



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

DISPOSAL OF DECEASED DOMESTIC ANIMALS

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The intent of this Guidance Document is to provide direction regarding the disposal of deceased domestic animals pursuant to Chapter 62-701.520(5), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), and Chapter 823.041, Florida Statutes (F.S.). This applies to the disposal of deceased animals due to disease, natural causes and euthanasia.

I. Rule 62-701.520(5), F.A.C.

Requirements Applicable to Disposal of Deceased Domestic Animals

5) Biological waste disposal.

(a) Disposal of bodies of domestic animals, upon the death of such animals due to disease, shall be accomplished pursuant to Section 823.041(1), F.S. This provision does not prohibit the disposal of such animals in Class I landfills.

(b) Disposal of dead poultry and hatchery residue shall be accomplished pursuant to Section 583.181(2), F.S.

(c) Bodies of captive wildlife, of fish or marine mammals, as well as bodies of domestic animals that have not died due to disease, may either be used, burned, disposed of in a Class I landfill, or disposed of on the property where they died, **or other properties approved of by the Department**, provided they are buried **at least two feet below the surface of the ground** and above the water table.

The above bolded sections of the rule require further guidance.

...or other properties approved of by the Department

This statement refers to burial at facilities such as Pet Cemeteries. Pet Cemeteries are not the property on which the animal dies, and may bury deceased animals with Department permission. The minimum requirements for burial at such facilities are:

- a. Receives Department permission,
- b. Buried at least two feet below the surface of the ground,
- c. (buried) above the water table.

For the burial of euthanized carcasses at such facilities, additional requirements should be considered due to the chemicals used. Additional requirements may be such things as groundwater monitoring, deeper depth of burial, reporting requirements, etc. and should be determined on a case by case basis.

At least two feet below ground surface

For the burial of animal carcasses in a Class I landfill, including euthanized animals, 'below ground surface' refers to below the current filled elevation of the landfill at the time of disposal. Interpreting 'below ground surface' literally for disposal in a landfill is not practicable nor logical. Furthermore, 'at least two feet below' is deemed applicable to burial in a Class I landfill within disposed waste; burial beneath daily cover of 6-inches is not sufficient. Two feet of compacted cover consisting of soil or waste shall be immediately placed over the disposed animal carcasses.

II. Chapter 823.041, Florida Statute

Requirements Applicable to Disposal of Deceased Domestic Animals

(1) Any owner, custodian, or person in charge of domestic animals, upon the death of such animals due to disease, shall dispose of the carcasses of such animals by burning or burying at least 2 feet below the surface of the ground; provided, however, nothing in this section shall prohibit the disposal of such animal carcasses to rendering companies licensed to do business in this state.

(2) It is unlawful to dispose of the carcass of any domestic animal by dumping such carcass on any public road or right-of-way, or in any place where such carcass can be devoured by beast or bird.

(3) Any person violating any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(4) For the purposes of this act, the words "domestic animal" shall include any equine or bovine animal, goat, sheep, swine, dog, cat, poultry, or other domesticated beast or bird.

III. Disposal Options for Deceased Domestic Animals Due to Disease

There are two options for disposal of deceased animals due to disease, as follows:

- Pursuant to Chapter 823.041, F.S., any owner, custodian or person in charge of domestic animals which die due to disease, may dispose of the dead animals on the property where they die provided they are buried at least two feet below the ground surface and above the water table.
- Pursuant to Chapter 62-701.520(5)(a), F.A.C., any owner, custodian or person in charge of domestic animals which die due to disease, may dispose of the dead animals in a Class I landfill.

IV. Disposal of Deceased Domestic Animals Not Due to Disease

Pursuant to 62-701.520(5)(c), F.A.C., the options for disposal of deceased animals, captive wildlife, fish or marine mammals that have not died due to disease, are as follows:

- Disposal in a Class I landfill;
- Disposal on the property where they died, or other properties approved by the Department, provided they are buried at least two feet below the surface of the ground and above the water table; and
- Disposal by burning.

V. Recommended Method and Procedures for Disposal of Euthanized Animals

- a. The preferred method of disposal of deceased animals, including euthanized animals, is cremation.

- b. When cremation is not practical, disposal in a Class I landfill is preferred. Class I landfills have a liner system and a leachate collection system where all waste is contained within the liner system and all leachate is collected and removed for proper disposal. In addition, there is a series of groundwater monitoring wells located around the landfill which are sampled and analyzed semi-annually to identify any groundwater impacts.
- c. The Euthanized Animal Disposal at Class I Landfills Best Management Practices (BMPs) document (December 29, 2017) outlines the BMPs for the acceptance and disposal of deceased animals at a Class I landfill. Following these BMPs is expected to essentially eliminate exposure to any birds of prey, and minimize any potential groundwater impacts resulting from euthanized animal disposal.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this document is intended for guidance only. It is not a rule and does not create any standards or criteria which must be followed by the regulated community.