



United States Department of Agriculture

Checklist for Safe Disposal of Dead Birds

It's an inevitable but unfortunate reality: you will deal with deaths in your flock. The best way to dispose of the birds depends on the size of your flock, the type of poultry you raise, and where you are located. You need to know what's allowed in your area (rules vary by State) and how to handle disposal safely. This is a key part of good biosecurity. By planning ahead and using the right methods, you can lower the risk of bringing new germs or diseases onto your property and protect your flock from more losses.

If you see or suspect anything unusual, call your flock supervisor, veterinarian, or cooperative extension office right away. Use this form to record phone numbers for contacts in your area. The earlier you act, the easier it is to contain the disease to a single flock.



Check the list on the back for tips to help keep your flocks healthy.



Report Sick or Dead Birds

If you see large numbers of dead or dying birds in your flock or other signs of illness, take action right away!

Veterinarian

Cooperative Extension Office

State Veterinarian/Animal or Poultry Diagnostic Lab

USDA

Phone Number

866.536.7593



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service



✓ Checklist: Tips for Safe Disposal of Dead Birds

This checklist is a general guide to practicing good biosecurity, but if you have a site-specific biosecurity plan, please follow it. Commercial growers should be sure their site-specific plans follow the National Poultry Improvement Plan biosecurity principles.

- ☐ **Plan ahead!** Include procedures for carcass disposal in your biosecurity plan. You'll need routine procedures for all dead birds using normal mortality numbers, along with a contingency plan for a large number of deaths.
- ☐ **Store or dispose of carcasses in a way that does not attract wild birds, rodents, insects, or other animals.** Collection bins should have tight-fitting lids, and burial pits or compost piles should be covered adequately to deter burrowing scavengers.
- ☐ **Make sure your procedures cover these basics:**
 - Disposal methods follow all local, State, and Federal laws.
 - If using a pickup service, describe how the dead birds are moved to the pickup location and show that the vehicles/equipment at the pickup location never cross the perimeter buffer area.
 - Draw carcass movements on the site map, or explain them in some other clear way.
- ☐ **Avoid cross contamination from equipment and vehicles.** Clean and disinfect them before and after leaving the farm. Don't use the same equipment and vehicles for feeding chores, manure and carcass handling, and animal handling, unless you clean and disinfect them before using for a different task.
- ☐ **Visit disposal sites at the end of the day** to avoid carrying contaminants from farm to farm.
- ☐ **Collect all bird carcasses as soon as possible,** at least once every day.

Disposal methods

Disposal methods may include composting, incineration, burial, or rendering. For most sites and flocks of all sizes, onsite disposal is more biosecure than taking carcasses offsite.

For more information about how to keep your flocks healthy, follow **Defend the Flock** on **Facebook** and **Twitter** and visit www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/defendtheflock.

