
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Snow Disposal Guidelines

Introduction

During each snowfall season from November to April, the Department of Environmental Services receives many complaints related to snow disposal into and/or near surface water. There are several different concerns regarding disposal of snow cleared from streets and parking lots. These can be initially categorized as aesthetic concerns, such as minimizing the visibility of debris and huge snow piles, and environmental concerns, such as protection of groundwater quality, surface water quality, and aquatic life.

The environmental effects of disposed snow result from high levels of sodium chloride, sand, debris and contaminants from automobile exhaust. It is the debris contained in plowed snow that makes it illegal to dump snow directly in water bodies. RSA 485-A:13,I(a) prohibits discharging wastes to surface waters without a permit. Groundwater is sensitive to snow dumping due to the high levels of sodium chloride in plowed snow. RSA 485-C:12 prohibits the siting or operation of snow dumps within classified wellhead protection areas.

Refer to the following guidelines for siting legal snow dumps and protecting the environment.

Recommended Guidelines for Snow Disposal

By following these guidelines you will find a safe place to dump plowed snow. Please note that snow dumps are kept out of water bodies due to litter and debris. Litter and debris do not belong on the land surface either; after the snow melts, all litter and debris must be collected and disposed of properly.

- Disposed snow should be stored near flowing surface waters, but at least 25 feet from the high water mark of the surface water.
- A silt fence or equivalent barrier should be securely placed between the snow storage area and the high water mark.
- The snow storage area should be at least 75 feet from any private water supply wells, at least 200 feet from any community water supply wells, and at least 400 feet from any municipal wells. (Note: Snow storage areas are prohibited in wellhead protection areas [class GAA groundwater].)
- All debris in the snow storage area should be cleared from the site prior to snow storage.
- All debris in the snow storage area should be cleared from the site and properly disposed of no later than May 15 of each year the area is used for snow storage.

For more information about snow storage contact DES Watershed Management Bureau at (603) 271-2457.