Stump and Brush Management

Stumps and brush are generated as a result of most types of land development. In New Hampshire, the management of discarded stumps and brush is regulated as a solid waste activity under the provisions of the New Hampshire Solid Waste Rules. This fact sheet provides an explanation of the regulatory requirements for the various methods of managing stumps.

Above-Ground Management

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services encourages the above-ground management of stumps, including chipping, because it eliminates the use of valuable landfill space and because it produces a reusable product. Shredded material can be used for several purposes, including mulch and biomass fuel.

For this reason, the management of stumps and tree parts by above-ground methods is exempt from the requirement for obtaining a permit under the Solid Waste Rules, provided the activity complies with the universal facility requirements in Chapter Env-Sw 1000 of the Solid Waste Rules and, if combusted, a permit is obtained from the DES Air Resources Division and local fire officials, if required [Env-Sw 1000 Universal Facility Requirements].

Chips, shavings and sawdust produced from stumps and other virgin wood are certified by the Solid Waste Rules for distribution and use as fuel, mulch, animal bedding and a bulking agent for composting. This means that when actively managed for the identified purposes, virgin wood chips, shavings and sawdust are considered a product rather than a waste, and are not regulated by the Solid Waste Rules.

Burial/On-Site

When stumps generated from clearing land are buried on the same land, state law exempts the activity from regulation under the Solid Waste Rules, provided that the burial site is at least 75 feet from any drinking water supply and local approval is obtained, if required.

Burial/ Off-Site

According to Env-Sw 810.09 of the rules, no permit is required for the burial of stumps and tree parts from off-site locations, provided: the burial site is in compliance with all of the requirements of Env-Sw 810.03 of the rules, is at least 75 feet from any drinking water well, at least 25 feet from any property line, at least 4 feet above the seasonal high groundwater table, the stumps and tree parts are buried in a manner that is protective of the environment, public health
and safety, and a notation is recorded in the chain of title for the property identifying the burial location, waste types, dates, and quantity of waste disposed of on the property [Env-Sw 800 Landfill Requirements].

Additional Information

For additional information concerning stump and brush management, including permit application forms, please contact:

NH Department of Environmental Services
Waste Management Division, Solid Waste Management Bureau
29 Hazen Drive; PO Box 95
Concord, NH 03302-0095
(603) 271-2900
Fax: (603)271-2456
TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

A copy of the Solid Waste Rules may be obtained by contacting the DES Public Information Center at the above noted mailing address or (603) 271-2975.