

# WS Directive

2.505 05/18/11

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## LETHAL CONTROL OF ANIMALS

### 1. PURPOSE

To provide guidance for Wildlife Services (WS) personnel on the lethal control of animals.

### 2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive revises WS Directive 2.505 dated 07/28/03.

### 3. BACKGROUND

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines on Euthanasia (2007), “euthanasia is the act of inducing humane death in an animal.” The AVMA further states that “Conditions found in the field, although more challenging than those that are controlled, do not in any way reduce or minimize the ethical obligation of the responsible individual to reduce pain and distress to the greatest extent possible during the taking of an animal’s life.”

### 4. POLICY

WS personnel will exhibit a high level of respect and professionalism when taking an animal’s life, regardless of method. WS personnel will be familiar with the methods described in the current AVMA Guidelines for Euthanasia, and those methods will be used to euthanize captured or restrained animals, whenever practicable. In free ranging wildlife, the AVMA recommends methods, “be as age-, species-, or taxonomic/class-specific as possible.” WS personnel will use methods appropriate for the species and conditions.

When immobilizing and euthanizing substances are administered, WS personnel will comply with policy set forth in WS Directive 2.430, Controlled Chemical Immobilization and Euthanizing Agents.

When euthanizing a captured or restrained animal, death of the animal must be confirmed; death should be confirmed in free ranging wildlife when carcass recovery is possible. Confirmation can be achieved by the absence of a blinking response when the cornea is touched and by monitoring heart rate and respiration for a period of time long enough to confirm death.

Animal carcasses should be handled and disposed of in compliance with WS Directive 2.515, Disposal of Wildlife Carcasses.

5. REFERENCES

American Veterinary Medical Association, 2007 AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia.

WS Directive 1.301, Code of Ethics (08/31/10).

WS Directive 2.430, Controlled Chemical Immobilization and Euthanizing Agents (07/06/09).

WS Directive 2.515, Disposal of Wildlife Carcasses (05/18/11).

WS Field Operations Manual for the Use of Immobilization and Euthanasia Drugs, June 2001.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William H. Clay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Deputy Administrator