

Best Management Practices for Disposal of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Positive Wildlife Carcasses and Used Personal Protective Equipment

Overview

This document provides recommended best management practices for disposing of wild birds and other wildlife carcasses, as well as used personal protective equipment (PPE), which are suspected or known to be positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). More information is available on the [DEQ Avian Influenza webpage](#).

Who should I notify about sick or dead wildlife suspected to be HPAI positive?

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is tracking the extent of HPAI in Virginia's wild birds and other wildlife. Sick or dead wildlife may be reported to DWR via the Virginia Wildlife Conflict Helpline at (855) 571- 9003 or by emailing wildlifehealth@dwr.virginia.gov. More information is available on the [DWR Avian Influenza webpage](#).

How should I dispose of HPAI positive wild birds and other wildlife carcasses?

It is recommended that property owners remove (or hire a contractor to remove) and dispose of suspected HPAI positive wild birds or other wildlife carcasses as soon as possible using the following best management practices:

- Avoid handling carcasses if you manage a backyard flock, domestic poultry, or have pet birds.
- Wear appropriate PPE including rubber or disposal latex or nitrile gloves, a mask, and safety glasses when handling carcasses.
- Consider using disposable boot covers or rubber boots that can be disinfected after use.
- Double bag carcasses and used PPE. Tie the inner bag, and remove gloves, leaving them in the outer bag before tying it closed.
- Transport carcasses and used PPE directly to an active sanitary landfill whenever possible.
- Avoid taking wild bird or other wildlife carcasses, or used PPE, to a transfer station or other non-landfill facility where bags may be ripped open as part of normal waste handling and transfer operations.
- Avoid disposal in landfills located in areas near commercial poultry operations, if possible.
- Notify and coordinate with the landfill in advance, informing them that the wild bird or other wildlife carcasses and/or used PPE may be the result of HPAI infection.
- Be aware that landfills may have site-specific protocols to follow, and some landfills may only accept waste generated within their locality or regional service area.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling carcasses.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wash or discard all clothing and disinfect footwear with products such as: Clorox Bleach, Clorox Disinfecting Wipes, Comet Disinfecting Bathroom Cleaner or Virkon S. A more extensive list of products suitable for avian influenza disinfection can be found on the US Environmental Protection Agency's [US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) List of Registered Antimicrobial Products Effective Against Avian Influenza \[List M\]](#).

How should landfills manage HPAI positive wild birds, wildlife carcasses, and used PPE?

The following best management practices are recommended for permitted active sanitary landfills:

- Dispose of carcasses and used PPE in a pre-excavated trench away from the active working face (or in an area with limited and/or controlled traffic) to prevent potential exposure to the public or individuals in other waste delivery vehicles.
- Interior areas away from exterior slopes are preferred, and any potential runoff should be controlled.
- Cover the carcasses and used PPE immediately with at least 2 feet of compacted soil (or at least 2 feet of compacted solid waste and subsequent compacted daily soil cover) to deter scavenging and control vectors.
- Alternate daily covers (such as tarps, Posi-shell or other spray-on covers, etc.) should NOT be used in lieu of soil for disposal.
- Depending on the volume of carcasses, multiple trenches may be necessary to avoid large pockets of homogenous waste that could decompose more rapidly and cause potential settlement or leachate issues.

- Take any other necessary precautions to control odors and eliminate the potential for scavenging or other wildlife exposures to the carcasses.
- Notify the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Solid Waste Program of carcass management if not already in contact regarding the situation.

The above recommendations may be used by the landfill in lieu of obtaining approval through a [DEQ Landfill Special Waste Disposal Request Form](#) in order to facilitate timely disposal of wild birds and other wildlife carcasses, as well as to facilitate timely disposal of used PPE from an HPAI response. It is important to note, however, that more stringent protocols and the [DEQ Landfill Special Waste Disposal Request Forms](#) are necessary for the landfilling of mass animal mortality (over 20 cubic yards of bird or animal carcasses at one time) and/or HPAI positive carcasses from a commercial poultry operation.

Who should I notify about HPAI concerns in commercial poultry operations or backyard flocks?

If domestic poultry (such as backyard flocks) or other farm birds exhibit signs of avian influenza (ranging from sneezing, coughing and ruffled feathers to sudden and high numbers of bird losses), bird owners should consult their local veterinary professional and notify state or federal animal health officials. Virginia backyard flocks or commercial poultry owners should report unusual poultry illnesses or deaths to the State Veterinarian's Office at (804) 692-0601 or email vastatevet@vdacs.virginia.gov or call the USDA's toll-free at (866) 536-7593. More information is available on the [Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services \(VDACS\) Avian Influenza webpage](#).