

ADVISORY FOR HANDLING WILDLIFE CARCASSES

Note: This advisory does not replace or supercede any applicable Federal or Provincial legislation or regulations, or the regulations or requirements of the Worker Compensation Board, the British Columbia Ministry of Environment or Provincial Health Authorities.

The British Columbia Ministry of Transportation strongly recommends that care be taken when handling wildlife carcasses at any time. Persons handling wildlife carcasses must be aware of the need to protect themselves, co-workers and others against potential exposure to infectious agents, and the inadvertent spread of these infectious agents. Careless handling of wildlife carcasses can create potentially harmful exposures for humans, causing serious diseases, including: rabies, lyme disease, salmonella, and e-coli. Failure to properly disinfect tools and vehicles may also infect co-workers, as well as potentially spread disease to the general public and wildlife population. Diseases not known to be dangerous to humans can also be spread to unaffected wild animal populations by careless carcass handling and inadequate disinfecting of gloves, clothing and tools.

BASICS

1. Always wash hands with soap and water, or use waterless hand sanitizer, after handling wildlife carcasses.
2. Do not allow the wildlife carcass or other contaminated surfaces to come in contact with bare skin.
3. Wear heavy water impermeable gloves if your hands are in direct contact with carcasses to avoid being scratched & otherwise exposed to animal fluids. For additional protection wear long vinyl gloves inside the heavy water impermeable work gloves.
Wash your gloves thoroughly with soap and water after handling carcasses.
4. Wear coveralls if your clothes come into contact with carcasses. Wash the coveralls regularly with soap and water. In the event clothes become contaminated, they should be removed as quickly as possible, and washed separately from all other laundry, following normal washing instructions.
5. Be aware that ticks and fleas present a health risk as they leave the dead carcass in search of a new host. Ticks can be picked-up from a dead animal host. As a precaution against tick-borne diseases, a thorough personal body examination for attached ticks should be done daily.

BEFORE HANDLING A CARCASS

1. Before handling a carcass, confirm the animal is dead by prodding with a long-handled tool. Startling an injured, apparently lifeless animal, can increase potential for contamination, and can otherwise be dangerous.
2. Injured/dying animals, or animals otherwise exhibiting abnormal behaviour, should be reported to the local Conservation Officer or telephone 1-800-663-9453.

3. Numerous dead animals or birds found in one location should be reported to the local Conservation Officer or 1-800-663-9453.

LIFTING AND MOVING WILDLIFE CARCASSES

1. Care should be taken when lifting and moving wildlife carcasses to avoid back injuries. An assessment of the weight and awkwardness of a wildlife carcass should be made before attempting to lift or move it. A large or heavy wildlife carcass may require two or more people and lifting equipment.

PERSONAL CLEANING EQUIPMENT

1. Soap and hot water, or waterless hand sanitizer, should be available for personal cleaning purposes.
2. Portable eyewash and first aid kit should be available and used as necessary.

TOOLS

1. All tools used for handling dead wildlife should be dedicated to this purpose only. These tools should have no pointed or sharp edges, and should be clearly marked to identify them for carcass handling purposes.
2. Disinfect contaminated tools, equipment and vehicles regularly with a liberal application of a bleach solution (9 parts water, 1 part bleach), prepared fresh daily. Tools used for handling wildlife carcasses should be kept separately in a designated location. Cleaning tools should be done outdoors using eye protection and gloves with eyewash available.

CONTAMINATION

1. Persons with scratches or cuts that become contaminated from a carcass or its fluids should immediately wash thoroughly with soap and hot water. If not available, clean affected areas temporarily with waterless hand sanitizer, and later wash thoroughly with hot water and soap. Immediately report to work supervisor.
2. Persons splashed by animal fluids should wash and rinse affected areas immediately. Wash eyes with eyewash or clean water. Immediately report to work supervisor.
3. If exposure to rabies is suspected, the carcass should immediately be iced and retained for examination by proper authorities. Immediately report to work supervisor.

For more information on occupational and environmental health and safety information in British Columbia, please contact:

Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia (WorkSafeBC)
Prevention Information Line

tel: (604) 276-3100 **toll-free:** 1-888-621-7233

after-hours: 1-886-922-4357 **fax:** (604) 276-3247