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Division of Air Quality Reminds Homeowners of Proper Handling and Disposal of Storm Debris

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 2, 2012) – With storms impacting much of the Commonwealth, many Kentuckians are cleaning and restoring their homes and properties. The Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection has specific guidelines for proper disposal of debris in the aftermath of severe weather.

Storm-affected Kentuckians should be aware of health, safety, and compliance hazards associated with debris handling and disposal. These hazards include, but are not limited to, burning of debris, asbestos removal, and mold growth.

The Division of Air Quality offers the following advice when cleaning up after a storm:

Recycle, Don't Burn

- Recycling is the preferred disposal method for many kinds of debris. Local governments are strongly encouraged to recycle woody and vegetative debris by composting, shredding or chipping for reuse as mulch. Those lacking the equipment should consider commercial shredders or seek help from other cities and counties.
- Open burning is restricted and only permitted under special circumstances. Open burning of household trash (other than uncoated paper products), furniture, carpeting, tires, appliances and building materials is strictly prohibited.
- Storm-generated vegetative debris managed at a staging area may be disposed of in a permitted, contained landfill or construction debris landfill.

- If local governments decide to burn woody and vegetative debris, local fire departments should oversee the burning and ensure there are adequate fire breaks. To be in compliance with state regulations, all trash, tires, appliances, construction/demolition debris, etc. must be removed prior to burning. To minimize environmental impact, debris should not be burned until dry, at least on exterior surfaces. Small amounts of clean diesel fuel or kerosene, not to exceed five gallons, may be used to aid ignition. Storm-damaged building materials, appliances and furniture may not be burned. After burning vegetative storm debris, ashes may not be buried. For proper disposal methods, refer to the Disposing of Storm and Flood Debris Fact Sheet at <http://air.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

Building Debris and Asbestos

- Building materials, such as bricks, concrete, masonry, rock, wood, lumber and insulation, should be disposed of at a construction and demolition landfill or a contained landfill. Building materials and other flood debris that could contain asbestos should be properly handled by qualified professionals using specialized equipment. For homeowners, the most likely materials containing asbestos are ceiling tiles, floor tiles, linoleum and transite siding.

Mold

- Materials that remain wet for more than two days are ideal sites for growing mold. Absorbent materials, such as carpet, wallboard and ceiling tiles, will need to be removed and replaced. When cleaning mold and areas affected by mold, use protective goggles that do not have ventilation holes and an N-95 mask, available at hardware or home improvement stores, to keep mold spores out of your eyes and lungs. Use rubber boots and long, waterproof gloves. Wash clothing after cleaning up mold. Avoid touching mold or moldy items with your bare hands. If you use chlorine bleach, it is very important to provide adequate ventilation. Never mix chlorine bleach with other cleaning solutions or detergents that contain ammonia. Detergents, such as borax, are safer for the homeowner to use. There are also mold-cleaning products available at home improvement stores.

Detailed information may be obtained at the Division for Air Quality's Web site at <http://air.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx> and clicking on "Disposing of Storm and Flood Debris" at the bottom of the page.

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