

PASTURE CLEANUP of SMALL DEBRIS

Document Updated November 20, 2013

These are suggested guidelines for cleanup of small debris in livestock pastures and crop fields. These guidelines should be disregarded if official protocols are provided.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: Human health and safety are paramount!

SECONDARY OBJECTIVE: Safely remove storm debris from fields to reduce the risks to humans and farm animals.

I. OFFICIAL PERSONNEL

(It helps to have brightly colored hats, coats or vests so people can easily identify you!)

Project Leader

- Conducts initial briefing of volunteers outlining safety, objectives and procedures.
- Oversees the cleanup effort, makes decisions of cleanup procedures (i.e., have pickup truck follow volunteers for debris collection, or have debris collected in garbage bags for later pickup). Geography and soil conditions will be factors to consider.
- Stays at the base of operations (meeting point).
- Has communications with field team leaders and field safety officers (test cell phones or radios before starting cleanup!).
- Has communications to 9-1-1 and other emergency phone numbers.
- Works with Lead Safety Officer in providing a work summary at the end of shift.
- Can ask volunteers to leave the scene if they are disruptive or engaging in activities that endanger themselves or others. Should call law enforcement if necessary and consider ceasing operations until they do leave or are removed.
- Has the authority to cease all operations temporarily or for the day.

Considerations

Document all aspects of the operation (who, what, when, where, why, how). It helps to have a check-off sheet of information provided to all volunteers during briefings.

Overview the pastures: what types of materials are present; what is the most efficient, safe way to collect debris?

Where will debris of different types be piled after removal from the pasture?

Obviously any downed electrical lines should be removed by trained personnel/experts/authorized individuals prior to anyone going into a pasture; animals should not be loose. NO PETS or children are allowed (this is a hazardous area).

Be careful not to have too many things going on at once, such as a team cutting wood and a team collecting insulation and multiple people in multiple fields doing debris removal. Stay focused and do not have one leader oversee dozens of people without assistance of other supervisors! You are overseeing volunteers in a hazardous materials environment!

IF there is insulation in fields, refer to Insulation Team section below.

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Lead Safety Officer

- Has the best safety and first aid training, and ability to work with people.
- Conducts safety briefing with all volunteers.
- Stays at the base of operations (meeting point).
- Is the person whom everyone must check out with prior to leaving (may need helpers for this checkout process).
- Shall have communications with each field team leader and safety officer in the field.
- Has communications to 9-1-1 and other emergency phone numbers.
- Has first aid kits .
- Monitors ongoing weather conditions (if you hear thunder, people can be struck by lightning, so immediately cease operations and get people to safety!).
- Anticipates issues such as hypothermia, hyperthermia, sunburn, exhaustion, etc.
- Can call mandatory breaks for rest, water, snacks, and bathroom breaks.
- Has the authority to cease part of or all operations because of safety issues.

Considerations

Document all aspects of the operation (who, what, when, where, why, how). It helps to have a check-off sheet of information provided to all volunteers during briefings.

Field Team Leaders (may need several if the volunteer groups are large)

- Oversees operations in the pasture (don't let people get too spread out!).
- Asks questions of the Project Leader if unusual situations arise.
- Coordinates with field safety officer.

Field Safety Officer

- Oversees human safety in the field (does not do debris removal---eyes are roving for safety issues).
- Has a field first aid kit and responds to basic first aid issues.

Considerations

Who is getting tired, flushed, out of breath? Who is bleeding but not wanting to tell anyone? The field safety officer should be willing to intervene and tactfully ask people if they are OK, and if not, call the Lead safety officer to assist in obtaining help.

Resource Volunteers

- Maintains volunteer sign-in sheets that every volunteer signs.
- Obtains drinking water, bananas or oranges (for potassium) and other snacks for volunteers.
- Supplies vehicles going out to field volunteers with water and snacks.

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II. VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers:

- Must be registered with local emergency management (usually at the Emergency Operations Center), or VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters) activated by the EOC for liability and other reasons.
- **Have to** be up-to-date on tetanus vaccinations.
- Have sturdy **heavy** boots (with ankle support) – these must be closed toed shoes (NO tennis shoes, sandals, bare feet, etc.).
- Have heavy work gloves (NO bare hands).
- Wear jeans or long pants (NO SHORTS).
- Wear long sleeved shirts.

All volunteers must sign in (name, address, emergency contact number), attend a safety briefing and agree to their assignment prior to work.

ALL volunteers must 1) notify their supervisor upon leaving; 2) officially sign out; and 3) inform the Lead Safety Officer of any cuts or injuries while on the cleanup site.

Any person who gets a wound should be evaluated by a doctor, a paramedic or a Red Cross medic for wound first aid and possible tetanus booster. Any injuries should be evaluated by appropriate medical personnel. The Lead Safety Officer should document all information and assistance provided to volunteers.

III. SAMPLE GUIDELINES FOR INFORMATION NEEDED BY PROJECT LEADER AND LEAD SAFETY OFFICER PRIOR TO WORK

- Meet with farm owner and get details about natural hazards in fields (e.g., sink holes).
- Ensure that no power lines are down in pastures.
- Arrange for water, snacks, first aid kits, communications (see sample supply list at the end).
- Determine from local Emergency Management about disposal of:
 - Collected, bagged insulation
 - Collected, bagged general debris
 - Sharps/glass
 - Chemical containers
 - Contaminated hay/grain
 - Large and small animal carcass disposal

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IV. SAMPLE GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT LEADER AND SAFETY OFFICER BRIEFING TO VOLUNTEERS PRIOR TO WORK

(NOTE: If insulation is in the pastures, the Project Leader and Lead Safety Officer should assign qualified volunteers with required personal protective gear to bag insulation materials prior to general debris removal volunteers are sent to work. See Section V for details.)

The Volunteer Briefing prior to work is led by the Project Leader.

- Makes introductions and overviews the layout of the pastures.
- Reviews the day's objectives of:
 1. Human health and safety are paramount. Tell the field safety officer and others if you see potential hazards while walking the pasture." EVERYONE must have safety as a priority!
 2. Safely remove small pasture debris.
 3. Other work objectives...

Next, the Lead Safety Officer conducts a mandatory SAFETY BRIEFING for all volunteers:

- Identify field team leaders and field safety officers (all should have each other's cell phone numbers or have radio communications with each other).
- Explain that the field safety officers' duty is to oversee the safety of the volunteers (not picking up debris).
- All volunteers shall work in pairs or in larger groups so everyone is accounted for.
- DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING with bare hands!
- Know your limitations on picking up heavy materials—lift with your legs, keep a straight back at all times.
- IMMEDIATELY notify the field safety officer of any injuries, cuts or punctures!
- Do NOT walk under trees with dangling branches that might fall on you. There should be no overhead hazards where people are working.

INSULATION

If insulation is found, volunteers should NOT touch or bag it, but report it to the field team leader to request an insulation team to handle.

SHARPS

- Warn people about the hazards of picking up barbed wire and fencing materials that have nails.
- Glass shards may also be present when picking up anything, and might not be seen ahead of time.
- Sharps (glass shards, nails, screws, metal bolts, metal shards, needles) should be put into plastic or metal buckets or suitable container carried by volunteers. A larger solid container inside a pickup truck can be used to empty the buckets as they get heavy or full, or other arrangements can be made.

GENERAL DEBRIS (not any chemicals or chemical containers)

Place regular debris (pop cans, paper, household items) in garbage bags; tie them when full.

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CHEMICAL or CHEMICAL CONTAINERS (even if empty)

- Containers found that are labeled or suspected as containing ANY chemical (bleach, pesticides, gasoline, ammonia, brake fluid, antifreeze, etc.) should NOT be put together in the same garbage bag or container, even if they appear empty. For example, ammonia and bleach mixed together causes toxic chlorine gas; brake fluid in contact with many other chemicals can cause spontaneous FIRE.
- NOTIFY a Field Team Leader or Field Safety Officer of any chemical container found—do NOT touch or handle!
- Field leaders: call Project leader to obtain advice from professionals on how to handle (or not) these types of containers if found in pastures.
- Temporary solution for leaking or damaged *pesticide* containers: Using thick rubber or other chemical resistant gloves, place damaged container in a clean 5 gallon bucket and seal. Mark container with **red X** if possible for future reference (label the outside of the bucket with the name of the chemical container inside with a Sharpie or waterproof marker). Set aside until appropriate disposal is available. This is also good advice for any leaking chemical container. When in doubt, leave it alone and call an expert.

DEAD ANIMALS

Small dead animals (rodents, fox, rabbits, etc.) can be double plastic bagged (do NOT touch with bare hands). For large dead animals, notify field team leader to call location in to the Project Leader.

DOWNED LIMBS and LOOSE SHRUBBERY

These should be removed from the pasture since many are toxic to livestock.

HAY and GRAIN

- All hay and grain need to be removed from pastures---preferably by people wearing N-95 masks since mold may have formed, and insulation fibers may be embedded in this material.
- Stand upwind and AVOID RAISING DUST when handling this material. Situations may vary from a few flakes of hay to 50 square bales that need to be removed. Work safely and do not lift something too heavy. Large pasture debris removal requires large equipment and should not be attempted by the small debris work team.

If applicable, overview other hazards such as possible presence of poisonous snakes (don't grab under logs and downed fencing materials where snakes may hide).

WALKING THE PASTURE

- NO ONE works by themselves! We work as a team!
- ONE first aid kit must be out in the field with the field safety officer.
- The location of drinking water and snacks will be _____.
- If you must leave the debris cleanup while out in the pasture, notify the field team leader who will have someone walk with you to sign out with the Lead Safety

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Officer. (People can trip and fall in pastures, so people must be in pairs at all times.)

- Explain how the pasture will be walked:
 - Straight line followed by a pickup truck to put debris into (need to keep track of the line!); OR
 - Straight line and put debris into bags or piles where a vehicle can come out later for pickup; OR
 - Another arrangement that is safe and suitable to the terrain and debris to be collected.

Each pasture/situation will be different!

Volunteers will walk an arm's length away from one another (no further) and cover the pasture in straight lines (grid pattern), where at all possible and safe to do. A truck can follow the volunteers to dispose of branches, fence material, full garbage bags (tied) and other non-chemical debris (flat tires will be a risk!). A large plastic or metal container (40 gallon garbage can) can be put in the truck to dump nails, metal and glass shards when volunteer buckets get full.

V. INSULATION REMOVAL TEAM

Volunteers SHALL WEAR at a minimum:

- Hard soled boots
- Pants and long sleeve shirts
- Leather gloves
- N-95 respirator
- Safety glasses
- And any other safety equipment suggested by Public Health

Equipment:

- Sturdy, large garbage bags with string or twist ties to close
- Spray paint or grease marker to indicate the material inside is insulation, e.g., mark with an "I"

If there are insulation materials in pastures, a small team of 4-5 people should be deployed to bag up insulation materials. At least ONE person must have communications to the Project Leader and Lead Safety Officer. ONE first aid kit must accompany this team. ONE person is delegated as team leader who makes final decisions about issues; another qualified person is designated as field safety officer.

- Approach areas with insulation with the wind at your back and STAY UP WIND of insulation materials throughout the bagging process.
- MINIMIZE raising dust.
- Gently put insulation material into garbage bags and tightly tie shut.

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Also handle any other fuzzy or insulation-type materials in the same manner. Pipes that are covered in insulation should be handled just as carefully, since they might be covered with aged insulation.

Leave bags in a group(s) for a vehicle to collect.

Note to Project Leader:

Personal protective equipment such as work gloves, N-95 masks (small, medium, large), safety goggles, etc. should be available from the Emergency Operations Center (call and make a request to Public Health). They can also provide information on how/where to dispose of this waste.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR END OF SHIFT SUMMARY

Project Leader and Lead Safety Officer shall collect the sign in/sign out sheets at the end of activities and write a short project summary which will include:

- Location (owner's name and address)
- Start and end times
- Total number of volunteer hours
- Number of volunteers
- Summary of activities
- Types of debris removed and how hazardous materials were marked and stored/disposed of
- Any injuries and how they were handled or referred
- What went right? What could have been changed to make it better next time?

This summary (hand written is fine) and the volunteer sign in/out sheets should be copied and the originals turned into the local Emergency Operations Center/emergency management as volunteer hours are totaled following a disaster for response documentation. **This is important!** One copy of the summary and sign in/out sheets should be retained by the Project Leader just in case the originals are lost, or the Project Leader's supervisor also requests a copy.

Sample supply list (basic):

- Heavy work gloves
- Drinking water, bananas, oranges, other snacks
- Garbage bags
- 5 gallon buckets to pick up sharps
- 5 gallon buckets to put chemical containers into (or empty plastic kitty litter containers, e.g., 35 lb. Tidy Cat containers)
- First aid kits
- Brightly colored hats, coats, or vests
- Pickup trucks
- Radios or cell phones
- Sign-in/sign-out sheets
- Check-off sheet
- Spray paint
- Safety glasses
- Duct tape
- Clip board, paper, pens, sharpies

