



North Valley Animal Disaster Group Standard Operating Guidelines

Title: CARCASS DISPOSAL

Objective: Safe and respectful protocols for the removal of dead animals

Description:

As dead animals decompose, bacteria that are normally contained within the animal's body can be released, exposing people to potential disease-causing pathogens. Scavengers and rodents may be attracted to the carcasses, so it is important to remove the carcass as soon as possible. Rats in particular may carry some diseases of concern. The risk to people from animal carcasses is low if proper precautions are taken.

In an evacuation event, finding the carcass may provide “closure” for the owners. If an owner can be found, they may want to deal with their pet remains (cremation/burial where allowable).

General Notes:

- Volunteers will receive direction during briefing whether they are picking up carcass or not.
- Proper hand washing can prevent infection with certain pathogens that may be transmitted from animals, including *Salmonella* and *E. coli*.
- Secure all food sources and remove any animal carcasses to avoid attracting rats and other scavenging animals.
- Wear insect repellent when outdoors. Emergencies such as natural disasters may lead to more mosquitoes, which can carry disease.

Identification of body

- Note any signs of identifiable markings or collars/tags if visible, color of animal, species, breed if recognizable
- If carcass is in a “presentable” shape, photograph the body for possible owner identification if needed
- Scan the body for microchip if scanner available
- Write precise details of where found—address, description of location on property, inside structural remains/outside etc.

Carcass Handling

- Avoid direct contact with any dead animal
- Wear gloves and use a shovel when possible while removing carcass
- Cover your gloved hand with a plastic bag, pick up the remains, then invert the plastic bag over the remains and seal the bag
- Alternatively, use a shovel to place remains inside a plastic trash bag- rinse shovel with water
- Avoid splashing contaminated water and animal body fluids into your eyes, mouth, or nose
- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after removing the carcass and after handling any debris in clean-up activities
- Place bagged remains in designated freezer where available- scan carcass with a microchip scanner if not done in the field
- Label bag with designated tags or tape attached to bag with as much detail as possible including owners name and phone number if known, address where found, date found, description of animal if recognizable
- Paperwork should be filled out to indicate carcass information (including all information on the tag) and current location of freezer used. A binder may be available to list the carcass information

People working to clean up areas containing swine or poultry carcasses should take the following precautions:

- Wear protective clothing, including waterproof gloves, waterproof boots, and protective eyewear (cover any open wounds)
- Use duct tape to seal tops of gloves and boots to prevent water seepage
- Wear respiratory protection—an N-95 respirator or better
- If you smell hydrogen sulfide (a rotten egg smell), get out of the area and report the location
- Clean and disinfect all clothing and boots after handling carcass-contaminated materials
- Wash work clothes separately from street clothes
- Wash hands thoroughly before placing fingers in mouth (nail biting, etc.)
- Shower and wash hair thoroughly after handling carcass-contaminated materials

For large animals (such as cattle, horses, sheep, goats, and swine), the procedure will be determined by the nature of the disaster. In general, NVADG would not be disposing of large animal carcasses, but directing owners to contact other providers to pick up the body. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) can provide technical advice and assistance on the effective disposal of animal carcasses in natural disaster situations.

Adapted from:

CDC: National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)

Related Documents Attached: n/a

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Author: Dr Nancy Reese, DVM