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**Iowa Deceased Animal Care Fact Sheet**

Proper handling and disposal of deceased animals is a critical responsibility for owners. This is particularly true when the animal has been euthanized with a drug containing pentobarbital sodium (“euthanasia solution”) due to potential environmental damage as well as unintentional poisoning of wildlife and/or other animals. In addition to the Iowa regulations outlined herein, it is important to note that several Federal statutes such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act may be violated as a result of improper deceased animal management. The following information is unofficial guidance that applies to deceased animal disposal for Iowa residents. If you intend to take a deceased animal to a state outside of Iowa for disposal, refer to that state’s rules and regulations.

By law, it is the responsibility of the person who has been caring for an animal that has died to properly dispose of the carcass within a reasonable amount of time (Iowa Code 167.18). In the state of Iowa, the options for animal disposal are limited to *burial*, *composting*, *incineration,* and *rendering*. It is strictly forbidden to dump a carcass into a body of water or near any stream/drain tile (IDALS 61.32(167)). Failure to properly dispose of an animal carcass can result in simple misdemeanor charges and potentially a civil penalty of up to $1,000 for each violation (Penalty Iowa Code 167.19).

**BURIAL:**

***LOCATION REQUIREMENTS***

Animal carcasses must be buried on the premises on which the animal lived or be hauled to a participating landfill.

The location of the pit must meet the following requirements according to IAC 567-100.4 c.

* 100 feet from a private well
* 200 feet from a public well
* 50 feet from a property line
* 500 feet from a residence
* 100 feet from a stream, lake, or pond
* 2 feet above the highest groundwater elevation
* Cannot be located in a wetland, flood plain or shoreline area

The pit must be dug in an area with well-draining soil (IAC 567-100.4(2)).

***HELPFUL RESOURCES***

Iowa DNR Burial Mapping: [https://programs.iowadnr.gov/maps//afo/burial.html](https://programs.iowadnr.gov/maps/afo/burial.html)

***STEPS***

1. Following the death or euthanasia of an animal that will be buried, call 811 and allow 48 hours prior to digging the pit. This is to ensure no underground utility lines are disturbed. (IA Code 480)
2. When the location is found acceptable, the pit may be dug to a maximum of 6 feet deep (IAC 567-100.4 a).
3. The **maximum** number of animal carcasses allowed to be buried per acre per year according to IAC 567-100.4 (2) b are
4. 7 cattle
5. 44 swine
6. 73 sheep/lambs
7. 400 poultry carcasses
8. 2 carcasses for all other species
9. Unlimited for animals less than 2 months old at time of death
10. A single pit may be used until it reaches its maximum number of carcasses per species as long as each new carcass is covered by 30 inches of soil.

**COMPOSTING:**

Carcass incorporation into a compost pile must be done within 24 hours of the death of the animal (IAC 105.6(6)).

***LOCATION REQUIREMENTS***

The location of the compost pile must meet the follow requirements according to (IAC 105.3(1))

* 100 feet from a private well
* 200 feet from a public well
* 50 feet from a property line
* 500 feet from a residence
* 100 feet from a stream, lake, or pond

On an all-weather surface such as compacted soil, gravel, or pavement (IAC 105.3(5)).

***STEPS***

1. It is highly recommended to contact the regional DNR office prior to starting the composting process.
2. Form a base layer of carbon source 12-24 inches thick depending on the size of the carcass (IAC 105.6(6)).
3. Once the carcass is placed on the base layer, it should be covered and maintained at 12 inches of cover material (IAC 105.6(6)).
4. If more than one carcass is being composted in the same pile, 6-12 inches of cover should be in between each carcass (IAC 105.6(6)).

***COMPOSTING RESOURCES***

CFSPH Composting Handout: <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Emergency-Response/Just-in-Time/11-Carcass-Disposal_Composting_PPT-6slide-HANDOUT.pdf>

Iowa DNR Composting Rules: <https://www.iowapork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/140709-IPPA-composting-rule-handout-for-Regional-Seminars.pdf>

Composting Horse Mortality video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXJ30jXUx_I>

**INCINERATION:**

Burning carcasses with an open flame is illegal in the state of Iowa. Burning is only allowed using an engineered incinerator.

Cremation or incineration is a more expensive option for disposal. There are two cremation businesses in Iowa that may serve large and small animals:

Ashes to Ashes Pet Cremation: <https://www.iowapetcremation.com/>

Loving Rest Pet Funeral Home:

<https://www.lovingrest.com/>

**RENDERING:**

Rendering may be available for some species using certain euthanasia methods.

Rendering services may not be available for equine carcasses due to pentobarbital usage for euthanasia.

**Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Office:**

* <https://www.iowaagriculture.gov/>
* *515-281-5321*

**Iowa DNR Field Offices**

* Manchester (563-927-2640),
* Mason City (641-424-4073),
* Spencer (712-262-4177),
* Atlantic (712-243-1934),
* Windsor Heights (DSM) (515-725-0268), and
* Washington (319-653-2135)

**Resources**

Iowa Chapter 61  
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/iac/chapter/10-08-2008.21.61.pdf>

Iowa Chapter 100 <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/ACO/chapter/567.100.pdf>

Iowa Chapter 105 <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/ACO/chapter/567.105.pdf>

Iowa Chapter 167 <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/ico/chapter/167.pdf>

Iowa Chapter 408 <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/DOCS/ACO/IC/LINC/Chapter.480.pdf>