

# The State of Rhode Island Manual for Rabies Management and Protocols



**2024 Version**  
*(Supersedes and replaces all previous versions)*

# The State of Rhode Island Manual for Rabies Management and Protocols

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## Part 1: Introduction

This version of the *Manual for Rabies Management and Protocols* (the Manual) represents a revision of the previous edition dated June, 2016. The changes in this version reflect changes to Roles and Responsibilities pertaining to response to wildlife.

The authority to issue regulations and policies regarding rabies control can be found in RI General Laws §4-13-1.3 and §4-13-29.3, as well as *Rules and Regulations Governing the Prevention, Control, and Suppression of Rabies Within the State of Rhode Island*. The *Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2016*, serves as the primary reference for this Manual. Other modifications have been made as the result of critiques of the previous version, which this document has replaced.

## Part 2: Definitions

1. The term "**Animal Control Officer**" (ACO) shall mean any person(s) employed by a city or town as a canine control officer, a dog or animal warden or a police officer responsible for animal control delegated authority by the Rhode Island Rabies Control Board.
2. The term "**Cat**" shall mean any member of *Felis catus* (excluding hybrids with wild felines).
3. The term "**Close Observation**" or "**Observation**" shall mean a level of confinement for low risk animals (based on vaccine status and as determined by the ACO, State Veterinarian, or official from the RI Department of Health) whereby the animal may be kept at home; and, the owner is informed of potential rabies risk; and, the owner is required to immediately notify the Animal Control Officer or Police, with jurisdiction over the municipality where the animal is being kept, upon discovery of any unusual behavior or change in the health status of the animal.
4. The term "**Compendium**" shall mean the most recent *Compendium of Animal Rabies Control* as published by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc.
5. The term "**Currently Vaccinated**" as used in these Regulations shall mean administration of a vaccine that has been properly stored and subsequently injected by or under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian with a rabies vaccine licensed for use in that species by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and satisfying the following criteria:
  - (1) For dogs, cats and ferrets: the manufacturer's protocol with regards to minimum age of animal as well as frequency and intervals of vaccination(s) was followed; and at least thirty (30) days have elapsed since the initial vaccination; and not more than twelve (12) months have elapsed since the last vaccine if last vaccine was the initial vaccination or the animal is a ferret, or if the vaccine has an annual booster recommendation. Dogs, cats, and ferrets shall be considered currently vaccinated if the last booster was administered within the time frame specified by the most current Compendium regarding frequency and interval of vaccination for the particular product used and for the specific species that the product was used in.
  - (2) For dogs, cats, and ferrets that were previously vaccinated but are not considered currently vaccinated, one of the following must apply:
    - (a) Dogs, cats, and ferrets presented for vaccination that are overdue at the time of booster vaccination by any timeframe for a booster on a one-year certificate, or are overdue by more than six-months on a three-year (or longer) certificate, are required to receive a booster vaccination with the resultant vaccination certificate having an expiration date no greater than one year from the date of administration of this vaccine; or,
    - (b) Dogs, cats, and ferrets presented for vaccination that are overdue at the time of vaccination by less than six months as determined by the expiration date on a three-year (or longer) certificate may be issued a certificate up to the duration of immunity stated on the product label upon vaccination.
  - (3) Vaccine status will be determined from the dates on the most recent rabies vaccination certificate. It will be the responsibility of the animal owner to maintain and produce that document as proof of vaccine status.

- (4) For all other species for which there exists an unconditionally licensed rabies vaccine, the animals must be vaccinated against rabies in accordance with the most current Compendium of Animal Rabies Control.

**NOTE:** Failure or inability by the owner/keeper of an animal to present or make available a proper rabies certificate or a copy thereof to an ACO investigating a possible rabies exposure shall result in classification of the animal in question as not currently vaccinated against rabies.

6. The term "**Dog**" shall mean any member of *Canis familiaris* (excluding hybrids with wild canids).
7. The term "**Domestic Animal**" shall mean animals which, through extremely long association with humans, have been bred to a degree which has resulted in genetic changes affecting the temperament, color, conformation or other attributes of the species to the extent that makes them unique and distinguishable from wild individuals of their species. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*);
  - b. Domestic cat (*Felis catus*);
  - c. Domestic horse (*Equus caballus*);
  - d. Domestic cattle (*Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus*);
  - e. Domestic sheep (*Ovis aries*)
8. The term "**Environmental Police Officer**" shall mean any commissioned environmental police officer for the Department of Environmental Management, Division of Law Enforcement.
9. The term "**Euthanasia**" shall mean the humane destruction of an animal accomplished by a method that involves nearly instantaneous loss of consciousness followed immediately by death or by a method that involves anesthesia produced by an agent that causes painless and rapid loss of consciousness and death during that period of unconsciousness. All methods of euthanasia must comply with Rhode Island General Laws and with the most current American Veterinary Medical Association Guideline on Euthanasia.
10. The term "**Exposure**" shall mean the possible exposure to the rabies virus via a direct bite or scratch, which results in a break in the skin of the victim, or contact between infectious material (i.e., saliva or Central Nervous System (CNS) tissue and fluid) and the eye, inside the nose or mouth, or a pre-existing break in the skin.
11. The term "**Exposure by Proximity**" shall mean a level of exposure where a domestic animal has been seen in a common area with a wild animal but there was no possible contact between the domestic animal and the wild animal. (An example of this would be a dog being walked on a leash and being approached by a wild animal, but the wild animal never having contact with the dog.)
12. The term "**Ferret**" shall mean any member of the family *Mustela putorius* or Common European Ferret.

13. The term "**Manual**" shall mean the current State of Rhode Island Manual for Rabies Management and Protocols.
14. The term "**Owner/Keeper**" shall mean any person or agency keeping, harboring or having charge or control of or responsibility for control of an animal or any person or agency which permits any dog, cat, ferret, or domestic animal to habitually be fed within that person's yard or premises. This term shall not apply to veterinary facilities, any licensed boarding kennel, municipal pound, pet shop, or animal shelter. (see RIGL 4-13-1.2)
15. The term "**Person(s)**" shall mean an individual, firm, joint stock company, partnership, association, private or municipal corporation, trust, estate, state, commission, political subdivision, any interstate body, the federal government or any agency or subdivision of the federal government, other government entity, or other legal entity.
16. The term "**Quarantine**" shall mean the act of holding an animal for a definite period of time in a means that prevents contact of that animal with other animals or the public at an escape-proof facility that has been approved for this use by the State Veterinarian. **NOTE: For livestock only, quarantine may be carried out at the farm where the animal is usually kept provided that access by the public can be restricted and the animal can be kept isolated from other susceptible species.**
17. The term "**Quarantine Facility**" shall mean a facility that has been approved by an authorized representative of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management for the purpose of quarantine as defined.
18. The term "**Strict Confinement**" as applied to:
  - a. attacking animals shall mean the act of confining an animal at the home of the animal in a manner that the animal is not allowed to run free and is not allowed to come into contact with any person or animal that does not reside at that location. This type of action may be done *in lieu* of quarantine at the discretion of the Animal Control Officer and only when the animal being confined is currently vaccinated against rabies and is not considered a high risk to escape, and the person in control of the animal is considered by the Animal Control Officer to be certain to adhere to the order for Strict Confinement.
  - b. animals that are the victims of wounds of unknown origin or attacks by domestic animals shall mean the act of confining an animal at the home of the animal in a manner that the animal is not allowed to run free and is not allowed to come into contact with any person or animal that does not reside at that location. This type of action may be done *in lieu* of quarantine at the discretion of the Animal Control Officer and only when the animal is not considered a high risk to escape and the person in control of the animal is considered by the Animal Control Officer to be certain to adhere to the order for Strict Confinement.
19. The term "**Target Species**" shall mean those animals at high risk for incubating rabies, including, but not limited to, raccoons, foxes, skunks, bats and woodchucks.

## Part 3: Roles and Responsibilities

### 1. Local Animal Control Officer:

- a. The key person in rabies management of all species, wild and domestic, is the local Animal Control Officer. All potential rabies exposures to humans or domestic animals are to be reported to the Animal Control Officer that has legal jurisdiction over the town/city where the exposure occurred.
- b. It is the responsibility of the Animal Control Officer to take the appropriate actions regarding the potential exposure regardless of whether the victim of the exposure is a person or domestic animal, and;
- c. If the victim of the exposure is a person, to report the incident to the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) for proper follow-up assessment and/or prophylaxis.
- d. The Animal Control Officer with jurisdiction over the municipality where the first known human or domestic animal exposure occurred is responsible for the transportation and submission of all specimens (from domestic animals or from wildlife) obtained from animals to the Rabies laboratory in the Division of State Health Laboratories of the Rhode Island Department of Health. This is necessary to ensure that a proper chain of custody and safety protocols are maintained for the sample and that the sample will be appropriately handled and stored during transport and submission to the lab for analysis.
- e. The Animal Control Officer is responsible for enforcing any means of rabies control and/or suppression such as ordering quarantine and enforcing state laws regarding rabies vaccination.
- f. Quarantine must be initiated immediately after a domestic animal is exposed to a potentially rabid animal. If the wild or domestic animal causing the exposure is being tested for rabies, it is the responsibility of the Animal Control Officer to coordinate with the RI Department of Health for the result of the testing; and, if those results are negative, the quarantined animal is to be released immediately.
- g. Animal Control Officers should make every effort to submit animal's head only unless the animal is a bat.

*See tables for guidance protocols for exposure of domestic animals to potentially rabid animals.*

### 2. Rhode Island State Veterinarian:

- a. The State Veterinarian is the Chairman of the Rabies Control Board, and will convene the Rabies Control Board as necessary to address any rabies related issues that are under the purview of that body.
- b. The State Veterinarian will coordinate and assist Animal Control Officers in procedural matters.
- c. The State Veterinarian may assist in obtaining specimens for rabies testing when the animal to be tested is a farm animal or large wild animal.
- d. The State Veterinarian will also assist Veterinarians in formulation of management plans for animals that have signs consistent with rabies infection.

### 3. The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH):

- a. RIDOH will assess potential human rabies exposures. Based upon this assessment RIDOH will recommend the appropriate course of action, which may include post-exposure prophylaxis.

- b. All potential cases of human rabies exposures must be reported to RIDOH.
- c. RIDOH will maintain testing capacity for postmortem analysis in animals and provide sample and submission requirements for testing.
- d. RIDOH can coordinate postmortem analysis for rabies on human samples through coordination of sample submission to CDC.
- e. RIDOH will test all approved specimens submitted to the Rabies lab with a completed test requisition form for rabies testing. Approval for testing may come from the Animal Control Officer, DEM Division of Law Enforcement, the State Veterinarian, or RIDOH.
- f. If the ACO contact is not provided on the submission form, reporting of results may be delayed.
- g. RIDOH will report results of rabies testing to the ACO that submitted the samples for testing. RIDOH WILL REPORT RESULTS TO ALL PEOPLE LISTED AS POTENTIAL EXPOSURES ON THE RISHL SUBMISSION FORM, WHICH CAN BE FOUND IN APPENDIX B.

**4. Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Environmental Police:**

- a. DEM Environmental Police may assist with wildlife issues. ACOs will be the primary responding agency for exposures to wildlife. Environmental police may provide a support role as resources allow.
- b. DEM Environmental Police will forward information to RIDOH for all incoming calls from the public concerning a bat being found in an occupied dwelling regardless of whether an officer responded to the call.
- c. DEM Environmental Police may assist when there is contact between a wild animal and a person or domestic animal. If a person or domestic animal is involved, the Animal Control Officer with jurisdiction over the city or town where the contact occurred will be notified and will be the primary responding agency.
- d. DEM Environmental Police may assist when there is a wild animal outdoors that is exhibiting abnormal behavior.
- e. DEM Environmental Police will not assist in removal of nuisance wildlife from a building or other property when there has been no chance of rabies exposure to a person or domestic animal involving that animal.

**5. Health Care Providers:**

- a. All physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants must report animal bites and potential rabies exposures to the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) and to the Animal Control Officer with jurisdiction over the city or town where the exposure occurred.
- b. All physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants must report cases consistent with clinical rabies to the RI Department of Health.  
<https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/216-30-05-1>
- c. Physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants are responsible for the administration of post-exposure prophylaxis to humans as appropriate and in consultation with the RI Department of Health.

## 6. Veterinarians:

- a. Veterinarians must have thorough working knowledge of all state Rabies laws, regulations, and policies, as well as the most current version of the Compendium of Rabies Prevention and Control as published by the National Association of State and Public Health Veterinarians. (See page 14 for applicable laws and regulations).
- b. Veterinarians must promote rabies awareness for staff and clients.
- c. Veterinarians must educate clients of their legal responsibility to maintain current vaccination status of dogs, cats, and ferrets, as well as other animals, for which a USDA approved vaccine exists, that have contact with the public. Veterinarians should document cases where owners willingly fail to comply with rabies laws and make appropriate notation of such failure to comply in the animal's veterinary record. Veterinarians should consider reporting those situations to the Animal Control Officer in the municipality where the animal resides.
- d. Veterinarians should formulate a hospital/clinic procedural policy for the following:
  - i. Reporting and recording of all potential rabies exposures suffered by personnel to the Animal Control Officer in the municipality where the exposure occurred.
  - ii. Ensuring that all staff remains currently trained and familiar with the state laws and regulations pertaining to rabies control.
  - iii. Establishing and maintaining a contact sheet of rabies contacts.
  - iv. Consider a policy for pre-exposure prophylaxis for all employees who handle animals.
  - v. Establish a policy for management of animals that are potentially incubating rabies or exhibiting signs of rabies.
- e. All potential rabies exposures to personnel must be reported to the Animal Control Officer in the municipality where the exposure occurred and to the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH).
- f. All animals for which rabies is a differential diagnosis must be reported to the State Veterinarian as soon as rabies becomes a consideration.
- g. All animals that present with a wound of unknown origin that is consistent with being inflicted by fighting with or being bitten by another animal (including but not limited to bite wounds, scratches, abscesses) must be reported to the Animal Control Officer in the municipality where the animal resides.
- h. All rabies vaccination records and certificates must be kept in accordance with RI laws and regulations.
- i. All rabies vaccinations must be performed in a manner consistent with state laws and regulations, and not be performed in a manner that is inconsistent with the guidelines set forth in this manual. Follow vaccine manufacturers label instructions for administration and duration of immunity. Be familiar with the definition of currently vaccinated.
- j. Veterinarians may be asked to assist in obtaining samples for submission for rabies testing.

## 7. Nuisance Wildlife Control Specialists (NWCS):

- a. Nuisance Wildlife Control Specialists are professionals licensed by the DEM to assist the general public with wildlife problems. NWCS come in contact with a variety of wild mammal species including those classified as "target species" and for this reason should be considered at high risk of exposure.



- b. Pre-exposure prophylaxis should be considered for all persons working directly with wildlife.
- c. Proper measures such as use of gloves and other protective equipment to limit exposure must always be employed.
- d. All potential rabies exposures to humans or domestic animals must be reported to the local Animal Control Officer and Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) immediately.
- e. If the situation warrants that an animal be submitted to the RIDOH for testing, the animal must be euthanized in a manner that does not damage the brain. Every effort should be made to submit the animal's head only unless the animal is a bat.
- f. Do not immediately release or dispose of any bat that was found in peoples living quarters. Any bat found in a room or common area of a house where there is the following: an infant, child, a domestic animal, a sleeping adult, an elderly person, a person who is impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs, a person with a disability, or a person with an impaired ability to communicate is a candidate for rabies testing. The local Animal Control Officer and RIDOH must be contacted immediately.

**8. Wildlife Rehabilitators:**

- a. Wildlife rehabilitators are licensed by the DEM to provide care for injured and orphaned wildlife until such time as they can be returned to the wild. Wildlife rehabilitators handle a wide variety of wild mammals and should be considered at risk for exposure.
- b. Pre-exposure prophylaxis should be considered for all persons working directly with wildlife.
- c. Proper measures such as use of gloves and other protective equipment to limit exposure must always be employed.
- d. The rehabilitation of adult "target species" and bats of any age is subject to restriction by regulation.
- e. Rehabilitation of juvenile "target species" requires a special permit from the DEM.
- f. Any "target species" that dies while in confinement must be reported to the RIDOH and the Animal Control Officer with jurisdiction over the city or town where the animal was kept.
- g. When receiving injured or orphaned wildlife, the name, address, and telephone number of the person submitting an animal and the location where the animal was found must be recorded at the time of intake.
- h. All potential rabies exposures to humans or domestic animals must be reported to the Animal Control Officer in the town where the incident occurred and to RIDOH.

**9. Public**

- a. Avoid wildlife contact between yourself, your pets, and your livestock.
- b. Maintain dogs, cats, and ferrets currently vaccinated as required by law.
- c. All animals that have public contact and for which a USDA licensed vaccine exists must be vaccinated according to RI regulation.
- d. Report all potential rabies exposures that happen to you or your family to the Animal Control Officer in the municipality where the exposure occurred and to RIDOH. All potential rabies exposures must be reported regardless of whether the animal that caused the exposure is domestic, wild, or currently vaccinated. You do not need to

report bites from animals that are not mammals, however if an animal that is not a mammal bites you, you should contact your physician for advice.

- e. Report all potential rabies exposures, in which your pets or livestock are victims, to the Animal Control Officer in the municipality where the exposure occurred. All potential rabies exposures must be reported regardless of whether the animal that caused the exposure is domestic, wild, or currently vaccinated. You do not need to report bites from animals that are not mammals, however if an animal that is not a mammal bites your pet or livestock, you should contact your veterinarian for advice.
- f. Comply with all public health measures designed to protect you, your pets, and your livestock, including receiving rabies immunization, adhering to terms of quarantine or confinement orders, and reporting any illness in your animals.

## Protocol Summary for Management of Domestic Animals that Have Potentially Exposed People

	Animal is Currently Vaccinated	Animal is NOT Currently Vaccinated
<p><b>The attacking animal is a dog, cat, or ferret, and, the animal appears <u>HEALTHY</u></b></p>	<p>Notify ACO who will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Issue an order of quarantine <u>or</u> strict confinement for 10 days; or,</li> <li>4. Order Euthanasia and subsequent testing (only if the animal is too dangerous to maintain in quarantine or confinement, or is suffering as determined by ACO or a veterinarian).</li> </ol>	<p>Notify ACO who will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Issue an order of quarantine for 10 days; and,</li> <li>5. Vaccinate at time of release from quarantine; or,</li> <li>6. Order Euthanasia and subsequent testing (only if the animal is too dangerous to maintain in quarantine, or is suffering as determined by an ACO or veterinarian).</li> </ol>
<p><b>The attacking animal is a dog, cat, or ferret and the animal does <u>NOT</u> appear to be healthy</b></p>	<p>Contact RIDOH who will consult with the State Veterinarian and the ACO to develop an appropriate management plan for the animal to consider confinement, quarantine, and/or testing, based on the circumstances.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Contact RIDOH who will consult with the State Veterinarian and the ACO to develop an appropriate management plan for the animal to consider quarantine, and/or testing, based on the circumstances.</li> <li>4. If quarantined, vaccinate at the time of release.</li> </ol>
<p><b>The attacking animal is other than a dog, cat, or ferret. (i.e. Livestock)</b></p>	<p>Contact RIDOH who will consult with the State Veterinarian and the ACO to develop an appropriate management plan for the animal to consider confinement, quarantine, and/or testing, based on the circumstances.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Contact RIDOH who will consult with the State Veterinarian and the ACO to develop an appropriate management plan for the animal to consider quarantine, and/or testing, based on the circumstances:</li> <li>4. If quarantined, recommend vaccination at the time of release, unless otherwise required.</li> </ol>

# Protocol Summary for Domestic Animals that are Exposed to Wildlife

EXPOSURE LEVEL	Animal Currently Vaccinated	Animal Previously Vaccinated but Overdue	No Proof of Vaccination
<p><b>High Likelihood of Exposure:</b> Direct Contact or Exposure From a Rabies Positive Animal (animal tested and confirmed to have rabies) or Suspect Rabies Positive Animal (animal was not tested or specimen could not be tested) including unobserved domestic animals in a common area with a wild mammal.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Booster Rabies Vaccination ASAP; and,</li> <li>3. Order 45 day OBSERVATION</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Booster Rabies Vaccination ASAP; and,</li> <li>3. Order 45 day STRICT CONFINEMENT</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Vaccinate Dogs and Cats for Rabies ASAP. If vaccinated within 96 hours of exposure QUARANTINE for 4 months</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>OR</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Vaccinate Dogs and Cats for Rabies ASAP. If vaccinated more than 96 hours after exposure QUARANTINE for 6 months</li> </ol> <p><b>ALL Ferrets and Livestock with direct contact or exposure must be immediately vaccinated against rabies AND held in QUARANTINE for 6 months; consult State Veterinarian</b></p>
<p><b>Moderate Likelihood of Exposure:</b> Wound of Unknown Origin (wounds consistent with being bitten or scratched including cat abscesses)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Booster Rabies Vaccination ASAP; and,</li> <li>3. Order 45 Day OBSERVATION</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Booster Rabies Vaccination ASAP; and,</li> <li>3. Order 45 day STRICT CONFINEMENT</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. If age of wound is <b>known</b>, and the Dog or Cat is Rabies vaccinated within 96 hours of being wounded, STRICT CONFINEMENT for 4 months.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>OR</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. If age of wound is <b>unknown</b> the Dog or Cat must be Rabies vaccinated ASAP and held in STRICT CONFINEMENT for 6 months</li> </ol> <p><b>ALL Ferrets and Livestock with wounds of unknown origin must be immediately vaccinated against rabies AND held in STRICT CONFINEMENT for 6 months; consult State Veterinarian</b></p>
<p><b>Low Likelihood of Exposure:</b> Exposure By Proximity (the domestic animal could not have had contact with the wild animal even though they were near each other)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Follow ACO recommendations regarding Rabies Vaccination Booster</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Booster Rabies Vaccination ASAP; and,</li> <li>3. Order 45 Day OBSERVATION</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Vaccinate for Rabies Immediately; and,</li> <li>3. Order 4 month OBSERVATION (<b>All Ferrets and Livestock OBSERVATION for 6 months</b>)</li> </ol>

## Protocol Summary for Domestic Animals that are Attacked by other Domestic Animals

Status of Attacking Animal	Victim Animal Currently Vaccinated	Victim Animal Previously Vaccinated but Overdue	Victim Animal No Proof of Vaccination
<b>High Likelihood of Rabies Transmission:</b> Attacking Animal has been Confirmed Positive for Rabies Virus Infection <u>OR</u> Attacking Animal is <u>NOT</u> Present for Quarantine or Testing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Booster Rabies Vaccination ASAP; and,</li> <li>3. Order 45 day OBSERVATION</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Booster Rabies Vaccination ASAP; and,</li> <li>3. Order 45 day STRICT CONFINEMENT</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Vaccinate Dogs and Cats for Rabies ASAP. If vaccinated within 96 hours of exposure QUARANTINE for 4 months</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>OR</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Vaccinate Dogs and Cats for Rabies ASAP. If vaccinated more than 96 hours after exposure QUARANTINE for 6 months</li> </ol> <p><b>ALL Ferrets and Livestock with direct contact or exposure must be immediately vaccinated against rabies AND held in QUARANTINE for 6 months; consult State Veterinarian.</b></p>
<b>Moderate Likelihood of Rabies Transmission:</b> Attacking Animal is <u>NOT</u> Currently Vaccinated <u>AND</u> is Present	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. QUARANTINE Attacker for ten (10) days; and,</li> <li>3. Vaccinate Attacker upon release from QUARANTINE</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Booster Rabies Vaccination ASAP for Victim; and,</li> <li>3. QUARANTINE Attacker for ten (10) days; and,</li> <li>4. Vaccinate Attacker upon release from QUARANTINE</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Administer Rabies Vaccination ASAP for Victim; and,</li> <li>3. QUARANTINE Attacker for ten (10) days; and,</li> <li>4. Vaccinate Attacker upon release from QUARANTINE</li> </ol>
<b>Low Likelihood of Rabies Transmission:</b> Attacking Animal is Currently Vaccinated <u>AND</u> is Present	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. STRICT CONFINEMENT for Attacker for ten (10) days</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Booster Rabies Vaccination ASAP for Victim; and,</li> <li>3. STRICT CONFINEMENT for Attacker for ten (10) days</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify ACO; and,</li> <li>2. Administer Rabies Vaccination ASAP for Victim; and,</li> <li>3. STRICT CONFINEMENT for Attacker for ten (10) days</li> </ol>

***NOTE: In the event that an attacking animal develops rabies while under an order of quarantine or strict confinement the victim animal must be managed as being exposed to a known rabid animal, as described above, immediately upon determination that the attacker was infected with rabies.***

## Rabies Contact Information

Contact Name	Primary Number	Alternate Number
<b>Local Animal Control</b>	See town website	See town website
<b>Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH)</b> Division of Infectious Disease & Epidemiology <a href="http://www.health.ri.gov/diseases/rabies/?parm=82">http://www.health.ri.gov/diseases/rabies/?parm=82</a>	(401) 222-2577	(401) 276-8046 (after hours only)
<b>RI DEM Division of Agriculture</b> <b>State Veterinarian</b>	(401) 537-4281	(401) 222-3070 (after hours only)
<b>RI DEM Division of Agriculture</b> <a href="https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/agriculture-and-forest-environment/agriculture/staff">https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/agriculture-and-forest-environment/agriculture/staff</a>	(401) 222-2781	
<b>RI DEM Environmental Police</b> <a href="https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/law-enforcement">https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/law-enforcement</a>	(401) 222-3070	( dispatch staffed 24/7)
<b>RI DEM/Division of Fish and Wildlife</b> <a href="http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/index.htm">http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/index.htm</a>	(401) 789-7481	(401) 222-3070 (after hours only)
<b>RI Dept. of HEALTH Lab (submissions)</b> <a href="https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/fish-wildlife">https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/fish-wildlife</a>	(401) 222-5600	

## Other Rabies Related Resources:

**Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association:**

<http://www.rivma.org/>

**Rules and Regulations Governing the Prevention, Control, and Suppression of Rabies Within the State of Rhode Island:**

[Rules and Regulations Governing the Prevention, Control and Suppression of Rabies Within the State of Rhode Island \(2/25/16\)](#)

**The Veterinary Practice Act:**

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE5/5-25/INDEX.HTM>

**Rules and Regulations for the Licensure of Veterinarians:**

<http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/released/pdf/DOH/4825.pdf>

**Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2016:**

<https://www.nasphv.org/Documents/NASPHVRabiesCompendium.pdf>

**Nuisance Wildlife Control Specialists:**

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/wildlifehuntered/wildlifemanagement/>



## **General Requirements:**

1. Submit only the heads of domestic and wild animals (not whole animals). Submit bats whole.
2. For farm animals, see instructions in the following section.
3. Package the animal head in two layers of heavy-duty plastic bags and tie it securely. Deliver to the State Health Laboratories (SHL) as soon as possible to ensure integrity. If you cannot deliver the specimen within 24 hours of death, refrigerate or place it in a cooler with ice packs until delivered. Avoid freezing.
4. Deliver to the SHL, Central Services (CS) area, between 8:30 AM-4:30 PM, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays).
5. Submit all specimens with a *Rabies Testing Submission Form*. Fill out the form completely. Also, if the specimen package is not already identified, fill out a Rabies Specimen Identification sticker provided by CS staff and affix it to the specimen's outermost container.
6. Improperly submitted specimens and/or specimens accompanied by incomplete forms may result in delays. If you have any questions about packaging, contact the SHL at 222-5588, before submitting.
7. If attending veterinarians wish to have any remaining specimens held for further testing or for cremation or burial (for rabies negative specimens only), note this on the Rabies Testing Submission Form. The SHL will contact the veterinarian when rabies testing is completed.

## **Species Specific Requirements:**

### Wild Animals, dogs, cats, and other domestic animals:

- Decapitate (or arrange with a veterinarian to decapitate) and submit the head.

### Bats:

- Submit bats whole. Euthanize bats unless it cannot be performed without risk of escape of the bat or without risk of rabies exposure to the person performing the euthanasia. Ideally, arrange with a pest control company or veterinarian for euthanasia.
- When euthanasia cannot be performed, submit live bats in a small, clear plastic, and well-sealed container in a manner that the bat can be seen within the container. Also, place the container within a leak-proof bag. Make small ventilation holes in the container so the bat can breathe and conspicuously mark the container with "CAUTION-Live Bat".

### Large Animal Species (Equine):

- Attending veterinarian will decapitate when possible (if euthanized by veterinarian) and safely package the specimen for transportation to the SHL.
- The ACO in the town where the animal was euthanized is responsible for transportation to the SHL.
- If the attending veterinarian is not present when the animal dies, the State Veterinarian or Animal Health Technician will decapitate the animal and transport the specimen to the SHL.





Rhode Island State Health Laboratories (RISHL Protocol for Rabies Specimen Submission 2024)

- Attending veterinarian is required to report suspicion of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and/or West Nile Virus (WNV) if these diseases are considered differential diagnoses. Rabies testing will be completed as a priority, and if the results are negative for rabies, EEE and/or WNV testing will be performed at the SHL.

Large Animal Species (Bovine and Small Ruminant):

- Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) are possible in some cattle and small ruminants (sheep and goats), and the signs may be consistent with rabies. If a TSE is a potential differential diagnosis when an animal is being tested for rabies, notify the State Veterinarian prior to submission since the sample will need to be handled differently and submitted to a lab with the capability to diagnose TSEs, and not the SHL.
- All cattle specimens will be submitted to the University of Connecticut Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory. Rabies testing will be the priority, and if negative for rabies, the remaining sample will be tested for TSE. Exceptions may be discussed on a case-by-case basis.
- Sheep and Goat samples for which Scrapie is a possibility will be submitted to the University of Connecticut Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory. Rabies testing will be the priority, and if negative for rabies, the remaining sample will be tested for Scrapie.
- Sheep and Goat samples for which Scrapie is not considered a differential diagnosis will be tested at the SHL.
- For all Cattle, Sheep, and Goats that die with signs consistent with rabies, but were not euthanized by a veterinarian, the State Veterinarian or Animal Health Technician will obtain appropriate samples for testing and will be responsible for proper packaging and lab submission.
- For all Cattle, Sheep, and Goats that are euthanized by an attending veterinarian, the veterinarian should decapitate the animal and properly package the sample.
- For all Sheep, and Goats that are euthanized, decapitated, and tissue samples packaged by a veterinarian:
  - For those that are only being tested for rabies, the ACO in the town where the animal is euthanized is required to transport to the SHL.
  - For those that a TSE is a differential diagnosis, the State Veterinarian or Animal Health Technician will arrange proper transportation to the proper laboratory.

Animals Not Specifically Covered:

Contact the State Veterinarian for specific advice and/or assistance with submission of samples.

## **Test Results and Reporting**

In most cases, testing will be completed the day of submission (if submitted before 11 AM) or on the following day. SHL will report all test results to the Department of Health, Center for Acute and Infectious Diseases and Epidemiology (CAIDE). CAIDE will report results to the submitter and follow up with case management.

## **Contact Information**

State Health Laboratories Rabies Lab: 222-5588 or 222-5600 (main switchboard)



**STATE HEALTH LABORATORIES**  
**50 ORMS ST. PROVIDENCE RI 02904-9971**  
**401-222-5600, FAX 401-222-6985, TTY: 711, WWW.HEALTH.RI.GOV**

**RABIES TESTING SUBMISSION FORM**

**Instructions for Submitter:** Use this form to submit animal specimens for rabies testing. **Complete sections I, II and III below.** Submit animal head in double heavy-duty plastic bags. Deliver to the State Health Laboratories 8:30 AM-4:30 PM, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays). Infectious Disease and Epidemiology staff will provide results by telephone (usually within three business days). Contact the Water Microbiology and Rabies Lab (222-5588) for submission questions. Contact Infectious Disease and Epidemiology (222-2577) for human exposure case management questions. Contact the State Veterinarian (222-2781) for animal exposure case management questions.

**I: Submitter Information**

Name:
Organization (If Applicable):
Street, City, State and Zip:
Telephone number:

**II: Specimen Information**

Animal species (type):	<input type="checkbox"/> Pet <input type="checkbox"/> Stray <input type="checkbox"/> Wild <input type="checkbox"/> Other
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**III: Exposure Information (Note: Use reverse if more space is needed)**

Name of Person(s) and/or Pet(s) Potentially Exposed	Telephone number(s)	Street and City/Town Where Exposure Occurred	Date(s) of Exposure

Please provide exposure details:

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**IV: Lab Information and Test Results**

**For Lab Use Only**

Element #:  (Place Label Here)	Central Services Date Received: _____ Tech: _____
	Rabies Laboratory Date Received: _____ Tech: _____

Results for Rabies:  
 Negative  
 POSITIVE by Direct Fluorescent Antibody Method  
 Other (list)

Completed by: _____ Date: _____	Results confirmed by: _____ Date: _____	<u>Element ID</u> <u>Check</u>  <u>Batch #</u>
Faxed by: _____ Date: _____	Entered into NEDSS by: _____ Date: _____	
Element Entry by: _____ Date: _____	Element Review by: _____ Date: _____	

**Delivered By:** Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_