



SNOW DISPOSAL

The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality snow disposal guide offers information on steps municipalities and businesses can take when locating sites for the disposal of snow. Finding a place to dispose of collected snow poses a challenge to municipalities and businesses as they clear roads, parking lots, bridges, and sidewalks. Public safety is first priority; however, care must be taken to ensure that collected snow, which may be contaminated with road salt, sand, litter, anti-icing agents, and automotive pollutants such as oil, is disposed of in ways that will minimize impacts to our environment.

The purpose of this guide is to help municipalities and businesses select, prepare, and maintain snow disposal sites before the snow begins to accumulate through the winter. Be aware that municipalities and counties may declare an emergency regarding snowfall which may qualify for reimbursement. To learn more, contact the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services at 701.328.8100.

There are several steps that communities can take to minimize the impacts of snow disposal on public health and the environment. These steps will help communities avoid the costs of a contaminated water supply, degraded waterbodies, and flooding.

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES

1. Site Selection

The key to selecting effective snow disposal sites is to locate them adjacent to or on pervious surfaces in upland areas or upland locations on impervious surfaces away from water resources and drinking water wells. To avoid potential contamination to wetlands, water supplies, and waterbodies, identify and map appropriate upland snow disposal locations. At these locations, the snow meltwater can filter into the soil, leaving behind sand and debris which can be removed in the springtime. Things to consider:

- Snow may not be pushed, piled, or otherwise moved, directly into a river, lake or other surface water.
- Avoid dumping snow in gravel or scoria pits, and landfills – meltwater. Snow meltwater will create more leachate in landfills which can cause operational issues.

- Avoid disposing of snow on top of storm drain catch basins, or in stormwater drainage swales or ditches, or in stormwater treatment devices. Snow, sand, and debris may block drainage systems, causing localized flooding. A high volume of sand, sediment, and litter released from melting snow also may be transported to surface waters.

2. Site Preparation and Maintenance

In addition to carefully selecting disposal sites before the winter begins, it is important to prepare and maintain snow disposal sites to maximize their effectiveness. The following maintenance measures should be done for all snow disposal sites:

- A silt fence or equivalent barrier should be placed securely on the downgradient side of the snow disposal site.
- To filter pollutants out of the meltwater, wherever possible a 50-foot vegetative buffer should be kept between the disposal site and adjacent waterbodies.
- Debris should be cleared from the site prior to using the site for snow disposal.
- Debris should be cleared from the site and properly disposed of at the end of the snow season.

SNOW MELTING

Snow melting activities are a type of industrial activity that are typically associated with short term discharges. Any discharge to waters of the state which is a result of commercial equipment used to melt snow through the application of heat are required to obtain a temporary discharge permit (NDG07-0000) through the department.

A few things to follow when discharging snow meltwater as stated above:

- The addition of cleaning materials or chemicals (such as deicers) during snow melting operations is strictly prohibited.
- All melting operations must comply with state and federal agencies, municipalities, counties, drainage districts, and other local agencies.
- Melting operations must not result in flooding of neighboring property, streets, gutters, or storm sewers.
- Melting operations must not cause unsafe conditions.

- Melting operations shall follow the requirements established in the North Dakota Pollutant Discharge Elimination System general permit for temporary discharges (NDG07-0000).

Contact Information:

Contact the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Water Quality at 701.328.5210, or visit the division website at <https://deq.nd.gov/WQ/>.