

Carcass Disposal Recommendations

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) can be spread among deer by both direct contact between animals and exposure to environments contaminated with CWD prions, the protein that causes the disease. Exposure to an area where a CWD-positive carcass has decomposed could be enough to cause infection in deer. Because of this risk, it is important that the carcasses of deer possibly infected with CWD, including all bones and other waste from butchering, be disposed of in a way that protects uninfected deer from exposure. The following are practical recommendations for how hunters should dispose of deer-carcass waste.

1. The best option is disposing of the carcass remains in a landfill.

Landfills are a safe and cost-effective option for disposing of carcass waste potentially contaminated with CWD-causing prions. Research has shown that when properly disposed of in a landfill, prions are extremely unlikely to migrate from the landfill disposal site. For most people, disposal in a landfill would be accomplished either by taking that waste directly to the landfill or through their regular trash pick-up service.

2. The second best option is to bury the carcass waste.

Bury the carcass deep enough to prevent scavengers from digging it back up, generally at least 3 feet deep. This method effectively removes the waste from the open environment and, again, places a barrier between uninfected deer and the source of infection.

3. The third option is to dispose of the carcass waste on the landscape near where it was harvested.

The carcass waste should be disposed of as close to the area of harvest as possible. Persons using this option should, if possible, put the carcass waste in a location where other deer are less likely to encounter it. As a reminder, it is illegal to dispose of waste on any public lands or road right-of-ways. As in the rest of the state, field dressing a deer and leaving the gut pile on site on public or private land is still permitted. Although gut piles pose a risk of transmitting CWD, evidence indicates that the risk is minimal due to their short persistence time on the landscape due to high rates of scavenging.

We thank you for your help with the effort to prevent carcass waste from becoming a source for the spread of CWD. If you have any questions, please call the Spooner DNR CWD Biologist at (715) 635-4025.

