



**LOUISIANA**  
**Ash Out Manual**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT FOR DISASTER RELIEF**

**To provide physical, emotional, and spiritual help to victims of natural and man-made disasters, including floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, and terrorist attacks, in North America and overseas**

- Our primary goal is to provide assistance to anyone that is in distress because of a disaster.
- At every opportunity we must insure that the gospel is made known to each person that we have contact with

### **Introduction**

After disasters such as forest fires, or house fires, we often have the opportunity to go and serve others by helping them clean up debris left as the results of these catastrophes. The process for cleaning up after a fire is governed by local and state regulations. Things that you can do in one locale may not be applicable in another. It is relevant that the Incident Commander and the Command Center are in contact with local authorities to insure that the rules and regulations for the affected area are understood and followed.

Just as with other DR activities, the Property Release Form must be completed and signed by the property owner. The site should also be looked at by the Assessors.

The responsibility of meeting all state and local regulations belongs to the Home Owner. These include hazardous materials inspections required by EPA, arranging and paying for dumpsters, etc.

Volunteers will not remove stem walls, concrete slabs, topple rebar enforced chimneys or tear out basement foundations.

Loss of personal possessions is an important issue. These may be gifts or something that has been in a family for years. They may remind the family of a deceased love one or special event in their lives. As you work in the debris, be sensitive to the feeling of attachments to these objects. What you may think of as trash, someone else thinks of as treasure. Set aside any object that might be treasured or of value.

Ash out work can consist of several different phases, you will need to know which phase or phases of the work you will be required to do prior to leaving so you can be prepared and bring the appropriate equipment before you leave. The phases of Ash Out work are:

Tree removal

Sifting ashes for valuables

Metal removal

Removing ashes/fire debris

## **Materials Needed to Perform Ash Out Work**

Before preparing to depart for the DR area, contact the Command Center and find out what type of work that you will be doing. The following is a list of material/supplies that may be needed to do Ash Out work:

### PERSONNEL PROTECTION

- Hard hats
- Ear plugs
- Face mask (N95), or Half face Respirator with dust cartridges
- Goggles
- Hard sole or steel shank sole shoes with steel toes if available
- Up to date tetanus shots
- Duct tape
- Gloves
- Safety Glasses

### CLEAN UP EQUIPMENT FOR ASH WORK

- Wheel barrow, one or two wheel
- Garden rakes
- Aluminum scoops
- Flat tipped shovels
- Magnets on wheels
- Garden hose
- Hose nozzle
- Scrapers
- Push brooms
- Bolt cutters
- Cutting torch
- Pry bars
- “Sifting Bins” – made with ½” hardware cloth
- 8-12# maul
- Sawsall with good metal cutting blades, not cheap ones
- Lubricant to use on blades while cutting

### HEAVY EQUIPMENT

- Heavy equipment with bucket and grapple, preferably with tracks

**NOTE:** If equipment has rubber tires, you may need to put tire sealant in them or have them filled with foam to keep them from going flat. Also in sandy soil, equipment with tires may get stuck.

- Water Buffalo
- Side grinders
- Generators
- Chop Saws

## EQUIPMENT FOR TREE WORK

- Chainsaws
- Chains –note “burnt trees dull chains much quicker, if you use an axe to cut away the charred bark, it’s easier to cut the trees and less dulling to the chainsaw chains.”
- Chains to pull cut trees up hills
- Climbing equipment
- Ropes for pulling trees

### **Prior to Beginning the job**

1. Get information from the Command Center verifying the procedure for sorting material. In some areas, bricks and other material need to be sorted separately from the ash.
2. Contact the home owner and insure that you understand:
  - a. If sifting is needed or has been complete.
  - b. If a dumpster is being delivered, or where the material is to be placed, i.e. placed on the road or a site on the property.
    - i. What is the level that you can fill the dumpster, a rule of thumb is to only fill it  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way. These often have weight limits and also have to be covered prior to removing.
  - c. When metal is removed where do they want it placed
  - d. Where do they want trees placed when they are removed?
  - e. Do they want walls that remain standing torn down and disposed of?
  - f. Ask if you can take pictures.

**NOTE:** Some of the time, you will not see the home owner, when you are in contact with them about the job, if you can get them to come and visit the site; it would then give you a good opportunity to witness.

3. Understand the type of area that you will be working in, some areas are very steep and you need to unload the equipment prior to climbing. This is a safety issue. You may need to locate a site to unload your equipment away from the job site.
4. If hazardous material is involved, what is the procedure for handling and for disposal?
5. Locations of the nearest medical center.
6. Contact information for the command center and White Hat. If any questions arise while removing the debris, especially concerning hazardous material, contact the command center.
7. Locate and mark the sewer system, the gas meter, and other utilities that may interfere with disposal activities.

Some generic rules to go by are:

- Place debris on the right –of-way in front of the property in **SEGREGATED** piles.
  - Segregate vegetative debris (trees, limbs, shrubs) from other debris
    - Cut vegetative debris into up to 8 foot pieces
  - Segregate construction and demolition debris (building materials, bricks, etc.) from other debris
  - Segregate cement slab pieces from other debris
  - Segregate ash into a separate pile.
  - Segregate appliances (refrigerator, washer, etc.) from other debris.
- **DO NOT** place any debris near water, gas, or other meters or near fire hydrants.

### **Upon arriving at the job site**

1. Survey the area and identify:
  - a. Trees, unstable walls, and other items that may detrimental to performing the work.
  - b. Locate areas to place the debris: metal, wood, ash, brick, etc.
  - c. If you have owner’s approval, take pictures of the area prior to work and after completion.
2. Ensure that every worker has their appropriate safety equipment.
3. Identify the location of the sewer system, the gas meter, any electrical wires, etc that may interfere with the removal process.

**NOTE:** If the structure was a mobile home or trailer, either a chop saw, sawsall, or a cutting torch will have to be used to cut up the frame so it can be moved to the disposal site.

### **General work rules for the job**

1. Designate at least one person as a Safety Monitor. Make sure that they have a whistle or some device that can be heard over equipment. They will be responsible for:
  - a. Keeping personnel out of the way of equipment
  - b. Making sure that personnel are wearing their safety gear
  - c. Supplying water and ensuring that personnel stay hydrated.
  - d. Calling for breaks when needed, or making sure that workers take breaks.
  - e. Calling “time out” if hazardous situations occur.

- f. Making sure that personnel have an area to eat and take breaks that is free from blowing ash.
- g. Conduct safety tool box meetings as directed by the Blue Cap or team leader.
- h. Make sure the site remains damp to control dust.

**NOTE:** Work may be monitored by the local Environmental Health Department.

- 2. Remove trees that may interfere with doing the work. Clearing an area for about 30 feet around the worksite is usually sufficient.
- 3. If the metal has not been removed, remove it to the staging area previously identified. For larger pieces, heavy equipment may be needed. If refrigerators or freezers are still on the site, DO NOT open, tape closed with duct tape.
  - a. If the site is a mobile home, the owner may have to hand load the sections of frame, these will need to be cut in shorter lengths than if equipment is used to load. If the site is to be sifted, use equipment to flip the frame over out of the ash bed so you can cut it up and place it at the metal site.
  - b. If the site is a house, make sure that you know whether there is a basement before you put heavy equipment on the ash site.

**NOTE:** DO NOT give anyone permission to remove the metal. Only the homeowner can do this.

- 4. If blocks and bricks are to be separated from the ash, then remove them to the staging area or dumpster. These may be placed in the bucket of the heavy equipment for removal, or hauled in wheelbarrows.
- 5. Designate a person to maintain a water spray to hold down the ash that is blown while being worked. Do not wet down excessively, you do not want to work mud, just wet enough to keep stable.
- 6. If ash is to be sifted, place the sifting screen over a wheel barrow and proceed with sifting the ash 1-2 shovels full at time. Remember that this may be all that the individual has left and they may be very sentimental about things that may be found, so treat all items with respect. You cannot make a decision about what to dispose of, that is the owner's decision. The actions that you do here may have a large impact on your witness to the person you are trying to help. A general rule for sifting is we will assist by sifting a 6 ft by 6 ft area, unless there are extenuating circumstances, i.e. an elderly person that is alone, used your on good judgment.
- 7. If ash is not to be sifted, proceed with removing the ash to the selected deposit site. Determine how the best way to remove, preferably using the heavy equipment when possible.

**NOTE:** In some areas it is permissible to bury the ash, rules may differ. If holes have to be dug to bury the ash, this may be another function taken care of by the command center. Insure that you know the rules so you can give proper information to the home owners.

- 8. After the ash and debris have been removed from the slab, sweep the slab clean.

### **Closing out the job**

Because of limited space, some jobs will take several visits to complete. Make sure each time that you leave a work site that your blue cap or leaderman identifies and notes the status of the job. If the road frontage is narrow, then there will not be enough area to stage all of the material at one time. Whenever you leave the work site, notify the home owner of the status that the site was left. They may need to have dumpsters changed out; metal removed, etc, so that the job can continue at a later time. Have them contact you when the job can continue.

### **At the end of day**

Work should be halted and personnel returned back to their staging area so that cleanup can be done prior to eating the evening meal. If at all possible, do not eat until dust, ashes, etc have been removed and soiled cloths have been replaced.