



Important Facts about Marion County Solid Waste and Marion County Animal Services

Solid Waste

What is Marion County Solid Waste?

Marion County Solid Waste is a department of the Marion County Board of County Commissioners that provides solid waste disposal and recycling opportunities for Marion County residents through 18 recycling centers and the Baseline landfill facility. The landfill is a Florida Department of Environmental Protection Class I landfill permitted facility that accepts residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial waste that is not a hazardous waste and that is not prohibited from disposal in a lined landfill per the permit requirements.

How does Solid Waste handle deceased animals at the landfill?

Marion County Solid Waste operates under Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Permit S042-0103935-011, and in compliance with 62-701.520 FAC and FS 823.041 (disposal of bodies of dead animals).

Acceptance and handling of deceased animals is done per state regulations and county policies, as follows:

Step 1: Deceased animals are transported (whether by individual, agency or business) to the landfill's inbound scale and reported to Solid Waste staff. Scale personnel notify the operators on the landfill.

Step 2: Operators excavate a hole at least 3 feet or more in depth, exceeding state statute requirements for a hole to be at least 2 feet in depth.

Step 3: The vehicle containing the deceased animal(s) is brought near the excavated hole for depositing. The landfill operator completes the deposit and covers with materials excavated from creating the hole.

Step 4: Operators continue to push and pack materials over the surface until end of work day.

Step 5: On closing, operators cover all areas on which they worked with a 6-inch dirt cover or a tarp, both methods authorized by the FDEP permit.

How is the process regulated?

Disposal of dead animals is regulated by state statute FS 823.041, which prohibits any dead animal carcass from being deposited in any place where such carcass would be exposed in the open. Additionally, Marion County Solid Waste operates under Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Permit S042-0103935-011, and in compliance with Florida Administrative Code 62-701.520 for special waste handling.

How deep is the hole dug?

Marion County Solid Waste operators excavate a hole at least 3 feet or more in depth, exceeding state statute requirements for a hole to be at least 2 feet in depth.

How does Solid Waste verify that the buried animals are not exposed once buried?

Solid Waste operators perform a visual inspection of the burial area upon covering to ensure there is no exposed portion, and additional incoming waste is placed over the burial area before the close of the business day.

Is Marion County Animal Services the only agency that brings deceased animals to the landfill?

No. Marion County Solid Waste accepts deceased animals at the landfill from any individual or animal-related agency, regardless of the type of animal or cause of death (whether natural or by euthanasia). Due to special disposal requirements, Solid Waste requires residents and agencies to notify if the waste they are disposing includes deceased animals, hazardous materials, chemicals, sludge or other, in accordance with the rules or statutory requirements or permit conditions. Deceased animals brought to the landfill must be reported to staff for proper burial.

In fiscal year 2013-14, Marion County Animal Services represented about 27% of the total deceased animals delivered to the landfill.

What is your process for reporting/handling distressed birds at the landfill?

While bird and eagle sightings are not uncommon at landfills, staff doesn't frequently encounter distressed wildlife at the facility. In these situations, however, addressing the animals' well-being becomes staff's first priority. Solid Waste adheres to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) protocol in these cases and immediately contacts a wildlife rehabilitator licensed by the FWC.

How does Solid Waste work to protect our water resources from landfill leachate?

As a Class I permitted landfill facility, the landfill has a liner system of leachate (water that has come into contact with waste) collection and liner layers installed between the soil subgrade and the waste for the purpose of containing the waste and for the collection and removing of leachate. There is a series of groundwater monitoring wells located around the landfill for semiannual groundwater sampling and analysis to be performed. Groundwater analysis results are reported to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Animal Services

What is Marion County Animal Services?

Marion County Animal Services (MCAS) is a department of the Marion County Board of County Commissioners that provides both animal shelter and animal control functions to residents in Marion County. MCAS is the county's only open-admissions shelter, which means it never turns Marion County's animals away, no matter how sick or aggressive.

Why does the shelter euthanize animals?

Some of the animals we receive are brought in because of severe behavior and health issues; these may be unable to be placed for adoption, as we have a responsibility to protect public safety and the health of all the animals in our shelter. We also provide euthanasia for pets at their owner's request. Unlike many shelters, we do not place a "time limit" on the animals in our adoption area; they can remain available until they find a home, as long as they do not become aggressive, sick or develop behavioral issues.

Our policy is that, generally, animals that go up for adoption stay until they find homes – we don't have time limits on our adoption wing. There are times when we simply do not have any more space in our kennels, and we ask residents turning in their animals to please pursue all other options, because we can't guarantee an adoption. We ask residents who can no longer take care of their pet to talk to friends, family, neighbors, church members and/or use social media as an effort to try to rehome pets themselves. Residents should use shelters in their communities as a last resort.

Also important to note is that although our county's human population increased 29 percent from 2001-2013, our euthanasia rates decreased by 35 percent in the same period. One of the most important ways we've worked to combat pet overpopulation, thereby reducing euthanasia, is through providing low-cost spay/neuter surgeries for

citizens' pets. Our veterinarians have provided sterilization surgeries to 6,274 animals (including citizens' pets and those in our shelter) in 2014 alone, and more than 100,000 animals over the past 13 years.

Additionally, the department works to find homes for as many animals as possible through its outreach adoption events, special reduced adoption fee promotions and the foster program for animals who come in, but are too young or sick to be put up for adoption immediately. All animals are provided proper food and water, and a clean and caring environment, regardless of the time they spend at the shelter.

Who administers euthanasia to the animals?

Per state statute, only shelter staff that has been certified may administer euthanasia. Certification is given through the Florida Animal Control Association, which provides the only euthanasia certification course that is currently approved by the Florida Board of Veterinary Medicine.

What disposal options are available for deceased animals?

For animals brought in by their owners to be euthanized, MCAS offers the option for the owner to take the body home for private burial. All other disposals are coordinated with Marion County Solid Waste for handling at the landfill in accordance with state regulations.

Why isn't a crematorium used?

Crematoriums can cost approximately \$80,000-\$100,000, and would require additional staff to run and maintain it. Using a landfill for disposition of euthanized animals is a common and cost-effective practice used by many county-run animal shelters.

What is the process for bringing deceased animals to the landfill?

Per county policy, certified staff transports euthanized animals to the landfill for burial. Animal Services staff contacts Solid Waste ahead of time so the landfill staff can prepare an area and create a hole for proper burial of the animals.

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