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News Release

For Immediate Release: April 17, 2012
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Debris Management Following Tornadoes

Information for Individuals

Many individual property owners may be trying to determine how best to manage debris left behind following the tornadoes. Property owners in rural areas may be able to burn tree limbs if they comply with open burning regulations, which can be viewed under the April 2012 Tornado Information link at www.deq.state.ok.us. Property owners must also follow all local ordinances.

Homeowner's insurance policies generally contain a provision for the pick-up of debris resulting from damages to a property covered by the policy. That usually includes structures, fences, playground equipment, etc., although vegetative debris may not be covered. **The first step a homeowner should take is to contact his/her agent to determine the extent of coverage.**

State law does not allow the burning of storm debris, including treated lumber, shingles, fences, furniture, household items, appliances, and carpet. City and county officials have plans in place to pick up storm debris in some areas.

Please note that in the communities in which curb/roadside pick-up is offered, debris should be placed at the roadside. Cleanup crews will not enter private property to remove the material. Additionally, for those individuals who want to dispose of their own storm debris, it must be taken to a permitted landfill or transfer station.

More information on debris management can be found at www.deq.state.ok.us under the April Tornado Information link. Residents can also call the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) at 1-800-522-0206.

Information for City/County Officials

DEQ has compiled a list of options for debris disposal for city/county officials. DEQ recommends the following:

- Chipping or cutting tree limbs for reuse as mulch or firewood
- Disposal at a permitted landfill
- Disposal at a location that is compliant with state and federal environmental, historical and archeological laws

The Federal Emergency Management Agency *may* reimburse communities for some costs incurred from debris removal. **To receive reimbursement, the area must first**

be declared a disaster and disposal must comply with all applicable state and federal environmental requirements.

To avoid jeopardizing FEMA reimbursement, DEQ strongly encourages communities to contact one of our local offices to make preparations for disposal that includes developing a staging area, finding a site that complies with site registry criteria and locating a chipper, many of which are funded by this agency. To begin this process, contact a local DEQ office. For further information on debris management guidelines or to locate a local DEQ office, visit www.deq.state.ok.us.

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