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## **ABC's of Demolition**

This guidance document has been produced by the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) to provide guidance on the process of building demolition, the options for demolition and disposal, and the regulations that apply. The regulations applying to the demolition and disposal of structures can be found in Nebraska [Title 132 – Integrated Solid Waste Management Regulations](#). Contact your local planning or building and safety office before starting demolition as there may be additional local requirements that regulate demolition.

### **A is for Asbestos**

Building structures should be inspected for the presence of asbestos before any demolition occurs. Asbestos was a very common building material over the last century and may be present in floor tiles, insulation, pipe covers, and central heating devices. Asbestos may not present a health risk when left in place. However, when disturbed during a demolition project, asbestos can become friable and small airborne particles can be inhaled into the lungs and cause serious health problems.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulates asbestos as well as the licensing of authorized asbestos inspectors and abatement contractors in the State of Nebraska. Contact DHHS for a list of licensed inspectors that can visit your property and determine the presence and extent of asbestos in the building structure. If asbestos is found, it will need to be removed before any demolition can occur.

### **B is for Burning**

One option for the demolition of building structures is to contact your local fire department and inquire if they would like to conduct a training burn for their fire fighters. Nebraska regulations allow for the burning of a building structure only by trained fire fighting professionals for educational purposes. The property owner must complete all the appropriate paperwork for each regulatory agency involved. Once all paperwork has been submitted to DHHS, DWEE, and the Nebraska State Fire Marshal, the fire department may conduct the training burn. The property owner is then responsible for disposing of the ashes at a permitted Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) landfill. For a more detailed explanation of the requirements for a training burn, please see the DWEE guidance document "Fire Training Burns."

If you have completed all requirements for a fire training burn and your fire department has reduced the structure to ash, you will need to remove the ash from the property. The process of burning releases

chemicals from the wood and construction materials that are now highly mobile and could easily be transported into streams, lakes, or groundwater by the next weather event. After the ash is cool it should be loaded into a truck and taken to a MSW landfill for final disposal. Contact the landfill before burning and disposal to ensure its acceptance and receive any special instructions. Ash must be disposed of at a state permitted MSW landfill. Ash is not allowed in unlined Construction and Demolition (C&D) landfill due to the potential for groundwater contamination.

### **C is for Clean-Out**

Before a building structure undergoes demolition, it must be emptied of all non-building material which are not defined as construction and demolition waste. Consider recycling copper wire and metal piping as well as any interior fixtures, doors, windows, and any architectural details of a building to limit the costs of demolition and disposal. Many of these items have real and potential market value from scrap metal recovery to vintage building materials.

Construction and demolition waste is defined in Title 132 as waste that results from land clearing and the demolition of buildings, roads, or other structures. This waste includes, but is not limited to:

- Fill materials
- Drywall
- Plaster
- Non-asbestos insulation
- Roofing shingles and other roof coverings
- Plumbing fixtures
- Glass
- Plastic
- Carpeting
- Electrical wiring
- Pipe and metals
- Wood (including painted and treated wood)
- Land clearing debris other than yard waste
- Wall coverings (including wallpaper, paneling, and tile)

Construction and demolition waste does not include friable asbestos waste, special waste, liquid waste, hazardous waste, waste that contains polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), putrescible waste, household waste, industrial solid waste, corrugated cardboard, appliances, tires, drums, and fuel tanks.

### **D is for Demolition**

Once the building structure has been checked for and possibly removed of asbestos and emptied of all other contents, the structure may be demolished. The most common demolition process is the rapid collapse and deconstruction of the building using heavy equipment. If your structure could yield resalable building materials, you may consider deconstruction by hand. This would allow the removal of old beams, hand-carved wooden trim and framing, or other valuable building materials. Once the building is reduced to rubble it can be loaded on trucks and taken to a local C&D landfill or MSW landfill. Contact the landfill before transport to ensure that your demolition rubble will be accepted and for any special instructions.

If your building is located on land zoned as agricultural property, you may bury your demolished building on the property. Once the building has been destroyed, it is often pushed into its own basement or foundation and buried. You may also bury the debris elsewhere on the property that the structure was originally on, but you may not transport the demolished materials offsite to another property, even if the property is owned by the same entity. In addition, a demolished building structure

may not be transported to agricultural property for burial if it was not from that agricultural property. While burial on site for rural properties is allowed by state regulation, consider recording the location of the burial for future reference to you and/or future owners of the property should it change ownership.

## **RESOURCES:**

- DWEE Home Page <https://dwee.nebraska.gov/>
- Nebraska DHHS Website <https://dhhs.ne.gov/>

## **Contacts:**

- Nebraska DHHS Main Number (402) 471-3121
- DWEE Main Number (402) 471-2186
- DWEE Toll Free Number (877) 253-2603
- DWEE Hazardous Waste Compliance Assistant (402) 471-8308
- Email questions to: [DWEE.moreinfo@nebraska.gov](mailto:DWEE.moreinfo@nebraska.gov)

## **DWEE Publications:**

- Environmental Guidance Document – “Fire Training Burns”
- Environmental Guidance Document – “Construction and Demolition Waste in Nebraska”
- Environmental Guidance Document – “Fire Damaged Debris Disposal”
- Environmental Guidance Document – “General Asbestos Information”  
*Guidance documents are available on the DWEE website by clicking “Visit Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (DEE),” selecting “Forms,” and “Publications, Grants & Forms.”*
- [Title 132 – Integrated Solid Waste Management Regulations](#)  
*Titles are available on the DWEE website by clicking “Visit Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (DEE),” selecting “Resources and Services,” “Laws & Regulations,” and “Rules & Regulations.”*

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