

## Conditional Exemptions

In certain conditions, exemptions to the approved disposal methods for dead animals apply. Conditional exemptions apply to carcasses of wild animals that were “road kill” or were taken under the authority of a damage and nuisance animal control permit, including:

- raccoons, opossums, porcupines or other small mammals
- wild deer or other wild cervidae
- birds

Conditional exemptions also apply to animals kept in secured, temporary cold or frozen storage.

## Temporary Cold Storage Options

Dead animals may be stored temporarily for up to seven days in secured, temporary cold storage at a maximum of 40 degrees Fahrenheit. If longer temporary storage is required, dead animals may be frozen and securely stored at 9 degrees Fahrenheit or below for a maximum of 30 days. At the end of the maximum storage period, carcasses must be disposed of in one of the approved methods listed in this brochure.

## Human and Animal Health and Environmental Protection

If the director of MDARD suspects that the disposition of animal carcasses or the residue from burning of a carcass would produce a toxicological contamination threat to human or animal health, or to the environment, the director may determine and require an alternative disposal method, at the owner’s expense.

## Violations

A person who violates the Bodies of Dead Animals Act or the rules promulgated under this act, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a minimum fine of \$300 or imprisonment for a minimum of 30 days, or both.

Three or more convictions for violating this act is a felony punishable by imprisonment for a maximum of one year or a fine of up to \$2,000, or both.

## For More Information

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Animal Industry Division  
P.O. Box 30017  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Ph: 1-800-292-3939 Fx: 517-373-6015  
[www.michigan.gov/mdard](http://www.michigan.gov/mdard)

For information on air use permits, contact the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Air Quality Division at 517-373-7023. For a list of landfills licensed to accept residues from burning animal carcasses, contact the MDEQ Environmental Assistance Division, at 517-373-9400.



## Proper Disposal of Animal Carcasses in Michigan

*An Industry Guide to the Bodies of Dead Animals Act*

[www.michigan.gov/mdard](http://www.michigan.gov/mdard)

## Proper Disposal of Animal Carcasses in Michigan

The Bodies of Dead Animals Act, Public Act 239 of 1982, as amended, establishes guidelines for the proper disposal of dead animals, to protect human, animal and environmental health. This brochure explains the proper methods for the safe and legal disposal of dead animals in Michigan. The information in this brochure refers to the disposal of dead animals that are not intended for human food.

### Approved Disposal Methods

In general, all dead animals must be disposed of within 24 hours after death. The following methods of disposal are allowed by law: burial, burning, composting or rendering. Alternatively, you can contact your local landfill to see if they accept dead animals.

### Burial of Animal Carcasses

Burial of animal carcasses is permitted under the following conditions:

- All body parts must be buried at least two feet beneath the natural surface of the ground, and in accordance with local ordinances.
- Animal carcasses may only be buried with the landowner's permission.
- Buried animal carcasses must not come in contact with the Great Lakes or any surface bodies of water (including inland lakes, streams, rivers, open drains), or groundwater.
- Animal graves must not be located within 200 feet of any existing groundwater well used to supply potable drinking water.

Animal carcasses may be buried in individual graves or common graves under the following conditions:

### Individual Graves

- No more than 100 individual graves per acre are allowed, with a total combined weight of no more than five tons per acre.
- Individual animal graves must be separated by a minimum of 2-1/2 feet.

### Common Graves

- The total animal carcass weight in a common grave cannot exceed 5,000 pounds per acre.
- If there is more than one common grave per acre, each common grave within that acre must be separated by a minimum of 100 feet.
- Animal carcasses in a common grave must be covered with at least one foot of soil within 24 hours of burial.
- A common grave cannot remain open for more than 30 days and must receive at least two feet of soil as final cover.

### Composting

For composting requirements, contact Dale Rozeboom, Ph.D. at 517-355-8398 or rozeboom@msu.edu, or to access the Composting Operational Standards at [www.michigan.gov/mdard](http://www.michigan.gov/mdard), click on "Disposal of Dead Animals" under the "Animal Health" tab.

### Exemptions

An owner may request an exemption to the total number of individual or common graves per acre or the total weight of carcasses in an individual or common grave. Exemptions may be granted by the director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) upon concurrence with the director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).

## Burning Animal Carcasses

Burning of animal carcasses is permitted under the following conditions:

- Burning must take place in a location that does not cause a public nuisance and in accordance with local ordinances and the Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (an air use permit from MDEQ may be required).
- Residues from the burning process must be buried as outlined in this brochure, land-applied at agronomic rates, or properly disposed of in a landfill licensed by the DEQ.

### Rendering

Rendering of animal carcasses is permitted under the following condition:

- Rendering services must be provided by a licensed dead animal dealer, rendering plant or animal food manufacturing plant.

NOTE: Under the Bodies of Dead Animals Act, a dead animal dealer procures and transports animal carcasses to or from a rendering facility. A rendering plant processes dead animals into products that are not allowed for human consumption, including tallow, meat scraps and cracklings. An animal food manufacturing plant produces animal or pet feed through the slaughtering, boning, grinding, cooking, canning or freezing of dead animals.

For a list of licensed renderers, go to [www.michigan.gov/rendering](http://www.michigan.gov/rendering) and click on "Directory of Licensed Transporting and Disposal of Dead Animal Dealers"