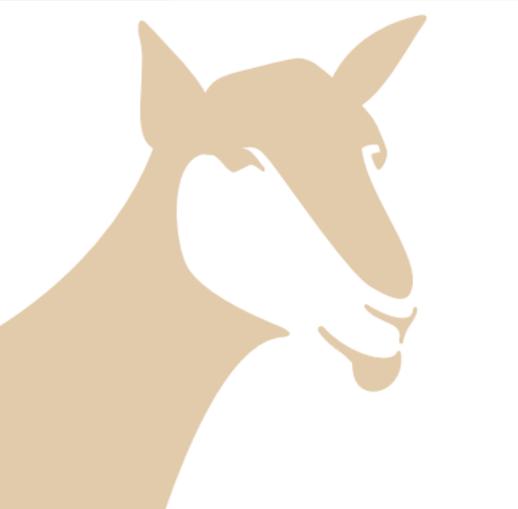


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# Disposal of Livestock Carcasses



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his document is a summary of suggested guidelines from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) for disposal of farm or ranch animals. This document does not explain requirements that apply to veterinarians, commercial poultry operations or exotic waterfowl operations. 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 rules that apply to veterinarians disposing of carcasses, refer to Title 30, Texas Administrative Code (30 TAC), Section 111.209(3). 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, <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/regions](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/regions)>, in the event of an emergency. This document is a guide to identifying 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 “Additional References” and “Recommended References” for more specific information.

## **Why is disposal of carcasses regulated?**

Disposal of dead animals on a farm 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 farm or facility is responsible for disposal in a timely and sanitary manner. Title 30, Texas Administrative Code, Section 335.4 (30 TAC 335.4), prohibits:

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

## **How soon must carcasses be disposed of?**

TAHC rules require 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 in accordance with Texas Water Code Section 26.0405; Texas Health and Safety Code Section 361.090; and 30 TAC 335.4–335.6, unless otherwise provided for by the 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. Animals must not be disposed of in any liquid-manure or process-wastewater system.

TCEQ 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. The cover requirements described in 30 TAC 330.171(c)(2) should be adequate for burial of farm and ranch animals in most cases. 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.

Disposal of diseased animals must be conducted in a manner that prevents a public-health hazard in accordance with Texas Agriculture Code Section 161.004 and 4 TAC 31.3 (specific to anthrax), 58.31(b), and 59.12.

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

If you decide to bury the animal, the site should not be in an area with a shallow water table or with very permeable soil. The TCEQ suggests that animals be buried far enough from standing or flowing water or groundwater to prevent contamination of those waters, and in an area not likely to be disturbed in the near future.

### **Suggested Setbacks for Burial**

- Drinking-water wells: at least 300 feet from the nearest well

- Surface water: at least 300 feet from the nearest creek, stream, pond, lake, or river, and not in a floodplain
- Neighbors: at least 200 feet from adjacent property lines
- Depth of burial: at least 3 feet below the natural surface of the ground, with at least 3 feet of earthen material (soil) over the carcass

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

The Outdoor Burning Rule (30 TAC 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. If burning seems necessary, but the situation does not fit an exception stated in the rule, then it is possible to request a special authorization to conduct burning from the TCEQ. To request a special authorization to conduct burning, please contact your local TCEQ regional office.

Do not burn in an area where a nuisance or traffic hazard would be created.

### **Suggested TCEQ 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.

## **Notification Requirements**

Notify the TCEQ by letter if you expect to bury animal carcasses on your farm. Your letter should

contain your full name and address, the type of animals, and a short description of each location on your farm where the carcasses will be buried. Include information on the anticipated capacity of the burial areas as well as the daily and final application of cover material, and a map showing the general location of the area would be useful. This letter will be considered as your compliance with 30 TAC 335.6 and will be acknowledged by the TCEQ. Mail your notification to the address listed under “Additional References” below.

Once you notify us, do not send additional letters. However, if you have more than 10 animals die at one time, it is recommended that you contact the TCEQ regional office nearest you, since multiple mortalities are handled case by case. If the location of burial changes, or if you use additional areas for burial, then you must submit an updated Section 335.6 notification to the TCEQ.

## Additional References

**Rules regarding carcass disposal:** Rules that are directly related to carcass disposal are in 30 TAC Chapters 335 and 111, including Sections 335.4–335.5, which deal with general requirements for waste disposal, and Subsection 111.209(2), “Exception for Disposal Fires.”

[http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=T&app=9&p\\_dir=P&p\\_rloc=93868&p\\_tloc=&p\\_ploc=1&pg=2&p\\_tac=&ti=30&pt=1&ch=335&rl=5](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=T&app=9&p_dir=P&p_rloc=93868&p_tloc=&p_ploc=1&pg=2&p_tac=&ti=30&pt=1&ch=335&rl=5)

[http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=T&app=9&p\\_dir=N&p\\_rloc=90272&p\\_tloc=&p\\_ploc=1&pg=3&p\\_tac=&ti=30&pt=1&ch=335&rl=5](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=T&app=9&p_dir=N&p_rloc=90272&p_tloc=&p_ploc=1&pg=3&p_tac=&ti=30&pt=1&ch=335&rl=5)

**Rules for poultry disposal:** 30 TAC 335.6, “Notification Requirements,” and especially

Section 335.25, “Handling, Storing, Processing, Transporting, and Disposing of Poultry Carcasses”

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**Disposal rules that apply to veterinarians:** 30 TAC 111.209(3)

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**Water-quality rules for concentrated animal feeding operations:**

30 TAC Chapter 321, Subchapter B

- For composting operations: 30 TAC Chapter 332
- For municipal solid waste (landfills): 30 TAC Chapter 330

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**Nuisance rules, general rules:** 30 TAC 101 Subchapter H, Division 4, and CAFO rules: 30 TAC 321.31

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**Public-health rules:** Texas Health and Safety Code, Sections 81.081–81.086

<[www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/HS/htm/HS.81.htm#81.081](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/HS/htm/HS.81.htm#81.081)>

**Texas Animal Health Commission:**

Texas Agriculture Code, Chapters 161 to 168. Call 800-550-8242 before disposing of diseased animals. The TAHC also can provide a list of reportable animal diseases.

<[www.tahc.state.tx.us/regs/code.html](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/regs/code.html)>

**Notification for on-site burial of carcasses:**

Industrial and Hazardous Waste Permits  
Section, MC-130  
TCEQ  
PO Box 13087  
Austin TX 78711-3087  
phone: 512-239-2335  
fax: 512/239-2007

Contact your TCEQ regional office if you have more than 10 animals die at one time and you plan to dispose of them on-site.

**TCEQ regional offices:**

<[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/regions](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/regions)>

**TAHC rules:** Rules and publications are available at <[www.tahc.state.tx.us](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us)>

## Recommended References

**How to Dispose of Carcasses from Poultry Operations** (TCEQ publication RG-326) 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, USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service–Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, 2002:

<[tammi.tamu.edu/burialguidance.pdf](http://tammi.tamu.edu/burialguidance.pdf)>

**NRCS TX Conservation Practice Standards, Code 316—Animal Mortality Management**

<<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/TX/AnimalMortalityFacility316CPSJuly2012.pdf>>

**OSHA excavation rules:**

<[https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=STANDARDS&p\\_id=10930](https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10930)>

**Texas Water Code, Chapter 26, Subchapter H, Poultry Operations:**

<[www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/WA/htm/WA.26.htm#26.301](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/WA/htm/WA.26.htm#26.301)>

**Texas Water Code, Section 26.302, Regulation of Poultry Facilities:**

<[www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/WA/htm/WA.26.htm#26.302](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/WA/htm/WA.26.htm#26.302)>

**Texas Agriculture Code, Section 201.026, Nonpoint Source Pollution:**

<[www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/AG/htm/AG.201.htm#201.026](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/AG/htm/AG.201.htm#201.026)>

**Texas Occupations Code, Section 801.361, Disposal of Animal Remains:**

<[www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/OC/htm/OC.801.htm#801.361](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/OC/htm/OC.801.htm#801.361)>

**Texas Animal Health Commission, Disaster-Related Carcass Disposal:**

<[www.tahc.state.tx.us/emergency/CARP-CarcassDisposal.pdf](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/emergency/CARP-CarcassDisposal.pdf)>

**Texas Animal Health Commission, Anthrax**

<[www.tahc.state.tx.us/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure\\_Anthrax.pdf](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_Anthrax.pdf)>

**FEMA Recovery Fact Sheet 9580.206, Public Assistance for Animal Carcass Removal and Disposal**

<[www.tahc.state.tx.us/emergency/FEMAPublicAssistanceAnimalCarcassRemovalDisposal.pdf](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/emergency/FEMAPublicAssistanceAnimalCarcassRemovalDisposal.pdf)>

**TCEQ publication RG-049, Outdoor Burning:**

<[www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/rg/rg-049.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/rg/rg-049.html)>

**TCEQ publication RG-029, Special Waste Regulations in Texas:**

<[www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/rg/rg-029.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/rg/rg-029.html)>

## 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.

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