

Safe fox culling procedure and carcass disposal in northern regions



All activities carried out under this procedure must comply with applicable laws and regulations. This procedure applies to the following situations:

- A fox, with or without signs of rabies, present in a community or near human settlements;
- A fox captured in a leg-hold trap.

General guidelines

- Do not touch a carcass with bare hands. Wear gloves.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose during and after handling carcasses or potentially contaminated equipment.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling carcasses or cleaning equipment.
- Ensure that young children and pets stay away from carcasses.
- Do not allow pets to touch or eat carcasses.

BE CAUTIOUS!

If you come into contact with a wild animal during trapping or culling activities (e.g., splashes on an open wound or mucous membrane — eyes, nose, or mouth —, a scratch from the carcass, a bite, or a cut during skinning) :

- Clean the wound or contact area thoroughly with water and soap for 10 to 15 minutes, even if it appears minor;
- Seek medical attention promptly by visiting your local nursing station for an evaluation and appropriate care based on your situation.

Required equipment

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| ☐ Durable plastic bags | ☐ Disinfectant wipes (e.g., Clorox, Lysol) |
| ☐ Thick washable gloves (e.g., work gloves, winter gloves) | ☐ Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol |
| ☐ Disposable gloves | ☐ Disinfectant solution |
| ☐ Watertight plastic containers | ☐ Water and soap |

1. Culling

- Use a small-calibre firearm (e.g., .22 calibre).
- Aim for the vital zone (heart-lung area), which is located in the thorax, above the front leg (see image).
- As a last resort, if a shot to the vital zone is not possible, aim for the head (between the eyes). Fire at a downward angle to also reach the spinal column. **WARNING: A headshot increases the risk of exposure to tissues and fluids that may contain the rabies virus. This method should be avoided for foxes showing signs of the disease.**



2. Carcass handling

- Wear thick washable or disposable gloves.
- Place the carcass in a plastic bag, avoiding direct handling whenever possible.
- Use a shovel or the inverted bag technique: place your hands inside the bag and grasp the carcass through the material, then turn the bag inside out over the carcass. Be cautious of teeth, claws, and bone fragments that could puncture the bag, cause injury, and potentially expose you to contamination.
- Seal the bag by tying a knot.
- Place the sealed bag inside a second plastic bag and tie it securely.
- Store carcasses in a closed plastic container to prevent contamination of surfaces or objects with fluids and tissues from the carcasses.
- If your clothing becomes contaminated while handling carcasses, place it in a tied plastic bag until it can be washed.
- Wash your hands with disinfectant wipes or a hand sanitizer until you can wash them with soap and water.

3. Safe carcass management and disposal

- Do not leave carcasses in place or exposed in landfill sites, as they may attract wildlife or domestic animals.
- Do not accumulate carcasses near homes or on streets. Ensure they are stored in closed containers until disposal.
- Do not feed fox or wolf carcasses to pets.
- If possible, burn carcasses in a landfill site while following regulations.
- If burning is not possible, bury carcasses deeply in the ground (whenever feasible, e.g., in summer).

4. Cleaning

The rabies virus is destroyed by most common disinfectants, and it does not survive long on surfaces.

WARNING: The virus survives freezing temperatures.

- Wear gloves during cleaning and wash your hands afterward.

Clothing contaminated with fluids and tissues from carcasses:

- Wash in a washing machine in hot water with regular detergent.
- Dry in a clothes dryer on a hot cycle if possible.

Surfaces and equipment contaminated with fluids and tissues from carcasses:

- Clean with soap and water to remove most dirt. Use a brush if necessary.
- Disinfect contaminated surfaces with a diluted bleach solution¹ (1 part bleach to 9 parts water).
- Leave for at least 30 seconds before rinsing and wiping down.
- If bleach cannot be used (e.g., on vehicle steering wheels), use disinfectant wipes instead.

¹ A commercial virucidal solution may also be used (e.g., Virkon® 1%, Clinicide®, CaviCide®).
Leave on as directed.

Specific guidelines for hunting and trapping

The fur of a fox may be used, provided all applicable laws and regulations are followed.

WARNING: The carcass of a rabid fox should be burned, including its fur.

The rabies virus is mainly found in saliva, the brain, spinal cord, and salivary glands. It is not present in the blood, feces, or urine of an infected animal.

- Always wear disposable gloves when skinning a wild animal. This protects against parasites and diseases, including rabies.
- Always follow the general guidelines outlined on the first page of this document.

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