

## Car-Killed Deer in Wisconsin

Car-killed deer continue to be an issue of concern for Wisconsin residents and municipalities. The state of Wisconsin budgets for car-killed deer pickup via the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the department has used this funding to contract with vendors for car killed deer (CKD) removal for over twenty years.

However, alternative funding was identified and changes to the car-killed deer process were made through the Wisconsin State Legislature's approved 2015-17 budget. Since its approval in July 2015, the department has communicated with contractors, County Highway Commissioners and media outlets regarding this change in an effort to allow for a smooth transition.

The department is currently working on the final steps to usher in a new CKD removal process.

All current DNR car-killed deer contractors have been directed to dispose of deer carcasses from ALL roads through February 29, 2016. **A new CKD pickup process, where DNR car killed deer services are provided only on state trunk highways, will begin March 1, 2016.**

Counties will remain responsible for ensuring that deer carcasses do not cause a road hazard on county highways, municipalities will be responsible for keeping their own local roads safe and clear of road hazards, and DNR will continue to coordinate car killed deer pickup and disposal services on interstate, U.S. and state highways.

### **Under this new system, what if a deer is hit by a vehicle and killed on a county or town road and the county/ local municipality chooses to pick it up?**

The department recommends that the county or local municipality develop a CKD management plan. Disposal options include taking the CKD to a licensed landfill or leaving it to naturally decay along the roadside. You should contact the local landfill prior to picking up the deer carcass to assure compliance with any special handling procedures required by the landfill. Another option is for the municipality to contract directly with one of the department's CKD contractors (see contact information at the bottom of the page if you are interested in this option). CKD may not be picked up for consolidation at another location and left to naturally decay. Consolidation of deer carcasses on a property is considered illegal disposal of solid waste.

CKD from a single incident may be disposed of by roadside abandonment. While there may be concerns about odor and unsightliness, these are generally short lived as the carcasses naturally decompose. This option allows natural processes to occur and may be beneficial by providing food for scavenging wildlife. In order to avoid vehicle collisions with birds or animals feeding on the carcasses, the CKD should be moved to the far edge of the road-right-of-way, but not onto private property outside the ROW. A reasonable effort shall be made to obscure the deer carcass from the traveling public. For instance if a deer carcass is dragged straight into tall grass it is easily visible due to the bent grass. Make a 90 degree turn to the right or left so unbent

grass obscures the carcass. Use bushes or other woody vegetation that might exist in the right of way to obscure the deer carcass visibility.

A reasonable effort should be made to place a roadside abandoned deer carcass in a portion of the right of way where the county or local municipality does not mow. If the entire area of the right of way is mowed, the deer carcass should not be disposed of through roadside abandonment but instead should be disposed of at a licensed landfill that accepts animal carcasses. Deer carcasses should not be placed in standing water or where a standing water condition will likely occur

**Under this new system, what if a deer, bear or turkey is hit by a car and killed and the vehicle driver wants to use/take the animal?**

**Statute (2015-17 budget)** - Wis. Stat. s. 29.349 now allows for possession and removal of a deer carcass from the scene of an accident once an individual notifies DNR and provides their name, address, and the carcass location. This notification must be completed BEFORE taking possession or removing the carcass from the scene. CKD are no longer required to be tagged by a law enforcement officer. **In any circumstance where an individual wants to take possession of a car-killed deer, staff/dispatchers should refer the caller to contact DNR at 608-267-7691.**

**NOTE:** Car-killed bear and turkey must still be tagged by a law enforcement officer in accordance with prior procedures through TraCS generated car-kill tags or DNR issued tags.

For more information, contact Todd Schaller, DNR Chief Warden at 608-266-1115, via email at [Todd.Schaller@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Todd.Schaller@wisconsin.gov), or visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keywords "car killed deer."