

Preparing for Disaster

# DISASTER WASTE PLANNING CHECKLIST



PRE-EVENT → RESPONSE → RECOVERY

This checklist provides a practical starting point for councils preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disaster waste events. It is designed to support rapid mobilisation, consistent decision-making, and compliance with funding and regulatory requirements.

## How to Use This Checklist

This checklist is divided into three phases. Work through each phase in order — but remember that pre-event preparation is the most valuable investment you can make.

**01**

### PRE-EVENT READINESS

Planning, approvals, supplier panels, and system readiness before a disaster occurs.

**02**

### RESPONSE PHASE

Activating systems, deploying staff, operating temporary sites, and managing clean-up.

**03**

### RECOVERY PHASE

Returning to BAU, finalising funding documentation, and site closure.



## PRE-EVENT READINESS

### Preparing for Disaster to Strike



#### Planning and Site Readiness

- Identify and document potential temporary waste sites
- Secure temporary site approvals in advance where possible
- Confirm site access, traffic flow, and environmental considerations

#### Administrative Readiness

- Prepare administrative checklist for disaster activation
- Confirm waste levy exemption process and trigger points
- Allocate internal staff to disaster response roles
- Prepare DRFA funding compliance and evidence checklist

#### Supplier & Contractor Readiness

- Establish a panel of preferred suppliers
- Confirm suppliers for temporary facility setup and operation
- Confirm suppliers for front-end administration and data management
- Confirm suppliers for street clean-up and community clean-up crews
- Document procurement processes aligned with DRFA recoverability requirements

#### Operational Planning

- Prepare pre-planning meeting agenda template for disaster response teams
- Establish pre-event clean-up protocols for council facilities and public areas
- Develop a pre-event waste communications plan



#### PRO TIP

BAU staff often aren't covered by insurance fundings. Align contractor scopes with your disaster/response types and funding requirements before an event, not during it. Think of it as an in case of emergency phone tree.



## Communications

- Confirm communication channels (social media, website, local media, etc.)
- Define key messaging and public information triggers
- Identify responsible communications officers and spokespeople
- Confirm pricing or fee arrangements if applicable

## Hazard and Risk Management

- Develop protocols for hazardous waste identification and management
- Prepare safety guidance for staff and contractors handling hazardous materials

## Council Asset Management

- Prepare protocols for internal council asset clean-up
- Ensure processes separate insurance-related clean-up activities from general disaster waste

## Data and Systems

- Establish minimum data standards for waste facilities
- Ensure systems can quickly activate disaster-specific data capture processes
- Align data standards with waste acceptance protocol



### REALITY CHECK

Manual data capture processes are often overlooked but are critical if systems go offline. Don't underestimate the power of a clipboard and paper form.



PRE-EVENT READINESS

RESPONSE PHASE

RECOVERY PHASE

## RESPONSE PHASE

### Once Clean-Up Starts



#### Communication and Coordination

- Activate disaster waste communications plan
- Establish escalation points and decision-making structure
- Confirm data owners and reporting responsibilities
- Set reporting frequency and communication timeframes

#### Data Capture and Systems

- Activate protocols for powered data capture systems
- Activate protocols for manual/non-powered data capture systems
- Ensure load acceptance procedures are documented and communicated



#### PRO TIP

Consistent data capture from Day 1 reduces reconciliation issues later. Have your prep done on Day 0 – before go live!

#### Equipment and Site Readiness

- Deploy temporary response toolkits (tablets, PPE, clipboards, printed protocols)
- Ensure staff and contractors have appropriate safety equipment
- Provide induction materials for temporary or redeployed staff

#### Operational Compliance

- Use checklists for data capture at waste facilities and temporary sites
- Implement regulatory compliance checks (waste levy, approvals, site conditions)
- Ensure WHS safety protocols are followed for contaminated loads

#### Temporary Site Operations

- Implement approved temporary transfer station layouts
- Confirm material separation zones and equipment placement
- Ensure traffic management plans are implemented



## Staff Support

- Confirm communication channels (social media, website, local media, etc.)
- Define key messaging and public information triggers
- Identify responsible communications officers and spokespeople
- Confirm pricing or fee arrangements if applicable



### PRO TIP

Prioritise simple, repeatable processes over perfect systems — speed is critical in early response.

## Material Management

- Secure landfill access for disaster waste disposal
- Confirm transport schedules and haulage arrangements
- Establish process for recyclable material stockpiles
- Assess opportunities for material recovery depending on disaster type

## Collection Services

- Implement kerbside waste collection adjustments where required
- Coordinate disaster clean-up collections appropriate to region and event type

## Data and Decision Making

- Implement data capture processes for operational reporting
- Ensure reporting systems function without reliance on power where necessary
- Provide data for daily operational decision-making

## Community and Government Communications

- Implement communications protocol for social media and public updates
- Provide briefing information for councillors and MPs
- Coordinate communications with internal council teams
- Provide updates to the broader disaster management group

## Bulk Clean-Up Operations

- Establish routing plan for bulk clean-up crews
- Track and record loads collected
- Implement reconciliation processes between collection and disposal site



PRE-EVENT READINESS

RESPONSE PHASE

RECOVERY PHASE

## RECOVERY PHASE

### Post Disaster



#### Return to Business as Usual

- Develop and implement plan to transition back to normal waste operations
- Close temporary waste sites safely and compliantly
- Restore standard pricing and operational arrangements at facilities

#### Site and Infrastructure Recovery

- Assess landfill airspace impacts from disaster waste
- Develop remediation plans where required
- Identify strategies for replacement airspace if capacity was affected

#### Funding and Compliance

- Finalise disaster funding documentation and reporting
- Ensure DRFA evidence requirements are complete and compliant
- Reconcile contractor costs and supporting documentation

#### Late Waste Receipts

- Develop process for handling late-arriving disaster waste
- Confirm eligibility for funding or levy exemptions where applicable
- Establish clear cut-off dates for disaster-related waste acceptance



#### **WANT TO GO FURTHER? THIS CHECKLIST IS A STARTING POINT ONLY.**

A comprehensive disaster waste management approach may also include:

- Temporary waste site design and layout plans
- Waste classification frameworks and coding systems
- Data capture templates and reporting tools
- Contractor onboarding and management packs
- Community communication materials and templates



#### Questions about this guide?

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