




ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

David B. Dove, Interim Director

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency
Georgia Forestry Commission
Cherokee County EMA

FROM: David B. Dove, Interim Director 

DATE: July 27, 2023

SUBJECT: Vegetative Storm Debris Generated by Cherokee County Severe Weather on July 20, 2023

This memo is in response to a resource request (CHER-7000412) received by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) through the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS). Based on information regarding the lack of practicable alternatives for the disposal of storm debris, under the authority provided by the Solid Waste Management Act (O.C.G.A. 12-8-23.1(a)(11) and the Rules for Air Quality Control Chapter 391-3-1-.02(5)(d), I am hereby authorizing a variance for Cherokee County to allow for the burning of vegetative storm debris generated by the July 20, 2023 storm event. This variance is retroactive from July 20, 2023.

This memo allows for the burning of vegetative debris resulting from storm damage for Cherokee County through October 1, 2023. Permissible storm debris include trees, brush, and stumps. Other storm damage debris, such as that from damaged or destroyed housing, is classified as solid waste and may not be burned. Furthermore, restrictions on other types of open burning during this period remain in effect.

EPD urges that burning of vegetative debris resulting from storm damage should be conducted only when all other options such as mulching or chipping are not possible. Outdoor open burning of this type in Georgia may require a burn permit from the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC). Permits for natural vegetation can be secured online at GaTrees.org or by calling 1-877-OK2-BURN. For additional information regarding burn permits you can contact the county GFC office. In addition, this memorandum cannot and does not authorize any activity prohibited by local ordinances or waive any requirement to obtain any requisite local permits or authorizations. Any burning of vegetative debris, whenever feasible, should be conducted between 10:00 a.m. and one hour before dark.