

RABIES PROTOCOL

MANAGEMENT OF DOGS & CATS EXPOSED TO WILDLIFE (Raccoon, skunk, fox, bat, woodchuck or any carnivorous wild animal)

Exposure Category	If Dog or Cat is Currently Vaccinated	If dog or cat is NOT Currently Vaccinated
Category 1 Direct contact with or visible bite from a confirmed rabid animal (includes eating viscera)	1. Booster Immediately 2. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector 3. Strict Confinement for 45 days	1. Euthanize, or 2. If owner unwilling: a. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector b. Isolate for 3 months followed by 3 months strict confinement c. Vaccinate 1 month prior to release
Category 2 Direct contact with or visible bite from a suspect rabid animal which is unavailable for testing (includes eating viscera)	1. Booster Immediately 2. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector 3. Strict Confinement for 45 days	1. Euthanize, or 2. If owner unwilling: a. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector b. Strict confinement for 6 months c. Vaccinate 1 month prior to release
Category 3 Wound of unknown origin suspected to be caused by another animal (e.g. cat abscesses)	1. Booster Immediately 2. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector 3. Strict Confinement for 45 days	1. Euthanize, or 2. If owner unwilling: a. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector b. Strict confinement for 6 months c. Vaccinate 1 month prior to release
Category 4 Exposure by proximity seen near or in close proximity to a confirmed rabid animal (no contact or wounds)	1. Booster Immediately 2. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector 3. Strict Confinement for 45 days	1. Vaccinate immediately 2. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector 3. Strict confinement for 6 months

- Always wear gloves when handling saliva-contaminated wounds or fur.
- Always advise owner of rabies risk.
- Veterinarians must inform the local animal inspector of any potential rabies contact cases seen at their offices
- Protocol for ferrets is similar, but notification must be made to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

1. Do not vaccinate any unimmunized dog or cat in categories 1, 2 or 3.
Timing of vaccination should follow above schedule
2. If most recent rabies vaccination was administered within one month, it is not necessary to booster.
3. Dog or cat should be examined by a veterinarian to assure there are no wounds.
4. Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife: (617) 626-1575

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Questions? (617) 626-1786