Animal Control Officer Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Basics

What is it?

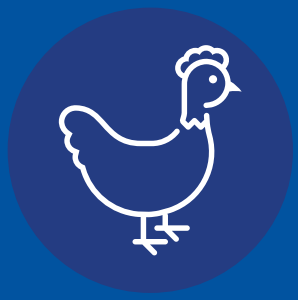
» Avian influenza is a virus infecting wild birds and waterfowl as well as domestic poultry, such as chickens, turkeys, quail, and geese. Wild birds commonly have avian influenza and sometimes spread it to domestic birds directly or indirectly through the environment.

» Avian influenza viruses are classified as either highly pathogenic (also known as high path) or low pathogenic based on how lethal the virus is. High path avian influenza viruses are extremely contagious to other poultry and cause high death loss.

What should you do?

» If you encounter sick wild birds or three or more dead wild birds you should report it to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources at 517-336-5030. If you encounter a poultry flock that is experiencing severe illness or multiple deaths, contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at 800-292-3939 or for after-hours emergencies call 517-373-0440.

» The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the risk to people from this high path avian influenza virus to be low. However, people should always take precautions when handling wild birds, dead birds, or birds that appear to be sick.



As a part of your routine duties, you may have to handle birds that could potentially have high path avian influenza.

You should take extra precautions; and when you respond, the following items should be with you:

- Coveralls
- Goggles or eye protection
- Shoe covers or boots that can be disinfected
- Gloves – latex, nitrile or rubber
- If possible, a respirator (preferably a NIOSH N95 respirator/mask)

Clean and disinfect hands, equipment, and any surface that came in contact with the sick birds.

A bird I handled was taken for testing, now what?

If a bird you have handled is submitted for testing, please make sure to give your name and contact information to the submitter and request they notify you of a positive result. If the bird is positive, contact your local health department (see www.malph.org/directory for a list of local public health departments).

Michigan Department of AGRICULTURE & Rural Development