



## **Disposal of Food, Putrescible Waste, Spoiled Medicines, Etc.** *Information for Community Officials*

**Introduction:** Orderly cleanup after a disaster will prevent impact of waste on human health and the environment. The North Dakota Department of Health advises debris cleanup be arranged for the following groups of waste, **which should not be mixed with other waste or piled together.**

- Putrescible waste such as food, small carcasses, diapers and similar wastes that quickly spoil must be managed as municipal solid waste.
- Hazardous chemicals, paint, materials that contain mercury (fluorescent lights, thermostats, etc.), and electronics should be separated for proper recycling or disposal. See the “Disposal of Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics” fact sheet at [www.ndhealth.gov/flood](http://www.ndhealth.gov/flood).
- Appliances that cannot be cleaned and repaired and scrap metal materials should be stockpiled separately for recycling.
- Furniture, carpet, books, paper and demolition debris should be managed at an inert waste site. Be aware some demolition materials may contain lead paint and/or asbestos.
- Concrete and brick should be stockpiled for recycling or hauled to an inert waste site.
- Tree branches and clean, non-treated wood should be ground for mulch, etc.

**Putrescible wastes** rot or decay quickly and should be kept apart from other waste, placed in heavy duty plastic bags or containers, and quickly managed. This debris type includes fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products and other produce from grocery stores, restaurants, schools, hospitals, and residences. Small animal carcasses, diapers, sanitary products, medicines that have been contaminated or spoiled, and similar waste must be kept separate from other disaster debris so it can be promptly and efficiently disposed.

Do not mix putrescible waste with hazardous materials, clean-up debris (such as carpet, furniture or demolition debris), steel and appliances, etc., or it may slow cleanup and disposal, increase cost and create more impact on human health and the environment.

**Staging, collection and disposal:** Bags or containers of putrescible waste can be placed in a separate place in the yard or community for prompt collection as municipal solid waste. The community can use its existing hauler or could contract with a municipal waste hauler to remove the putrescible waste. If the hauler does not have the right equipment or is otherwise unable to handle the waste, contact the North Dakota Department of Health for more information.

If you have any questions about putrescible waste or need assistance finding a waste hauler, disposal site or disaster debris cleanup, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.5166 or visit [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov). If you have questions about disposal of asbestos and lead-based paint, contact the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.5188.