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Christie Administration Working With Storm-Affected Counties and Municipalities to Ensure Safe and Environmentally Responsible Debris Removal

Friday, November 9, 2012

Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

Trenton, NJ – The Christie Administration and the Department of Environmental Protection are taking a series of actions to ensure that the massive volume of debris and trash resulting from Hurricane Sandy is removed from storm-affected areas efficiently so affected communities can begin to recover from the storm's unprecedented and widespread devastation.

"Many thousands of people suffered unimaginable property losses during the storm. The first tangible step toward getting their lives back to normal is the cleanup and removal of debris. Our first priority is getting storm debris off our streets and out of our neighborhoods so the difficult road to recovery can get under way."

"Toward that end, the DEP is working closely with cities and towns, counties, the State Office of Emergency Management, the Department of Community Affairs, solid waste facilities, and haulers to implement a system that will move debris out of our storm-ravaged communities efficiently, safely and in an environmentally responsible manner that protects the health and welfare of our state."

The DEP is taking steps to ensure that all municipalities, counties and haulers are able to utilize all available disposal and recycling capacity within and outside New Jersey. The DEP also is working to ensure sufficient numbers of trucks are available to haul the waste.

The DEP is assigning staff to work with each storm-affected municipality one-on-one, serving as liaisons to help them work through any concerns, advise them on the availability of resources, and ensure the cleanup proceeds smoothly. Among their tasks will be to help municipalities work through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement process.

Some municipalities have already begun the work of clearing debris from affected communities, using their own crews and equipment or hiring private contractors. The DEP is assisting them with these efforts while developing a system of local and regional staging areas to ensure debris moves smoothly as these efforts increase.

Local staging areas will allow municipalities to get debris off the streets quickly, reducing health and safety concerns and improving access to these communities. Solid waste and recyclable materials will be separated at the regional staging areas and sent to appropriate facilities.

Commissioner Martin stressed that DEP inspectors and local authorities will closely monitor storm debris removal to ensure the environment and public health are protected.

"We are counting on full cooperation and compliance from everyone," Commissioner Martin said. "Activities such as illegal dumping, hauling without proper approval, and price-gouging will not be tolerated, and will be prosecuted swiftly and to the fullest extent of the law."

Among the steps taken by the DEP to manage storm debris include:

- Expediting the review of applications for local debris staging areas;

- Engaging with municipalities and counties, as well as representatives of New Jersey's solid waste and recycling industries, to evaluate ongoing and anticipated solid waste and recycling demands to ensure there is sufficient capacity in the system to handle storm debris;

- Issuing a directive allowing solid waste facilities and transfer stations to remain open 24/7 at least through Nov. 16, subject to further extensions;

- Authorizing state, county and municipal entities and permitted solid waste facilities in the state to obtain temporary DEP registrations for commercial vehicles and equipment to be used in hauling storm waste;

- Issuing a statewide enforcement alert noting that illegal dumping will be subject to mandatory fines and possible vehicle forfeiture. Illegal dumping may be reported to local police or the DEP's emergency hotline at 877-WARNDEP

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Working to ensure resumption of normal trash and recycling collection services to communities throughout the state. Residents should contact local public works or municipal recycling coordinators or visit their websites for details.

The DEP is offering the following tips to help residents manage their trash and debris:

Storm-affected residents should take special care to document storm damages before disposing damaged personal property, including taking pictures and making a list of damaged or lost items. If possible, make sure to save receipts for valuable items.

Use caution with wet carpeting, upholstery and other porous items. Growth of molds on these items happens quickly may be a health risk. For more information on protecting yourself from mold, go to

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/mold/protect.asp>

If your property did not sustain damage in the storm, dispose of larger, bulky non-food items at a later time and delay any major household cleanups such as backyard cleanup, tree pruning or disposal of old furniture or any other projects that will generate a large amount of waste.

Place food waste, disposable diapers and other wet waste into double plastic bags for better storage if collection is delayed. Add a capful of ammonia to reduce odors that could attract animals and other vermin. Secure the bags tightly and store in a cool place.

If possible, separate and store recyclable materials for disposal at a later time. Store non-recyclable paper, containers, packaging and other dry waste indoors and away from sources of combustion.

If practical, remove TVs and computer monitors and contact your local recycling coordinator for details on how this material, known as e-waste, can be recycled.

A list of solid waste facilities and operating hours as well as various DEP actions and guidance documents related to debris management may be found at: www.nj.gov/dep/special/hurricane-sandy/debris.htm

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