCA will provide trained staff who are able to respond to disasters and can provide direction with the HHW collection and cleanup process. The most appropriate collection method will vary depending on available resources and the nature, severity, and scope of the disaster. Collection methods may include an option of extra open hours at this HHW facility. However, to provide a collection service closer to where the disaster occurred and/or where the greatest volume of waste is located, a mobile collection event may be warranted. The State-contracted HW Disposal Company also has the capability of hosting and staffing a collection event, although local facility staff knowledge and use of the HHW facility for storage of collected HHW may still be required. Coordination between the ICS, State and local HHW Programs is necessary.

HHW mobile collection methods	Pros	Cons
A single-site mobile collection event where the public brings the HHW to a pre-designated city location	Less labor for Program staff	A greater public hardship and chance of improper HW disposal
A single-site mobile collection event where the public segregates the waste curbside, and Program staff picks up and consolidates at a mobile unit site set up in the impacted city	Less public labor involved	Collection resources are required (staff, trucks, etc.)
Perform weekly “milk runs” to pick up HHW left at pre-designated city location(s)	Serves the general public; decreases chance of improper HW disposal	Greater resources are required for collection staff. NOTE: even after setting an end date for the public, HW will still be left at the site
All debris is picked up curbside and brought back to a temporary or fixed HW demolition site. From there, waste will require further segregation into SW, HW, etc.	Serves the general public; decreases chance of improper HW disposal	Greatest resources are required for collection staff. NOTE: even after setting an end date for the public, HW will still be left at the site
Enlist a HW disposal contractor to assist with a HW collection event	Less labor for Program staff	Increased expenses, although costs may be reimbursed by <a href="#">FEMA</a>

**2.3 Advertise.** HHW mobile collections are commonly held one to two weeks following cessation of the disaster event. Disaster victims require time to sort and segregate waste prior to disposal of their personal belongings (e.g., SW, HHW, etc). Coordinate with local emergency responders to determine a date and time for a HHW collection event. Distribute flyers to affected households; see Attachment A of this SOP. Also place ads on local radio station(s) promoting the event; see Attachment B of this SOP. For minor disasters, simply promoting the permanent HHW Program and upcoming regularly scheduled collection mobile events may be the best option.

**2.4 Solicit help and equipment.** HHW collection events require trained staff at the site to minimize risks (e.g., releases, reactions, exposures). Coordinate efforts with MPCA HHW staff to ensure adequate assistance is available on the HHW collection day. Request the MPCA HHW staff coordinate the use of other HHW Programs’ mobile unit(s), pickups, or trailers. Ensure adequate availability of staff trained to lab pack and have plenty of supplies and equipment onsite the day of the event, including:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Plastic tubs/containment bins      | Food and water for staff and/or volunteers        |
| Shipping containers and liners     | SW dumpster(s)                                    |
| Sorting tables                     | Secure location for mobile unit                   |
| PPE for staff and/or volunteers    | Proximity to restrooms and handwashing facilities |
| Tent (protection from sun/rain)    |   |
| Poly lining for HW collection area |   |

**2.5 HHW volume quantitative estimate.** To estimate the volume of HHW that will require processing, HHW staff must consider these factors:

- The scope of the disaster (determines the number of affected households).
- The type and severity of the disaster (affects the amount of waste generated in each home). Homes with modest damage typically generate an average of 50 pounds of HHW each, while destroyed homes typically generate an average 100 pounds of HHW each.
- The waste collection manner (affects the volume of waste that will require management).  
**The total expected HHW volume to be managed = # of homes experiencing damage X % of homes HHW is collected from X # of pounds/home collected on average.**

**2.6 Collection event day.** Provide guidance to ensure the public does not improperly dispose of HW into the trash following a disaster and ensure adequate staff is available to check and remove HHW from SW loads arriving at transfer stations and landfills.

- Ensure all HW is removed from solid waste loads (e.g., asbestos, mercury switches, PCB transformers, fluorescent bulbs, ballasts) prior to demolishing buildings.
- Immediately place all leaking HW items into secondary containment.
- Separate collection events may be offered for business HW generators. HW cannot be accepted at collection events from businesses larger than a VSQG. Keep receipts or any documentation that may be required later for possible FEMA reimbursement.

# Attachment A: Managing \_\_\_\_\_ City Flood Debris

Please separate your wastes at the curb.

We are asking your help in separating wastes from your property into **3 main types** so we can pick them up and properly manage them.

Floodwaters carry bacteria that can cause illness. Since you are cleaning up materials that have been flooded, wear waterproof gloves, and wash up with soap when finished. County staff and volunteers will begin collecting wastes from city curbs; see date listed below.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Large appliances</b>	Refrigerators, ovens, dishwashers, stoves, freezers, washing machines, dryers
	<b>Electronics</b> (Segregate and place on curb)	TVs, computers, and stereos from large appliances
<b>2.</b>	<b>Demolition debris</b>	Carpet, sheetrock, wood, pipes, wiring, shingles, cement, any part of the building structure
	<b>SW</b>	Garbage, lamps, furniture, bedding, clothes, dishes, books, small appliances, house wares

### 3. Household hazardous waste (HHW) collection for \_\_\_\_\_ County residents

**Day, date, times**

Leave your HHW on the curb, and we will pick up. After this date, do not leave HHW on the curb. Bring your HHW to the \_\_\_\_\_ County HHW Facility located at: \_\_\_\_\_, telephone number.



Please put any leaking containers of HHW in a plastic bag or tub. Don't mix wastes. Keep labels with products or write the name on the container so wastes can be identified and safely handled.

<b>Automotive products</b>	Gas, oil, antifreeze, solvents, cleaners
<b>Cleaners</b>	Bleach; ammonia; oven, toilet bowl, and kitchen cleaners
<b>Mercury-containing items</b>	Cooking and fever thermometers, thermostats, fluorescent light bulbs
<b>Paints</b>	Oil, latex, stains, thinners, acetone
<b>Pesticides</b>	Poisons, bug and weed killers
<b>Miscellaneous</b> Other items that should not go into the regular trash	Gas cylinders, aerosol cans, batteries, pool chemicals. Segregate and place near HHW

**Questions?** \_\_\_\_\_ County residents, call: xxx/ xxx-xxxx

## Attachment B – Example



# NEWS RELEASE

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency [www.pca.state.mn.us](http://www.pca.state.mn.us)  
St. Paul • Brainerd • Detroit Lakes • Duluth • Mankato • Marshall • Rochester  
651-296-6300 | 800-657-3864 or use your preferred relay service | [Info.pca@state.mn.us](mailto:Info.pca@state.mn.us)

For Release:

Contact:

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### **IF YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS IS WHERE FLOODING IS LIKELY, GET RID OF OR MOVE ITEMS THAT COULD BECOME HAZARDOUS WASTES**

St. Paul, Minn. — although it's too early to tell whether flooding will be a problem in Minnesota this year, if you live or have a business in a flood-prone area, we recommend that you take some precautionary steps when you do your early spring cleaning.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) says that home and business owners should first dispose of, or else remove products that will become hazardous wastes from flood-prone basements or other areas. The MPCA recommends disposing of unused solvents, paints, paint thinners, pesticides, batteries, tires and household cleaners and other chemicals. For items you must keep, move them to a place that you are certain will not become flooded.

And it would be prudent to move canned goods and other foodstuffs so they will be out of harm's way. Should food goods be damaged by floodwaters, they would become contaminated and must be thrown away.

Keep containers of bottled or other potable water in a place that's unlikely to be flooded to ensure you'll have safe water to drink and cook with should flooding become a reality. For more information about preparing for and minimizing pollution and health risks from flooding is available on the MPCA's Web site at: [Floods: Minimizing pollution and health risks | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency \(state.mn.us\)](#)

#### **Broadcast version**

If you think your home or business may become flooded this spring, you can minimize damage and risks to health and the environment by preparing in advance. First, safely dispose of all unused hazardous or toxic products, and then move those you will be keeping for later use. For more information contact the Environmental Office xxx-xxx-xxxx.