

GUIDELINES FOR BRUSH DISPOSAL

As we have become a more urban society, disposal of brush has become a problem for many people. There are several options available for disposal of brush.

RECLAMATION/RESTORATION PROJECTS

House Bill 2573 amended 27A O.S. Supp. 1999, Section 2-10-301, which relates to the Oklahoma Solid Waste Management Act. Subsection " I" states " No permit shall be required for a project approved by the Department and a local conservation district to use suitable portions of the solid waste stream to reclaim and restore Oklahoma lands" . The Department has deemed brush to be a suitable portion of the waste stream for reclamation and restoration of Oklahoma land as long as the following guidelines are followed.

The local conservation district shall approve each project. The district will coordinate the project with the generator and landowner. If the site is on property not owned by the generator, there shall be a written agreement signed by both parties submitted with the project proposal. Projects are approved for the purpose of using only brush to control erosion in restoring and reclaiming land. Material other than brush will have to meet additional requirements and may require a separate plan. Sites must be fenced to prevent unauthorized disposal materials.

WILDLIFE AND FISH HABITAT

In many areas of the state there is a shortage of habitat for protection of wildlife. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) has guidelines available on constructing brush shelters to furnish loafing areas for quail and smaller wildlife. These may be constructed on private lands or on lands managed by the ODWC.

Many Oklahoma lakes are getting old and the natural brush used for fish habitat is diminishing. In many cases it is feasible for the ODWC Fisheries Division to use brush to build fish shelters.

For more information on how to coordinate the use of brush for wildlife or fish habitat contact the ODWC. You may also contact the local DEQ office to find out how to contact the ODWC field biologist for your area of the state.

CHIPPERS

The use of wood chippers in many cases is a desirable way to dispose of brush. Chipping reduces the brush to a more desirable and manageable state. Wood-chips are a very desirable commodity in many areas of the state. They can be used for ground cover and mulch in many instances. The use of wood-chips is considered reuse and not disposal, so they are not a waste material and thus not regulated.

Wood chippers are quite expensive. Some monies may be available for public entities to help purchase chippers. For information on monies available to help purchase chippers contact the Waste Management Division of the DEQ.

OPEN BURNING

Open burning should be used as a last resort to dispose of brush. Burning should be conducted only when the following conditions are observed:

- The fire is set only when atmospheric conditions will readily dissipate contaminants. To accomplish this initial burning shall begin only between three hours after sunrise and three hours before sunset and additional fuels shall not be intentionally added to the fire at times outside these limits.
- Fire is located at least 500 feet upwind of any occupied residence other than those located on the property on which the burn is conducted.
- Fire does not create a traffic visibility hazard.
- Burning is conducted so that the contaminants do not adversely affect the ambient air quality of a city or town. Burning is prohibited in non-attainment areas.
- Brush should be stacked and dried to provide the best practical condition for efficient burning.
- Large quantities should not be burned when feasible.

- No material except brush shall be burned. In no case shall tires be allowed to burn.

Persons burning brush are not exempt or excused from the consequences, damages or injuries that may result from this activity, nor are they exempt from complying with all applicable laws, ordinances, rules and order.

If there is better way to eliminate brush, do it!
Remember... Open burning causes air pollution.