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ABC's of Demolition

This guidance document has been prepared by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) to outline the process of building demolition, the options for demolition and disposal, and the regulations that apply. The regulations that apply to the demolition and disposal of structures can be found in Title [132 – Integrated Solid Waste Management Regulations](#). If you have any questions about the demolition process, please call the Waste Management Section Environmental Assistance Coordinator at (402) 471-8308. Be aware that there may be other local requirements that regulate demolition so be sure to contact your local planning or building and safety office.

A is for Asbestos:

Most all 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. When left in place, asbestos may not present a health risk. However, when disturbed during a demolition project, asbestos can become friable and small airborne particles can be inhaled into the lungs and cause a number of serious health problems.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulates asbestos in the State of Nebraska, as well as the licensing of authorized asbestos inspectors and abatement contractors. 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, you will have to have it removed prior to any demolition of the building. The Department of Health and Human Services can be contacted through their website at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/> or by calling (402) 471-0386. In Lincoln contact the Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) at (402) 441-8000, or in Omaha contact the Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) at (402) 444-6015.

B is for Burning:

An 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 of the appropriate paper work for each regulatory agency involved. Once all paperwork has been submitted to DHHS, NDEQ 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 and all necessary forms, please see the NDEQ Guidance Document: [Fire Training Burns](#).

C is for Clean-Out:

Before a building structure undergoes demolition, it should be emptied of all non-building materials which are not defined as construction and demolition waste (Title 132, Chapter 1, §021). The property owner should consider recycling copper wiring and metal piping. Also consider recycling any interior fixtures, doors, windows, and any architectural details of a building to help defray the costs of demolition and disposal. Many of these items have real and potential market value from scrap metal recovery to vintage building materials.

D is for Demolition and Disposal:

Now that you've checked for and possibly removed all the asbestos in the building, and emptied it of other contents, it is time to finally demolish the structure. The most common demolition process is the rapid collapse and deconstruction of the building through the use of heavy equipment. Alternatively, if your old barn or vintage house could yield resalable building materials you may consider deconstruction by hand. This would allow the removal of old barn beams, hand-carved wooden trim and framing, or other valuable construction materials. Once the building is reduced to rubble it can be loaded on trucks and taken to your local Construction & Demolition (C&D) landfill, or a municipal solid waste (MSW) landfill. Please contact your landfill before transport to ensure that your demolition rubble will be accepted and for any special instructions.

An alternative process of demolition may be available to rural residents that live on agricultural property. If your building is located on your farm you may, as per State regulation, 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. However, you may also bury the debris elsewhere on the property the structure was on, but you may not transport the demolished materials offsite to another 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.

Lastly, if you have completed all the requirements of a fire training burn and your fire department has reduced the structure to ash, you will need to remove that ash from the property. The process of burning releases chemicals from the wood and other construction materials. These chemicals are now highly mobile and could be easily transported into streams, lakes or groundwater by the next weather event. After the ash is cool you should load it into a truck and take it to a MSW landfill for final disposal. Contact your MSW landfill prior to burning and disposal so you can ensure acceptance and receive further instruction. Ashes must be disposed at a state-permitted, MSW landfill; ash is not allowed in unlined C&D landfills because of the potential for groundwater contamination.

If you have any questions please call NDEQ Waste Management Section's Environmental Assistance Coordinator at (402) 471-8308.

RESOURCES:

- NDEQ Home Page: <http://deq.ne.gov/>

Contacts:

- NDEQ Waste Management Section (402) 471-4210
- NDEQ Toll Free Number (877) 253-2603
- NDEQ Waste Compliance Assistance (402) 471-8308

Guidance Documents and Regulations:

- Title 132 – Integrated Solid Waste Management Regulations
Title 132 can be found on the NDEQ website under “Laws & Regulations”
- NDEQ Guidance Document – CFCs and Household Appliances/Vending Machines
- NDEQ Guidance Document – Construction and Demolition Waste in Nebraska
- NDEQ Guidance Document – General Asbestos Information
- NDEQ Guidance Document – Treated Wood Disposal Procedures
NDEQ Guidance Documents can be found on the NDEQ Website under “Publications & Forms”