

Safely managing debris from flood damaged buildings

Protect yourself and your neighbors by following these precautions.

Many structures and buildings in Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties, including lands of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, suffered significant damage from recent flooding. The debris from damaged structures can pose a threat to people and the environment if not handled safely.

Safety first

Use caution when working in or around any damaged building. Keep children and pets away from debris, where they could be exposed to sharp objects, electric shock, or hazardous material, including asbestos. Always wear personal protective gear and clothing, including eye protection, gloves and boots. Check with your insurance company before removing debris. The insurance company may be able to assist.

Disposing of waste

Disposal sites that are willing to accept flood debris but that cannot accept asbestos-containing materials are:

- Umatilla County: Humbert Landfill, Pendleton Transfer Station and Hermiston Transfer Station.
- Milton Freewater: Milton Freewater Landfill.
- Union County: transfer stations in Union, La Grande and Elgin.
- Wallowa County: Ant Flat Landfill, Transfer stations in Joseph, Lostine and Wallowa.

Other regional landfills that can accept asbestos-containing materials are: Finley Buttes Landfill in Morrow County; Columbia Ridge and Chemical Waste Management of the Northwest landfills in Gilliam County (accepts household hazardous waste); Walla Walla Landfill.

Asbestos

Asbestos is in many building materials, and it is difficult to determine which ones. When asbestos is disturbed and improperly handled, tiny fibers are released into the air and may cause lung cancer and other illnesses. Paper masks and bandanas do NOT filter out asbestos fibers.

Consult with a licensed asbestos removal contractor or call a DEQ asbestos expert at one of the numbers below before disturbing materials

that may contain asbestos. Find more info about safe asbestos removal at

www.oregon.gov/deq/Hazards-and-Cleanup/Pages/Asbestos-Information.aspx

Burning of materials

Check with the local fire department before conducting any open burning of construction materials. It is illegal to burn treated wood, asbestos, petroleum-based products, or anything that emits dense or noxious smoke.

Hazardous materials in the environment

If you encounter hazardous materials that may have been released into the environment during the flooding, immediately report the spill or release to the Oregon Emergency Response System (OERS) at 800-452-0311. These items could include labeled or unlabeled barrels or containers of pesticides, fertilizers, oil or other petroleum products. DEQ recommends not handling or attempting to dispose of these items on your own.

Household hazardous waste

Many homes contain small quantities of hazardous waste, including paints, stains, solvents, fuels, antifreeze, aerosols, cleaners, poisons, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, oil filters, rechargeable batteries, fluorescent tubes and bulbs, propane tanks, pool and spa chemicals, thermometers, and mercury thermostats and switches. Please follow all local, state, federal and tribal regulations.

Contact your local waste management company or the department responsible for waste collection in your area for information on household hazardous waste. DEQ is working with local providers and volunteer organizations to schedule special hazardous waste collection events in the counties affected by the floods, contact DEQ for more information.

For more information please contact:

- **Asbestos:** Tom Hack, 541-278-4626 or Frank Messina, 541-633-2019
- **Solid waste:** Eric Clanton, 541-298-7255 x233
- **Hazardous waste:** Brian Allen, 541-633-2014



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Separate and recycle when possible

Many buildings are constructed of metal, wood, brick and cinder block. These materials have the potential to be separated for reuse or recycling.

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.