

WI DNR 2026 Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) Outbreak – *Background & Disposal Information for Municipalities*

ABOUT EHD

- Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease Virus or EHDV, is a virus that can cause disease in wild hoof stock, primarily impacting deer. It can also affect domestic cattle, though signs of disease are often absent or minimal.
- EHD viruses do not infect humans.
- The virus is transmitted between deer by biting midge flies also known as biting gnats or no-see-ums. The disease is typically seen in late summer and early fall when biting midge activity is at its peak. Freezing temperatures drastically reduce midge population activity and the spread of the disease.
- The disease has been identified in wild deer in Wisconsin sporadically over the past 14 years in limited areas.

ABOUT THE OUTBREAK IN SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN

- The DNR began receiving a large volume of reports of dead or sick deer in Washington County in early August. EHD was confirmed in samples collected from the Richfield and West Bend areas.
- As of 8/27/2026 reports of over 500 dead or sick deer that are suspected to be from the EHD outbreak have been reported, the majority from southern Washington County.

INFORMATION ON DEER CARCASS DISPOSAL

- DNR staff are unable to assist with pick up or disposal of deer that have died from suspected EHD.
- It is important to note that the virus that causes EHD does not infect humans, and the virus does not survive in deer carcasses.
- Leaving carcasses of deer that died from EHD to decompose naturally where they are found does not pose known risks to deer or people.
- For those seeking options to dispose of deer carcasses, here is some helpful information and tips:
 - According to Wisconsin statute s. 289.01(33), deer carcasses are defined as solid waste, and it is illegal to dispose of waste on any public lands or roadways as well as on private property without permission.

- Generally, landfilling is the *preferred* option for deer carcass disposal.
 - DNR Solid Waste Management Staff have shared that this specific area of the state has limited local disposal options at landfills, and the GFL landfill that is close will only accept deer tested negative for CWD. It is unknown if they have a position on deer that die during an EHD outbreak.
 - We recommend municipalities contact landfills directly to determine if they will accept deer carcasses and whether there are any special handling procedures prior to disposal.
 - Individual homeowners should always work directly with their waste hauler prior to placing deer waste in a bin. For deer carcass waste disposed of at a transfer station, in a dumpster or through curbside pickup, putting the carcass in garbage bags keeps bins cleaner, reduces the chance of nuisance scavengers and keeps odors down.
- Burial may be an option in some situations. It is legal to bury a carcass on private property on which the carcass was found with permission from the landowner. Burial is only allowable for residential generated carcass waste and is not an option for large quantities of carcasses.
 - The carcass should be buried deep enough to prevent excavation by scavengers.
 - Do not bury carcasses in wetlands or where they may cause a detrimental effect to surface or ground water.
- In general, health officials recommend avoiding handling the carcasses of wild animals that are found dead of unknown causes. When it is necessary to handle a carcass, use appropriate precautions, including gloves and good hygiene practices.

REPORTING DEAD OR SICK DEER & CONTACTING DNR STAFF

- The DNR is tracking the outbreak with the public online reporting form <https://arcg.is/0K1eSW0>.
- Questions about EHD can be directed to DNR Wildlife Management staff by email DNRWildlifeSwitchboard@wisconsin.gov or leaving a message at 608-267-0866.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Epizootic hemorrhagic disease \(EHD\) in Wisconsin deer | Wisconsin DNR](#)
- [Cornell - EHD Pamphlet](#)
- [FAQ - Deer Carcass Disposal in WI](#)
- [Deer waste disposal sites | Wisconsin DNR](#)