

# Animal Remains and Carcass Disposal

## Fact Sheet

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Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Environmental Health  
Solid Waste Program

Proper disposal of dead animals and animal remains is important to prevent the transmission of disease and to protect the environment. This includes remains of livestock, poultry, game animals, wildlife, pets, and other animals.

### Most Common Disposal Options

#### Disposal in a Landfill

Animal remains may be disposed in a permitted landfill. Contact your local landfill about specific requirements for disposal of all euthanized animals. When you arrive at the landfill or transfer station be sure to notify them that you are disposing of a euthanized animal. Euthanized animals may require special handling to prevent accidental exposure or poisoning to wildlife who may come in contact due to the euthanasia drug.

#### Burial

It may be possible to bury animal remains on private land. The following requirements must be met:

- Check with local authorities to ensure burial of the animal does not violate local ordinances.
- Ensure that ground water is at least 10 feet below ground surface.
- Obtain permission from the landowner.
- Ensure that the burial site is at least 100 feet from any drinking water well, stream, lake, or other water body.
- Cover the remains with lime before burying, particularly when needed to control odors.
- Cover the remains immediately with at least 2 feet of soil.

#### Cremation or Incineration

Animal remains may be cremated or incinerated and the ashes disposed in a permitted landfill.

#### Livestock with Infectious Diseases

Dead livestock that may have infectious or contagious diseases must be disposed under the guidance and authorization of the State Veterinarian. If you have any questions, contact your local veterinarian or call the Office of the State Veterinarian at 907-375-8215.

Wildlife carcasses with possible infections or contagious diseases must be disposed under guidance from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

#### Resources

- ADEC State Veterinarian - <http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/vet/>
- AK Fish and Game Parasites and Diseases - <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=disease.specieslist>

## Dead Bird Disposal

If there are more than 5 wild birds found dead with no obvious cause, such as a power line or building, it should be reported to the Alaska Sick and Dead Bird Hotline at 866-527-3358. For your safety, you should not handle sick or dead wild birds.

Any domestic bird that has died of unknown causes should be handled carefully to prevent the spread of disease. You can contact your local veterinarian regarding domestic pet birds or poultry; and for poultry concern you can also contact the State Veterinarian at 907-375-8215.

## Safety Precautions

1. Do not touch a dead bird with your bare hands!
  - ✓ Use disposable, protective gloves or put your hand inside a plastic bag when handling a dead bird.
  - ✓ Turn the bag or gloves inside out as you remove them to avoid contamination.
  - ✓ Contaminated gloves or bags should be sealed inside a clean plastic bag, and disposed with other household garbage or buried.
2. After handling the bird wash your hands thoroughly with soap.
3. Disinfect any surfaces or objects that are likely to be contaminated.
4. Clothing that may have contacted the bird should be washed immediately.

## Disposal Options

### Household Garbage

1. Place the dead bird in a plastic bag and seal the bag.
2. Put the bag containing the dead bird into a second plastic bag.
3. Place the bag in the trash can or dumpster with your normal household garbage.

### Burial

1. Ensure that groundwater is at least 10 feet below ground surface.
2. Dig a hole at least two feet deep.
3. Holding the bag (using gloves or another plastic bag) by the corners of the closed end, let the carcass fall out of the bag into the hole.
4. Cover the carcass with dirt and fill the hole.
5. Place the used bag and gloves (or other hand protection) inside a clean plastic bag and seal it. This may be disposed with other household garbage.

## Resource

US Fish and Wildlife Service Avian Health and Disease - <http://www.fws.gov/alaska/pages/migratory-birds/avian-health-and-disease-program>