



DEER CARCASS DISPOSAL IN WISCONSIN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Many deer hunters have questions about proper handling of deer carcasses. Given statewide interest in managing the spread of chronic wasting disease, proper carcass disposal is more important than ever.

This document answers many frequently asked questions about deer waste and carcass disposal. On the back, you'll find more resources for further information.

ARE DEER CARCASSES SOLID WASTE?

Yes, according to Wisconsin statutes s. 289.01(33), deer carcasses are defined as solid waste.

CAN DEER CARCASSES BE DISPOSED OF IN A LANDFILL?

Yes, landfilling is the preferred option for carcass disposal.

WHAT IS ADOPT-A-DUMPSTER (AAD)?

The Adopt-a-Dumpster program works with volunteers to place [carcass disposal dumpsters](#) around the state during the fall deer seasons. These dumpsters are hauled to landfills, making appropriate carcass disposal available to hunters in areas where options may be very limited or unavailable. Contact your local wildlife biologist or deer biologist for further details on how to get involved with Adopt-a-Dumpster.

WHERE CAN I FIND A LOCATION TO ACCEPT MY DEER CARCASS?

A list of [licensed or approved facilities](#) that are

willing to accept deer carcasses can be found at on the DNR website. (See the More Information section on the back of this FAQ). Adopt-a-Dumpster locations are depicted on the map during the fall deer hunting season.

IF I BUTCHER MY DEER AT HOME, WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY LOCAL LANDFILL DOES NOT ACCEPT DEER CARCASSES?

The preferred option for carcass disposal is landfilling, for example through dedicated carcass disposal dumpsters or at a participating landfill. However, if that is not a reasonably available option, you may legally bury a single carcass on private property where the waste was generated with permission from the landowner. The carcass should be buried deep enough to prevent excavation by scavengers.

This method effectively removes the waste from the open environment and places a barrier between uninfected deer and a potential source of CWD transmission. Do not bury carcasses in wetlands or where they may cause a detrimental

effect to surface or ground water. (Burial is not available for large quantities of carcasses that would be generated by roadside pickup, butchering operations or taxidermists. It is only allowable for residential generated carcass waste.)

CAN I DISPOSE OF MY CARCASS IN THE FIELD?

While it is legal to leave a deer carcass in the field of harvest, landfilling is the preferred method of disposal. If landfilling is not available, either directly or through a dedicated dumpster, hunters may obtain landowner permission to dispose of deer carcasses on private property as close to the site of harvest as possible. Anyone using this option should also place the carcass waste in a location where other deer and scavengers are unlikely to encounter it.

ARE THERE RESTRICTIONS ON WHERE I CAN MOVE A DEER CARCASS?

Yes, because chronic wasting disease can be spread to deer through contact with deer carcasses, deer carcass movement is restricted, especially in CWD-affected areas.

Deer harvested in a CWD-affected area may only be transported to another county within the CWD-affected area or a county adjacent to the CWD-affected area. An exception is made if the carcass is being transported to a licensed meat processor or taxidermist. Deer heads may also be transported to any CWD sampling station within the state. See s. NR 10.105 for a full list of exceptions.

Deer carcasses are solid waste, and it is illegal to dispose of waste on any public lands or roadways as well as on private property without permission. (Field dressing a deer and leaving the gut pile and associated animal parts onsite on public or private land is permitted.)

CAN HUNTERS LEGALLY OBTAIN INEDIBLE DEER PARTS FROM LICENSED MEAT PROCESSORS AND TAXIDERMISTS FOR THEIR PERSONAL USE IN TRAPPING OR WILDLIFE WATCHING?

No, licensed meat processors and permitted taxidermists receiving deer carcasses must dispose of all inedible parts and all parts of the spinal column, brain and lymphoid tissues in a properly permitted landfill or with a licensed renderer in accordance with s. NR 10.105(7)(c), Wis. Adm. Code.

MORE INFORMATION

Find carcass disposal options near you:

dnr.wi.gov, search keyword "[carcass disposal](#)"

Find more information on CWD:

dnr.wi.gov, search keyword "[CWD](#)"

Further questions? Contact us:

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