

Floodwater Sandbag Reuse and Disposal Guidance from the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources

The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has developed this guidance to help properly manage sandbags, sand, and plastic sheeting that has been used in fighting flood events. It depends on the situation, but remember that floodwaters can be contaminated with untreated human and animal wastes, industrial and agricultural chemicals, oil and gasoline, etc., and these pollutants can contaminate other materials as well. To properly dispose of sand, sandbags, and plastic sheeting used to fight floods, DENR surveyed surrounding states to develop the following guidelines:

- Sand or sandbags that have come into contact with only precipitation, but **not** floodwater, are normally considered to be not contaminated and can be reused without restriction as long as blowing sand and blowing litter from sandbags is prevented.
- Sand or sandbags that are **not** contaminated may also be disposed as waste or used as daily cover in a permitted municipal solid waste landfill. Disposal at a permitted Restricted Use or Construction and Demolition Debris site can be allowed if six inches of cover soil is applied within 24 hours to prevent blowing sand and litter from plastic sandbags. A list of permitted disposal sites can be found at: <https://apps.sd.gov/NR60SolidWaste/main.html>.
- Sand or sandbags that have been in contact with floodwater should not be reused in ways that would involve direct human contact such as sand boxes, gardens, or playgrounds.
- Sand or sandbags that are visibly contaminated or you suspect have been contaminated (i.e. sandbags that may have come into contact with raw sewage, industrial chemicals, petroleum products, etc.) should be disposed at a permitted municipal solid waste landfill. In some circumstances, contaminated sand and sandbags may be used as fill material where there is no direct human contact and where groundwater resources will not be impacted. However, before you begin to use contaminated sandbags as fill, please contact the DENR Waste Management Program at (605) 773-3153.
- Sandbags, empty or full, may not be disposed in a waterway, wetland, floodplain, or other sensitive area, but noncontaminated loose sand may be used in a waterway, wetland or floodplain if proper permits are obtained, such as a 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (go to <https://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/Media/Fact-Sheets/Article/714884/post-flood-permitting-sd/>) or a Shoreline Alteration Permit from the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (contact Steve LaBay in Webster at (605) 345-3381 or email Steve.LaBay@state.sd.us).
- Used plastic sheeting can be recycled through your local recycler under certain circumstances, but may cost more than disposal directly through your local garbage hauler. Contact your local recycler for more details if you wish to recycle plastic sheeting.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact us at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Waste Management Program:

website: <https://denr.sd.gov/des/wm/wmp/wmpmainpage.aspx>

phone: (605) 773-3153

Thank you for your help in cleaning up from flood events.