Best Management Practices

Debris Removal in and Around Waterways to Keep People Safe

CDFW has developed a set of best management practices to help people respond while minimizing impacts to fish and wildlife during stabilization activities in and around waterways conducted pursuant to Executive Order N-13-25.

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1. **Toxic & Hazardous Materials Handling:**
   Contain and safely remove debris, including ash, sacked concrete, asphalt, creosote-treated wood, and other hazardous substances, to prevent contamination of soil and waterways.

2. **Removal of Contaminated Materials:**
   Excavate and properly dispose of debris, including fire debris-contaminated soil and hazardous materials, ensuring all waste is transported to approved disposal sites.

3. **Prevention of Waterway Pollution:**
   Prevent hazardous and contaminated materials and fire-related pollutants like ash, silt, or toxic materials from entering watercourses by deploying silt barriers, such as straw bales, silt fences, or coir logs.

4. **Erosion Control During Debris Removal:**
   Place temporary erosion control measures (e.g., sediment barriers or coir rolls) during debris clearing to stabilize the site and minimize sediment flow. Avoid using erosion control materials with monofilament that could snag wildlife.

5. **Post-Debris Removal Slope Stabilization:**
After removing debris, stabilize disturbed slopes using natural biodegradable materials or clean, angular rocks to prevent further erosion and to persist during and after rain events.

6. **Cleanup from Water-Adjacent Zones:**
Use watertight coffer dams or barriers to isolate water channels during debris removal near streams or lakes, ensuring contaminants are not washed downstream.

7. **Revegetation and Restoration:**
Prior to replanting or reseeding, till area to at least one inch deep. Use native seed and plants, short-lived or sterile non-natives, and avoid using invasive exotic plant species for revegetation.

8. **Fish and Wildlife Protection Measures:**
If wildlife is stranded, relocate wildlife away from hazards immediately outside the work area. If wildlife is in a waterway, relocate it downstream within the same water body as it was found.

9. **Water Drafting and In-Water Work:**
Conduct water drafting operations so as not to dewater a watercourse. Water truck operators should be aware of current flow conditions as to not potentially dewater downstream reaches from drafting work. Water drafting should not occur if there is not adequate flow. Intakes on water drafting should be adequately screened to avoid uptake of aquatic wildlife.

10. **Watercourse Crossing and Bank Stabilization:**
When feasible, install and remove temporary watercourse crossings. Use existing or temporary watercourse crossings, clearly marked with signage or flagging, and implement sediment and erosion control methods to minimize impacts within the watercourse. Use erosion control measures to stabilize the approaches and banks of the watercourse.