

# Initial clearing of debris and solid waste

Debris from collapsed buildings can obstruct relief operations, pollute groundwater, and threaten the local population and relief workers with hidden dangers and further collapse. Proper clearing is essential for the short- and long-term success of recovery efforts.

## DO

Store useful materials for rebuilding or recovery efforts, such as wood planks, bricks, cement blocks and containers and look for recycling opportunities in local areas.



## DON'T

Avoid burning waste openly. If burning is necessary, locate a properly operated incinerator.



## DO

Protect yourself. Enter damaged buildings cautiously and only if necessary. Wear boots, gloves, dust masks, overalls and helmets, if available. Wash and if possible disinfect your hands regularly.



## DO



If you suspect waste to be dangerous, warn other workers and notify authorities. When possible, fence off the area or secure the waste in clearly labelled containers.

## DON'T

Don't mix wastes from hospitals and clinics with other wastes. Store them in sealed, labelled containers.



## DO

Remember the five stages of debris removal:

- ✓ Recover the living
- ✓ Recover the dead
- ✓ Recover valuables
- ✓ Clear for access
- ✓ Clear for reconstruction and recycling

# Where best to deposit waste

If properly managed, a storage site for disaster wastes will facilitate relief operations and subsequent recovery and rebuilding. If badly managed, waste can hamper relief operations for a long time.

## DO

Consult local government and environmental authorities. Use existing waste handling facilities in the area before you set up a storage site.



## DON'T

Never deposit wastes near a watercourse, in a flooded area or close to an environmentally sensitive area such as a forest or beach.



## DON'T

Don't store wastes near or upwind of human habitation, to avoid flies, rats, and bad smells. Don't leave wastes near hillsides where rainwater drainage can flood homes and camps.



## DO

Estimate the amount of waste expected, the space required for its disposal, and the types of waste to be dealt with. Instruct workers in the safe handling of hazardous materials such as chemicals, healthcare wastes and biological materials.



## DO

Separate wastes according to their reusability – bricks, concrete, timber, metal, solid containers, etc.



## DO

Put temporary landfills where they can be easily accessed by large trucks.



## DO

If waste cannot be incinerated properly, then store it in areas with clay or solid rocks and away from wells and groundwater.



## DON'T

Avoid burning waste openly. If necessary, use a properly-operated incinerator to burn healthcare wastes.

