

Guidance document: 150-23

Revised: March 11, 2021

## VIRGINIA BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

### Disposal of Deceased Animals

A veterinary establishment is required to have an acceptable method for disposal of deceased animals. Refrigeration exclusively for carcasses of companion animals that require storage for 24 hours or more is required. Disposal of a deceased animal must also be compliant with all local ordinances.

When a deceased animal is to be returned to its owner, the veterinarian or his/her designee should discuss with the owner preferences for the return of the animal to include type of container and/or wrapping.

In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's [Secondary Pentobarbital Poisoning of Wildlife](#) fact sheet provides information on which animals are affected, how to prevent accidental poisoning, and penalties for noncompliance. Questions on secondary poisoning of wildlife should be directed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement Resident Agent in Charge, at the Richmond District Office at 804-771-2883.

### References

#### [Regulations Governing the Practice of Veterinary Medicine](#)

##### ***18VAC150-20-200. Standards for veterinary establishments.***

*A. Stationary establishments. A stationary establishment shall provide surgery and encompass all aspects of health care for small or large animals, or both. All stationary establishments shall meet the requirements set forth in this subsection:*

*1. Buildings and grounds must be maintained to provide sanitary facilities for the care and medical well-being of patients.*

*a. Temperature, ventilation, and lighting must be consistent with the medical well-being of the patients.*

*b. There shall be on-premises:*

*(1) Hot and cold running water of drinking quality, as defined by the Virginia Department of Health;*

*(2) An acceptable method of disposal of deceased animals, in accordance with any local ordinance or state and federal regulations; and*

*(3) Refrigeration exclusively for carcasses of companion animals that require storage for 24 hours or more.*

### Other

Please review the [Department of Environmental Quality's](#) information on [animal carcasses](#).