



Sedation Handling Tips

Sedating cervid (deer, elk and moose) is an important topic to research, discuss with your veterinarian and be prepared for. It is also important to organize in advance for any sedation event by having all necessary equipment with you, any equipment that might be needed in the case of an emergency and to always have a contingency plan.

The first step in sedating your animal is to be patient and not do anything out of your normal behavior so as to not stress the animal before sedation. For example, if you are adding extra help on the day of sedation, be sure to have the extra hands stay away from the animals or in a vehicle until sedation takes place. Also, depending on your tranquilizer, make sure you are using a long enough needle to obtain a proper intramuscular injection. A subcutaneous injection will result in failed or partial sedation. Discuss this with your herd veterinarian and keep the information as part of your VCPR.

1. After the animal appears to go down, make sure they are fully sedated, watch for any movement, making sure it's safe to approach
2. Approach from the rear, cover the eyes to prevent the possibility of ultraviolet rays damaging the animal's eyes, as it will reduce drying and dirt from entering the eyes as well as it's calming to the animal. Reducing stimuli ensures good, deep sedation
3. Ensure nothing is impeding breathing and position your deer sternally (breastbone side on the ground). If you need to rotate the animal from one side to another, tuck their legs and roll them from their underside to the other side. Never roll them onto their back to rotate position
4. Try to keep the animal on relatively flat ground
5. Check vital signs as needed, breathing, temperature and heart rate
6. Systematically check the animal's body, directionally starting at the head and moving all the way to the tail, checking for any injuries or abnormalities
7. Be as quiet as possible, try not to make loud noises while the animal is under sedation
8. Make sure the animal is in the correct area prior to administering reversal
9. When recovering the animal, stay within sight of it as it will first regain swallowing reflex/response. Watch until they have regained all senses and are able to stand and walk