

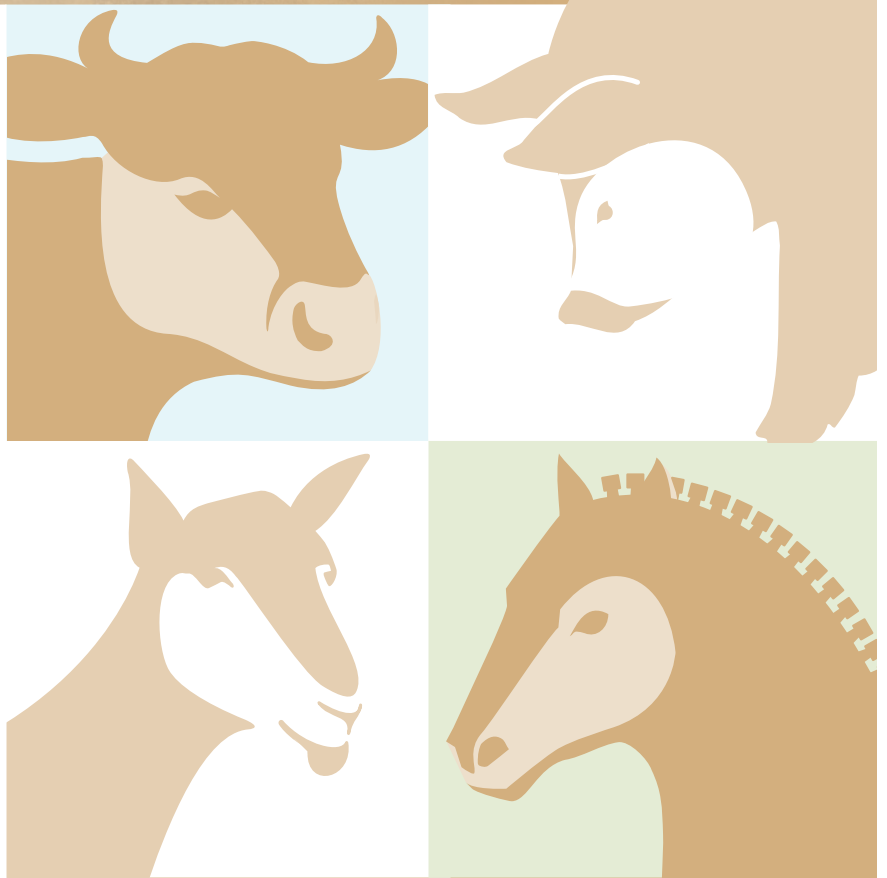
# Disposal of Livestock Carcasses

This document is a summary of suggested guidelines from TCEQ and the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) for disposal of farm or ranch animals. It does not explain requirements that apply to veterinarians, commercial poultry operations, or exotic livestock or fowl operations. For rules that apply to veterinarians disposing of carcasses, refer to Title 30, Texas Administrative Code (30 TAC), Section 111.209(3).

For information about the disposal of carcasses from commercial poultry operations, see TCEQ publication RG-326, *Handling and Disposal of Carcasses from Poultry Operations*. For additional information about the disposal of exotic livestock or fowl, see Title 4, Texas Administrative Code (4 TAC), Section 59.12.

By planning in advance how you will dispose of carcasses, your facility will be better prepared to deal with environmental and health issues. Emergency cases may be handled differently. Contact your [regional TCEQ office](#) in the event of an emergency.

This guide identifies the requirements for the disposal of animal carcasses; it does not supersede or replace any state or federal law, regulation, or rule. It is the responsibility of the owner to know the guidelines and regulations and to remain abreast of changes. Please refer to “References” and “Recommended Resources” for more specific information.



TEXAS COMMISSION ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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## Why is disposal of carcasses regulated?

Disposal of dead animals on your property should always be carried out in a manner that protects public health and safety, does not create a nuisance, prevents the spread of disease, and prevents adverse effects on water quality.

## Who is responsible for making sure the carcasses are properly disposed of?

The owner or operator of the property, farm, or facility is responsible for disposal in a timely and sanitary manner. 30 TAC Section 335.4 prohibits the collection, handling, storage, processing, or disposal of solid waste so as to cause:

- discharges into or adjacent to water in the state
- the creation or maintenance of nuisance conditions; or
- the endangerment of public health and welfare.

## How soon must carcasses be disposed of?

4 TAC Section 59.12 requires that animals that die from a disease recognized as communicable by the veterinary profession must be disposed of within 24 hours by burial or burning. Animals dying from anthrax or ornithosis must be killed, then burned on-site within 24 hours.

Non-diseased carcasses must be collected within 24 hours of death and properly disposed of within three days of death, per Texas Water Code, Section 26.303; Texas Agriculture Code, Section 161.004; Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 361.090; and 30 TAC Sections 335.4–335.6, unless otherwise provided for by TCEQ.

## How can I dispose of the carcasses?

There are several options including on-site burial, composting, or sending the carcass to a municipal solid waste landfill, renderer, or commercial waste incinerator. Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR), Subsection 122.42(e)(1)(ii) prohibits disposal in a liquid manure, storm water, or process wastewater storage or treatment system that is not specifically designed to treat animal mortalities.

Disposal of diseased animals must be conducted in accordance with Texas Agriculture Code Section 161.004 and 4 TAC Sections 31.3 (specific to anthrax), 58.31(b), and 59.12. Also see the section **Who is responsible**.

## Landfilling Carcasses

One of the preferred ways to dispose of animal carcasses is as special waste in a landfill that is authorized to accept

them. In legal terms this would be at a Type I or Type IAE landfill, as long as the disposal is in accordance with 30 TAC Subsection 330.171(c)(2).

## Onsite Burial

### *Where and how can I bury the carcasses?*

If you decide to bury carcasses on your property, we recommend using the following guidelines for carcass burial based on TCEQ rules for the disposal of household garbage, sludge, and wastewater:

- Locate the site at least 50ft from the nearest public well, 150ft from the nearest private well, and located outside the 100-year floodplain.
- Locate the site at least 50ft from the nearest creek, stream, pond, lake, or river.
- Make sure the site is at least 50ft from adjacent property lines; 200 feet or more is recommended.
- The burial site should be in soil that will retain the carcasses and their decomposition by-products within the excavation. High permeability soils such as sand or gravel may not be suitable for carcass burial without first lining the burial pit.
- Bury carcasses at least 3 feet below the natural surface of the ground and cover with at least 3 feet of earthen material.
- Construct the burial pit in a manner to minimize the risk of caving in.
- Cover carcasses as soon as practicable after placing in the pit, ideally the same day.
- Note the location of the burial site by recording the GPS coordinates or the location of the pit based on metes and bounds of the property.

### *What should I do before I dig?*

Before selecting a burial site, be sure to know the location of any utility lines. If you do not know the location of utility lines, call 811 from any phone in Texas.

If disposing of 10 or more carcasses, it is recommended that you call the TCEQ regional office that serves your county and ask for guidance.

### **CALL BEFORE YOU DIG**

Call **811** or visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com) to make sure you will not accidentally hit a gas or utility line on your property when digging a hole to bury animal carcasses.



## Burning Carcasses

TCEQ and TAHC rules allow animals to be burned when burning is the most effective means to control the spread of a communicable disease. The animal must be burned until the carcass is thoroughly consumed. Some diseases are reportable, and you are required to contact the TAHC at 800-550-8242 before disposing of animals with these diseases. The TAHC can also supply a list of reportable animal diseases.

### *Where can I burn the carcasses?*

The Outdoor Burning Rule (30 TAC Section 111.201–111.221) first prohibits outdoor burning anywhere in Texas; however, it allows exceptions for specific situations in which burning is necessary or does not pose a threat to the environment. The rule also prescribes conditions that must be met to protect the environment and avoid other adverse impacts when burning is allowed. (30 TAC Section 111.219)

If burning seems necessary, but the situation does not fit an exception stated in the rule, it is possible to request a special authorization from TCEQ to conduct burning, as long as it does not create a nuisance or traffic hazard. (30 TAC Section 111.215) To request such an authorization please contact your local TCEQ regional office.

### *What are the suggested setbacks for burning?*

- Adjacent properties: Downwind of, or at least 300 feet (90 meters) from occupied structures.
- Weather conditions: If possible, burn during the day when the wind speed is more than 6 or less than 23 mph. Monitor the fire and complete the burn the same day.

## Who should I notify?

Notify TCEQ by letter<sup>1</sup> if you expect to burn or bury animal carcasses on your property.<sup>2</sup> Include your full name and address, the type of animals, and a short description of each location where the carcasses will be burned or buried. Include information on the anticipated capacity of the areas as well as the daily and final application of cover material, and a map showing the

<sup>1</sup>This letter will be considered as your compliance with 30 TAC Section 335.6 and will be acknowledged by TCEQ

<sup>2</sup>If your facility has a certified water quality management plan under Texas Agriculture Code, Section 201.026(f), you are not required to notify us.

general location of the area. Mail your notification letter to the address below.

Once you notify us, do not send additional letters. However, if more than 10 animals die at one time, and you plan to dispose of them on-site, contact the TCEQ regional office nearest you. Multiple mortalities are handled on a case-by-case basis. If the burn or burial location changes, or if you add more areas after initially notifying us, you must submit an updated notification letter to TCEQ.

**Send notification for on-site burning or burial of carcasses to:**

**Industrial and Hazardous Waste Permits Section, MC-130  
TCEQ  
PO Box 13087  
Austin TX 78711-3087**

**Phone: 512-239-2335 • Fax: 512-239-2007**



## References

Find the sections that govern these requirements in [30 TAC rules](#):

**Disposal of industrial waste** – 30 TAC Sections 335.4 and 335.6.

**Outdoor burning of animal carcasses** – 30 TAC Subsection 111.209(2), “Exception for Disposal Fires.”

**Poultry disposal** – 30 TAC Section 335.25, “Handling, Storing, Processing, Transporting, and Disposing of Poultry Carcasses.”

**Outdoor burning for veterinarians** – 30 TAC 111.209(3).

**Concentrated animal feeding operations and CAFO-related air nuisance rules** – 30 TAC Chapter 321, Subchapter B; and 30 TAC 321.31(b).

**Composting operations** – 30 TAC Chapter 332.

**Municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills** – 30 TAC Chapter 330.

**Air nuisance** – 30 TAC Section 101.4.

## Additional References

**Public-health rules** – [Texas Health and Safety Code](#), Sections 81.081–81.0955.

**Texas Animal Health Commission** – [Title 4 Texas Administrative Code, Part 2](#). Find rules and publications at [Texas Animal Health Commission](#).

TCEQ regional offices – [TCEQ Region Directory](#).



## Recommended Resources

[TCEQ publication RG-326 How to Dispose of Carcasses from Poultry Operations](#) (Explains carcass-disposal rules and options for anyone who hatches, raises, or keeps chickens or ducks for profit).

[Catastrophic Animal Mortality Management \(Burial Method\) Technical Guidance](#) (pdf) (USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service/Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board).

[Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Practice Standards, Code 316, Animal Mortality Management](#) (pdf) (United States Department of Agriculture).

[Trenching and Excavation Safety](#) (pdf) (Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA]).

[Texas Water Code, Section 26.302, Regulation of Poultry Facilities.](#)

[Texas Agriculture Code, Section 201.026, Nonpoint Source Pollution.](#)

[Texas Occupations Code, Section 801.361, Disposal of Animal Remains.](#)

[Disaster-Related Carcass Disposal](#) (pdf) (Texas Animal Health Commission).

[Anthrax](#) (pdf) (Texas Animal Health Commission).

[FEMA Public Assistance for Animal Carcass Removal and Disposal](#) (pdf) (Federal Emergency Management Agency).

[TCEQ publication RG-049 Outdoor Burning](#) (pdf).



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