

Fire Plan Guidance for Mulching Operations

This document is designed to provide an outline of the chapters and content that should be included in the fire plan required for mulching facilities in Georgia under Rule 391-3-4-.16(5)(a).

The first chapter should identify the types of fire hazards present based on the current operation. An example list is shown below.

A. Types of Fire Hazards

- Electrical Hazards
- Cutting, Welding, and Open-Flame Work
- Flammable and Combustible Materials Storage
- Smoking
- Spontaneous Combustion
- Lightning

Next, the fire plan should include the best management practices for fire prevention in general and based on the hazards identified in chapter one.

B. Best Management Practices for Fire Prevention

- Monitor temperature carefully (twice per week); address hot spots greater than 140° F in the storage pile
- Track and correlate weather events; prepare for long periods of dry weather followed by lightning and thunderstorms
- Restrict pile size; less than 25 feet in height and 25,000 square feet in area
- Maintain moisture levels; keep storage pile between 40-60%
- Turn storage piles to release heat; a critical step to prevent fires in organic material piles; turn or open the storage pile if temperature exceeds 140° F
- Designate and enforce non-smoking areas
- Designate and enforce maintenance areas for cutting and welding
- Designate areas for combustible and flammable materials storage
- Insure proper insulation and grounding of electrical equipment

The next chapter should cover the best management practices for detecting fires and types of firefighting equipment kept onsite.

C. Best Management Practices for Fire Detection and Firefighting Equipment

- Fire alarms
- Smoke detectors
- Temperature and moisture probes for the storage piles
- Stockpiled soil
- Fire extinguishers
- Water truck
- Water storage tank and fire pump
- Maintain close contact with the local fire department and other emergency responders
- Coordinate a fire safety audit with the local fire department
- Establish minimum fire lanes around and between storage piles in coordination with the local fire department

The last regular chapter should cover fire prevention training for staff at the facility.

D. Training

- Present basic fire prevention and response training for all employees
- Annual fire prevention and response training review

The last section of the fire plan is for any attachments, including checklists and any applicable permits.

E. Attachments

- Fire Risk Survey - Walk-through with local fire department and other emergency responders
- General Fire Prevention Checklist - OSHA Standards
- Emergency Exits Checklist - OSHA Standards
- Flammable and Combustible Material Checklist - OSHA Standards
- Hot Work Permit