

FAD PReP/NAHEMS Tactical Topics: Mass Depopulation and Euthanasia

Information is based on the **Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Plan (FAD PReP)/National Animal Health Emergency Management System (NAHEMS) Guidelines: Mass Depopulation and Euthanasia (2011)** to be used in training or during an animal health emergency. Reference to the Guidelines sections are provided in parenthesis for more detail.

Introduction/Overview: Euthanasia and mass depopulation may be employed during an animal health emergency to help prevent the spread and eradicate disease by eliminating infected, exposed or potentially exposed animals. Personnel engaged in euthanasia and mass depopulation efforts must be trained and qualified to perform euthanasia procedures using the quickest, safest and most humane methods practicable.

FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING DEPOPULATION/EUTHANASIA PROCEDURES: Contact your immediate supervisor. Follow chain of command.

Responsibilities within the ICS – Euthanasia Group (3)

- Incident Commander (IC): Holds ultimate responsibility for mass depopulation and euthanasia activities.
- Euthanasia Group Supervisor: Leads all Euthanasia Teams which are part of Disease Management Branch in the Operations Section. Ensures euthanasia personnel receive training and equipment to carry out euthanasia protocols. Coordinates activities with other response groups such as Appraisal, Compensation, Carcass Disposal, Biosecurity, and Surveillance.
- Euthanasia Team Leader: Supervises and instructs Euthanasia Team Members on safe, effective and humane performance of euthanasia. Assigns Team Members to specific tasks. Cooperates with other groups such as Appraisal, Compensation, and Carcass Disposal. Reports to Euthanasia Group Supervisor.
- Euthanasia Team Member: Applies and exhibits knowledge, training and proficiency in the euthanasia method employed for response. Trained in species-specific humane handling and restraint techniques, and applicable euthanasia methods. Understands hazards associated with assignment, and safety, biosecurity, PPE, and cleaning and disinfection protocols. Reports to Team Leader.

Sources of Information Regarding Depopulation/Euthanasia Procedures

- Initial orientation upon arrival at ICP
- Daily briefings
- Information from Team Leader or Group Supervisor and the incident-specific depopulation plan
- Most recent version of AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia (to follow when possible/practical)

Terminology (1)

- Euthanasia: Process of transitioning a living animal to death using the most painless and stress-free method possible.
- Mass Depopulation: Method for quickly and efficiently destroying a large number of animals with as much consideration given to their welfare as practicable.

USDA recognizes the difference between these terms, however, for this document these terms will be used interchangeably.

General Safety Information (3)

Species-specific handling and euthanasia safety information should be provided during training by the Team Leader.

- Move and restrain animals in a manner which minimizes stress and maximizes safety.
- Be cautious when working with dangerous animals such as bulls, sows with litters, bison, boars, and cervids to avoid responder injuries.
- Understand the chosen euthanasia method and be familiar with the equipment, hazards, and safety concerns associated with that method.

FAD PReP/NAHEMS Tactical Topics:

Mass Depopulation and Euthanasia

- Use required PPE. Follow procedures for donning, doffing, and cleaning and disinfection and/or disposal of used/contaminated PPE.
- Adhere to biosecurity and cleaning and disinfection protocols to prevent transfer of infectious pathogens. Use extra care when working with zoonotic agents.

Euthanasia: General Considerations (4)

- Conduct all euthanasia activities with responder safety as the primary consideration.
- Complete training and proficiency testing in the chosen euthanasia method prior to deploying to the field.
- Recognize that the choice of euthanasia method is species-specific as well as situation-specific.
- Minimize animal stress by moving and handling animals calmly, quietly and gently.
- Perform euthanasia in a manner that minimizes pain and stress to the animal.
- Be prepared to complete euthanasia procedures using an approved adjunct method in the event that the primary euthanasia method fails.
- Conduct euthanasia activities in a manner that promotes a positive public perception of the process.
- Coordinate euthanasia activities with other response Groups to avoid delay in subsequent carcass disposal activities.
- Use euthanasia methods that are appropriate to the species involved, legal for use in the jurisdiction, and implement the methods according to current professional standards.
- Properly account for and document all controlled substances used during euthanasia. Contact your supervisor with questions.



Human Psychological and Behavioral Aspects (4.4)

- Situations involving mass depopulation of animals are stressful and emotionally draining to Team Members, animal owners, and the community.
- Recognize the signs of compassion fatigue, a form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Monitor yourself and co-workers for signs of undue stress.
- To reduce stress: take frequent breaks, eat regular meals, get adequate sleep, engage in stress-relieving after-hours activities, speak with a counselor.