

Benton-Franklin Health District



Fact Sheet

Proper Disposal of Dead Animals.

The following information pertaining to the proper disposal of dead animals is guided by Washington Administrative Code 246-203-121(2).

Who is responsible for removal and disposal of a dead animal?

It is the responsibility of the owner of any dead animal to properly remove and dispose of the animal. If the owner of the animal is unknown, the responsibility lies with the owner of the property upon which the animal was found.

How can I properly dispose of a dead animal?

Dead animals must be removed and properly disposed of within 24 hours after death. If the animal is buried, it must be placed so that every part is covered by at least three (3) feet of earth and at a location more than 100 feet from any well, spring, cistern, stream, or other surface waters, and in a place not subject to overflow. This includes not disposing of the animal in any lake, river, stream or other surface waters. There must also be at least three feet of soil underneath the animal to keep it separated from groundwater. Therefore, if you live in an area of high groundwater, find an alternative way to dispose of the animal. If you choose to bury an animal that died of a communicable disease, the carcass must first be covered in a caustic material. Covering with a caustic material can be as simple as sprinkling the carcass with a bag of lime before burial.

Other proper methods of disposal include rendering (consult your local yellow pages) and incineration (like cremation). Rendering is the preferred method of disposal for large animals (cows, horses, etc.). You may wish to check with your local refuse collector to find out if they accept dead animals carcasses. Usually dead animals are only accepted at landfills during emergency situations.

How can I protect myself when disposing of a dead animal?

Never touch a dead animal with your bare hands! You especially want to protect yourself if the animal died from a communicable disease. Since you may not know how the animal died, always wear gloves and a face mask for personal protection. After disposing of the animal, be sure to WASH YOUR HANDS thoroughly with lots of soap and warm water.

What do I do if I hit an animal or find a dead animal on county or city property?

If you hit a small domestic animal and cannot find its owner, contact local animal control. At this time animal control within the Tri-Cities can be contacted at 545-3740.

If you hit a large animal (ie: cow, deer), call the police. The police can see to the proper disposal of the animal.

If you find a dead animal on city or county property, try to contact someone at the city or county who can see that the animal is properly disposed of. If you cannot reach anyone for proper disposal, contact the Benton-Franklin Health Department and we will contact the responsible party.

If you need more information, contact the Environmental Health Division at 509.460.4205.