



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Environmental  
Conservation

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
Solid Waste Program

610 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3643  
Main: 907.451.2100  
fax: 907.451.2188

April 15, 2020

Sent via electronic mail

Re: Increased Flood Risk from River Breakup: Spring 2020

Dear Rural Community Leader:

The National Weather Service is forecasting that the ice breakup flood potential will be above normal this year in the Kuskokwim, Tanana, Yukon, Koyukuk, and Copper River basins. Current ice conditions are similar to those seen in past high flood event years such as 2009, 2012, and 2013, particularly in river systems located below the Brooks Range. In preparation, we wanted to share with you some proactive measures your community can take to minimize the impacts of flooding at your landfill.

Prior to breakup, here are some precautions that you can take to lessen the impact to or from your solid waste or recycling program in the event of a flood. These are listed on a sliding scale as not all communities have the same options. If your landfill is already located on high ground and most of your materials are staged there, you only need to focus on materials that are still within the floodplain.

- Remove any materials staged for backhaul from the barge landing and:  
**Good:** Secure using banding or cargo straps and store away from the river.  
**Better:** Store them in a building or connex box that is secured to the ground.  
**Best:** Move them to high ground.
- Secure any loose items that will easily float, such as freezers, refrigerators, etc. if they are stored in the flood plain and:  
**Good:** Store inside the landfill and close the gate.  
**Best:** Move to high ground.
- Ensure that all liquids, chemicals, and containers and drums containing hazardous substances including fuels, oils, antifreeze, and any other liquids are:  
**Good:** Properly labeled and have leak-proof secured lids in place.  
**Better:** Stored with leak-proof lids inside a building or secured connex.  
**Best:** Moved to high ground.
- Secure and relocate any lead-acid batteries:  
**Good:** In a tote with a lid secured in place.  
**Better:** In a tote with a secured lid in a connex or building.  
**Best:** In a secured and covered container or tote and moved to higher ground.
- Lock and secure any connex or other containers that may contain collected recycling such as aluminum cans or plastic bottles. This can be done by:

**Good:** Using a cargo strap on the doors and securely staking the connex into the ground.

**Better:** Chaining the connex to a large heavy object such as a piece of heavy equipment.

**Best:** Moving the connex to higher ground.

- If possible, cover all disposed wastes at the landfill with cover material. Covered waste is less likely to wash out of the landfill in the event of a flood.
  - Good:** Consolidate waste and use what cover material is available.
  - Best:** Consolidate waste and cover with at least 6 inches of material.
- Close and secure the landfill gate and any other open points to the landfill. This may help contain wastes within the landfill boundary during a flood.
  - Good:** Use a temporary fence such as snow or silt fencing to close up landfill.
  - Better:** Use a chain-link swing gate that reaches the ground to close up landfill.
  - Best:** Use a chain-link swing gate that reaches the ground to close up landfill. Also fill in any gaps between the ground and the fenceline, to fully enclose the landfill.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, or would like to discuss what your community could do in the event of a flood, please contact your Rural Landfill Specialist below:

Trisha Bower -451-2174

Sarah Durand 451-2761

Stephen Price- 269-7467

Melinna Faw- 269-7642

Christi Scott- 465-5318

If you do not know who your Rural Landfill Specialist is, a complete list can be found here:

<https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/solid-waste/rural-contacts/>

In order to remain informed of changes to the breakup predictions, there are some resources that are available to you.

- The Alaska Pacific River Forecast Office maintains a map of current flooding information here: flooding in Alaska: <https://www.weather.gov/aprfc/>
- The Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy will be hosting a webinar on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 Alaska River Break-up Preview, and you can register here: <https://uaf-accap.org/events/>

Sincerely,



Trisha Bower

Northern and Interior Class III Lead

Environmental Program Specialist