

Debris Clearance

Many types of natural disasters cause destruction and result in debris. Cleanup is the responsibility of the owner of the land where the debris lies. Therefore if a tree falls on a person's land, that owner is responsible for its removal. Emergency management deals only with debris that lies on public lands, and its greatest emphasis is on clearance of transport routes, utility supplies, and actions to ensure public health.

The same principles apply to carcass disposal. The responsibility for carcass disposal belongs to the owner of the land where the carcasses lie. If carcasses are moved to land that is not owned by the owner of the carcass (e.g., during a flood), this can lead to conflicts. These conflicts arise because of cost (landowner's versus carcass owner's) and public health (land versus carcass versus regulatory agency). The best mitigation is to have worked through similar scenarios during the planning stages of emergency management.

The principles of carcass disposal regulations are generally the same. Carcasses on a farm are the responsibility of the landowner, and they can only be disposed of according to local (county), state, or in some cases federal environmental laws. These clearly specify the number and size of animals that can be buried and at what depth they can be buried in a given area. The same applies to large-scale disasters. Methods for carcass disposal are listed in Table 30-5.

Table 30-5 Methods used for carcass disposal

Method	Procedure	Use
Burial	Dig hole and cover	All species, only in accordance with county, state, and federal environmental protection legislation
Cremation	Use incinerators, burners, or car tires and diesel fuel	All species, if capacity not exceeded and air pollution not a problem; federal regulations may apply
Rendering	Rendering	All species; in some areas sheep no longer accepted; carcasses cannot be rendered into feed for like species
Composting	Layer by volume 1 part carcass, 2 parts litter, 1 part straw	All species; most common for poultry; cut into sections less than 10 inches
Fermenting	Mix 90% chopped carcass and 10% fermenting bacteria	All species, if they can be chopped to small enough size