



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

March 2008  
EPA530-F-08-008  
[www.epa.gov/osw](http://www.epa.gov/osw)

## EPA Helps Communities Plan Ahead for Natural Disasters

*The Environmental Protection Agency is helping U.S. communities plan for and safely manage debris created from natural disasters.*

### Action

Each year, natural disasters, such as wildfires, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, and winter storms challenge American communities. These disasters can create large amounts of debris, which can include building rubble, sediments, vegetative debris, wood waste, personal property, and other materials. Cleaning up this debris is often the longest and costliest element of disaster recovery. To help communities prepare to clean up after one of these events, EPA has developed the *Planning for Natural Disaster Debris* guide.

The guide, based on experiences of other communities and states, provides helpful planning suggestions and steps that local officials can take to prepare for dealing with the waste that is created by natural disasters. One of the main recommendations is that local communities develop disaster debris management plans. These plans help determine how disaster debris will be managed before a natural disaster happens. In addition the guide includes information on:

- Management options for various debris streams that might be found after a natural disaster.
- A collection of case studies that highlights how several communities prepared for and managed debris generated by recent natural disasters.
- A list of federal, state, and local resources to consult in planning for natural disasters.

This document was developed as an update to the *Planning for Disaster Debris* guide that EPA published in 1995. This updated version provides local communities with current disaster debris-related information, consistent with information provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and individual states, and emphasizes the importance of managing disaster debris in an environmentally protective manner.

### For More Information

For a copy of the document, please visit:  
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/debris-new/disaster.htm>.