



Floods: Animals and Mosquitoes

Animals

Many wild animals have been forced from their natural habitats by flooding, and many domestic animals are also without homes after the flood. Take care to avoid these animals, because they may carry rabies. Remember, most animals are disoriented and displaced, too. Do not corner an animal. If an animal must be removed, contact your local animal control authorities. Your local and state health department can provide information about the types of wild animals that carry rabies in your area.

Rats may be a problem during and after a flood. Take care to secure all food supplies, and remove any animal carcasses in the vicinity by contacting your local animal control authorities.

If you are bitten by any animal, seek immediate medical attention. If you are bitten by a snake, first try to accurately identify the type of snake so that, if poisonous, the correct anti-venom may be administered.

Animal Disposal After a Flood

Most states have their own guidelines on disposal of dead animals, so people with questions regarding the specific situation in their state are highly encouraged to contact local or state health and agricultural officials for clarification.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any special health risks I need to be aware of when disposing of dead animals after a flood?

The risk to humans from animal carcasses is low if proper precautions are taken.

- Practice proper hand washing to prevent infection with certain pathogens that may be transmitted from farm animals, including *Salmonella* and *E. coli*.
- Secure all food sources and remove any animal carcasses to avoid attracting rats.
- Wear insect repellent when outdoors. Flooding may lead to more mosquitoes, which can carry disease.
- Be on the alert for snakes that may be hiding in unusual places after flooding. If you are bitten, try to identify the snake so that if it is poisonous, you can be given the correct antivenin. Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck the venom out. Contact your local emergency department for further care.

People working to clean up areas containing swine or poultry carcasses should take the following precautions:

- Wear protective clothing, including waterproof gloves, waterproof boots, and protective eyewear (cover any open wounds).
- Use duct tape to seal tops of gloves and boots to prevent water seepage.

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- Wear respiratory protection – an N-95 respirator or better.
- If you smell hydrogen sulfide (a rotten egg smell), get out of the building and call your county extension office.
- Clean and disinfect all clothing and boots after handling carcass-contaminated materials.
- Wash work clothes separately from street clothes.
- Wash hands thoroughly before placing fingers in mouth (nail biting, etc.).
- Shower and wash hair thoroughly after handling carcass-contaminated materials.

How do I dispose of a dead animal on my property during flood cleanup?

It is usually the responsibility of the owner or person in charge of domesticated animals to appropriately dispose of dead animals in accordance with local or state ordinances within 24 hours after knowledge of the death. It can be the responsibility of the municipal or county government to designate appropriate people to dispose of any domestic dead animals whose owner cannot be identified.

Contact your local animal control department, local health department, or state veterinarian for specific disposal guidance.

My pet was killed in the flood. Can I bury it on my property?

Several cities require Animal Care and Control agencies to manage the disposal of family pets and other dead animals, except for livestock. Check with your local authorities for more information.

If not, how do I dispose of the remains?

1. Wear gloves.
2. Cover your gloved hand with a plastic trash bag, pick up the remains, then invert the trash bag over the remains and seal the bag.
3. For larger animals, use a shovel to place remains inside a plastic trash bag, then rinse off the shovel with water.
4. Call your local animal care and control agency for further instructions and to request pickup.
5. Wash your hands.

I am a farmer and I lost a lot of livestock during the flood. How do I dispose of multiple animal remains?

Each farm operation should have specific plans for animal disposal in the event of an emergency. Farm operations should check with state and local authorities to ensure their plan meets local requirements.

In addition, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) can provide technical advice and assistance on the effective disposal of animal carcasses. The main phone number for the APHIS Emergency Management Staff in Riverdale, Maryland is 301-734-8073. Local phone numbers may be established in the event of an emergency response. <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/>.

These guidelines are intended to address dead animal disposal during a declared emergency. They do not take the place of the dead animal disposal that occurs under the normal permitted operation of a farm.

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Related Links and Resources

For articles regarding disposal of dead animal production—U.S. Department of Agriculture:

<http://www.nalusda.gov/awic/pubs/carcass.htm>

For comparative methods of carcass disposal in animal production—Minnesota Board of Animal Health:

http://www.bah.state.mn.us/animals/carcass%20disposal/carcass_disposal.htm

For local assistance available *without* a Major Determination of Disaster, contact the Animal Diseases and Plant Pests Control section of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Emergency Management Staff in Riverdale, Maryland, at 301-734-8073. Local phone numbers would be established in the event of an emergency response.

<http://www.usda.gov/da/ocpm/nda.htm>

American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Disaster Preparedness Series

<http://www.avma.org/disaster/resources.asp> Lists several disaster preparedness sites link to state and local resources related to animals

Mosquitoes

The large amount of pooled water remaining after the flood will lead to an increase in mosquito populations. Mosquitoes are most active at sunrise and sunset. The majority of these mosquitoes will be pests, but will not carry communicable diseases. Local, state, and federal public health authorities will be actively working to control the spread of any mosquito-borne diseases.

To protect yourself from mosquitoes, use screens on dwellings, and wear long-sleeved and long-legged clothing. Insect repellents containing DEET are very effective. Be sure to read all instructions before using DEET. Care must be taken when using DEET on small children. Products containing DEET are available from retail outlets and through local and state health departments.

To control mosquito populations, drain all standing water left in containers around your home.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).