

AVMA MODEL RABIES CONTROL ORDINANCE

Section I—Definitions

Animal—Any of the order Mammalia, all of which are capable of being infected with and transmitting rabies.

Animal shelter—A public facility that is maintained by a government entity or a private facility providing contractual services to a government entity for the purpose of impounding or harboring animals.

Bite—Wound made by biting where the skin has been penetrated by an animal's teeth.

Cat—Any domestic feline animal (*Felis catus*).

Currently vaccinated against rabies— Vaccination status of an animal that has received a primary rabies vaccine or has received a booster vaccine administered in accordance with the current Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, authored by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians. Rabies vaccination must be performed by or under the direct supervision of a veterinarian who is licensed or legally permitted to practice veterinary medicine in the state.

Dog—Any domestic canine animal (*Canis familiaris*).

Ferret—Any domestic ferret animal (*Mustela putorius furo*).

Isolation—Confinement of an animal exposed or potentially exposed to rabies.

Non-bite exposure—Instance where saliva from an animal has come in contact with an open wound or a mucous membrane.

Own—To keep, harbor, or have control, charge, or custody of an animal.

Owner— A person having the right of property or custody of an animal or who keeps or harbors an animal or knowingly permits an animal to remain on or about any premises occupied by that person. This term shall not apply to veterinarians or kennel operators who have temporary custody, for a period of less than 60 days, of animals owned by others.

Quarantine—The strict confinement of an animal in a manner that precludes direct contact with other animals not concurrently in quarantine or persons other than the owner or caretaker. The quarantine shall be conducted under an order issued by the Public Health Official or the Rabies Control Authority designating the specific place, manner, and provisions of the quarantine.

Rabies Control Authority—A government agency or persons who are legally authorized and responsible for enforcement of this ordinance.

Section II—Rabies Vaccination Requirements

A. Initial Vaccination

Effective _____ in the (county, city, town, or village) of _____, the owner of every dog, cat, or ferret 3 months of age or older shall have the animal vaccinated against rabies. Vaccination at a younger age should be in accordance with the labels of USDA-licensed rabies vaccines. Unvaccinated dogs, cats, or ferrets more than 3 months of age that are acquired or moved into the (county, city, town, or village) must be vaccinated within 30 days of purchase or arrival unless there is documented evidence of current vaccination.

B. Revaccination

The owner of every dog, cat, or ferret shall have the animal revaccinated 12 months after initial vaccination. Thereafter, the interval between revaccinations should conform to the manufacturer's product labeling or local jurisdiction laws or regulations.

Section III—Duties

A. Duties of Veterinarian

It shall be the duty of each veterinarian, when vaccinating any dog, cat, or ferret, to complete a certificate of rabies vaccination (or generate a computer ~~print-out~~ printout) for each dog, cat, or ferret that is vaccinated. The certificate shall include the following information:

1. Owner's name, address, and telephone number.
2. Description of the dog, cat, or ferret (species, breed, sex, markings, age, and name).
3. Date of vaccination.
4. Date of vaccination expiration.
5. Rabies vaccination tag number.
6. Vaccine producer and product name.
7. Manufacturer's serial or lot number of vaccine.
8. Veterinarian's signature.
9. Veterinarian's address and license number.
10. Microchip number, if applicable.

The original certificate of rabies vaccination shall be provided to the owner. The veterinarian who administers the vaccination shall retain a copy, and make copies available to the Rabies Control Authority or Public Health Official as needed. All parties should retain the certificate for the duration of the vaccination plus 1 year. A durable metal or plastic, series-numbered rabies tag issued by the Rabies Control Authority or the veterinarian who administers the vaccine may be provided to the owner with instructions that it must be securely attached to the dog, cat, or ferret's collar or harness.

B. Duties of Owner

The owner is responsible for procuring rabies vaccination for his or her dog, cat, or ferret as outlined above and for securing a license. The owner is responsible for assuring that his or her dog, cat, or ferret wears a collar or harness with identification and the approved license or rabies tag securely attached.*

Section IV—Transient or Show Dogs, Cats, or Ferrets

Owners of dogs, cats, or ferrets who are temporarily visiting a specific rabies control jurisdiction with their dogs, cats, or ferrets or who are exhibiting a dog, cat, or ferret in competition must carry with them and be prepared, upon demand of a legal authority, to present a current certificate of rabies vaccination for each dog, cat, or ferret.

Section V—Post-Exposure Management

This section refers to any animal exposed to a confirmed or suspected rabid animal. Wild mammalian carnivores or bats that are not available or suitable for testing should be regarded as rabid animals.

A. Dogs, Cats, and Ferrets

Any illness in an exposed animal should be reported immediately to the local health department. If signs suggestive of rabies develop (eg, paralysis or seizures), the animal should be euthanized and the head shipped for testing.

1. Dogs, cats, and ferrets that have never been vaccinated and are exposed to a rabid animal should be euthanized immediately. If the owner is unwilling to have this done, the animal should be placed in strict isolation for 6 months. Isolation in this context refers to confinement in an enclosure that precludes direct contact with people and other animals. Rabies vaccine should be administered upon entry into isolation or up to 28 days before release to comply with pre-exposure vaccination recommendations. There are currently no USDA-licensed biologics for post-exposure prophylaxis of previously unvaccinated domestic animals, and there is evidence that the use of vaccine alone will not reliably prevent the disease in these animals.
2. Animals overdue for a booster vaccination should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis based upon severity of exposure, time elapsed since last vaccination, number of previous vaccinations, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology to determine need for euthanasia or immediate revaccination and observation or isolation.
3. Dogs, cats, and ferrets that are currently vaccinated should be revaccinated immediately, kept under the owner's control, and observed for 45 days. The rationale for an observation period is based in part on the potential for overwhelming viral challenge, incomplete vaccine efficacy, improper vaccine administration, variable host immunocompetence, and immune-mediated fatality (ie, early death phenomenon).

B. Livestock

All species of livestock are susceptible to rabies; cattle and horses are the most frequently reported infected species. Any illness in an exposed animal should be reported immediately to the local health and agriculture officials. If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized and the head shipped for testing.

1. Unvaccinated livestock should be euthanized immediately. If the animal is not

- euthanized, it should be observed and confined on a case-by-case basis for 6 months.
2. Livestock exposed to a rabid animal and currently vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the USDA for that species should be revaccinated immediately and observed for 45 days.
 3. Multiple rabid animals in a herd or herbivore-to-herbivore transmission are uncommon; therefore, restricting the rest of the herd if a single animal has been exposed to or infected by rabies is usually not necessary.
 4. Handling and consumption of tissues from exposed animals might carry a risk for rabies transmission. Risk factors depend in part on the sites of exposure, amount of virus present, severity of wounds, and whether sufficient contaminated tissue has been excised. If an exposed animal is to be custom or home slaughtered for consumption, it should be done immediately after exposure, and all tissues should be cooked thoroughly. Persons handling exposed animals, carcasses, and tissues should use barrier precautions. Historically, federal guidelines for meat inspectors required that any animal known to have been exposed to rabies within 8 months be rejected for slaughter. If such exposures occur in food animals before slaughter, USDA Food and Inspection Service and state meat inspectors should be notified. Rabies virus is widely distributed in tissues of rabid animals. Tissues and products from a rabid animal should not be used for human or animal consumption or transplantation. Pasteurization and cooking will inactivate rabies virus; therefore, inadvertently drinking pasteurized milk or eating thoroughly cooked animal products does not constitute a rabies exposure.

C. Other Animals

Other mammals exposed to a rabid animal should be euthanized immediately. Animals maintained in USDA-licensed research facilities or accredited zoological park should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in consultation with public health authorities. Management options may include isolation, observation, or administration of rabies biologics.

Section VI—Management of Animals that Bite Humans

Animals

A. Dogs, Cats, and Ferrets

Rabies virus is excreted in the saliva of infected dogs, cats, and ferrets during illness or for only a few days before illness or death. Regardless of rabies vaccination status, a healthy dog, cat, or ferret that exposes a person should be confined and observed daily for 10 days from the time of the exposure; administration of rabies vaccine to the animal is not recommended during the observation period to avoid confusing signs of rabies with rare adverse reactions. Any illness in the animal should be reported immediately to the local health department. Such animals should be evaluated by a veterinarian at the first sign of illness during confinement. If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized and the head submitted for testing. Any stray or unwanted dog, cat, or ferret that exposes a person may be euthanized immediately and the head submitted for rabies examination.

B. Other Animals

Other animals that might have exposed a person to rabies should be reported immediately to the local health department. Management of animals other than dogs, cats, and ferrets depends on the species, the circumstances of the exposure, the epidemiology of rabies in the area, the exposing animal's history, current health status, and the animal's potential for exposure to rabies. The shedding period for rabies virus is undetermined for most species. Previous vaccination of these animals might not preclude the necessity for euthanasia and testing.

Section VII—Testing of Suspect Rabid Animals

If a suspect rabid animal is available for testing, an animal that was bitten by or otherwise potentially exposed to the suspect rabid animal will be isolated pending the rabies test result on the suspect animal. If the testing results are negative, the bitten or otherwise potentially exposed animal shall be released with the approval of the Rabies Control Authority or the Public Health Official.

Section VIII—Impoundment of Animals Found in Violation of this Code

- A. The Rabies Control Authority shall operate a shelter or shelters, or the Rabies Control Authority may enter into cooperative agreements with a licensed veterinarian or other organization for the establishment and operation of a quarantine facility.
- B. Any animal that is found off the owner's premises at large or without a valid rabies vaccination tag shall be impounded. All impounded animals shall be given proper care and maintenance. Each impounded animal shall be kept and maintained at the shelter for a minimum of _____ days, unless it is reclaimed earlier by the owner.
- C. Notice of impoundment of all animals, including any relevant identification marks, shall be posted at the shelter as public notification of impoundment.
- D. An owner may reclaim a vaccinated animal that is impounded for lack of rabies vaccination tag by furnishing proof of rabies vaccination and paying all impoundment and licensing fees prior to release.
- E. An owner may reclaim an unvaccinated animal during the period of impoundment by paying the prescribed shelter and vaccination fees of \$_____. A rabies vaccination must be administered prior to or within 72 hours after release; arrangements will be made by the local government to reimburse the rabies vaccination fee to a veterinarian designated by the owner after receipt of proof of vaccination.
- F. Any animal that is unclaimed at the end of ____ days shall become property of the Rabies Control Authority in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Section IX—Penalties for Violation of Ordinance

Any owner who fails to comply with any of the provisions of this ordinance shall be guilty of an infraction and subject to a fine of not less than \$_____ and not more than \$_____ .

Section X—Shelter Fees

Impoundment fees shall be paid by the owner.

Section XI—Enforcement

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the _____ to administer this ordinance, and to promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its implementation.
- B. Enforcement shall be the responsibility of _____.
- C. Effective _____ in the (county, city, town, or village) of _____, all regulations pertaining to rabies control (and licensing) will be enforced by the (state, county, or local) enforcement officers or others with regulatory authority specified by the governing unit.

Explanatory Notes

Communities that require licensure of dogs or cats may insert the following sections in the ordinance:

Licensing

Effective _____ in the (county, city, town, or village) of _____, every dog or cats 4 months of age and older shall be licensed. On proof of rabies vaccination in accordance with Section II of this ordinance and upon application for licensure and payment of the required fee to the (county, city, town, or village) clerk of _____, a license shall be issued. All licenses will expire _____ and each year thereafter.

Fees

Annual license fees shall be as follows:

Male (sexually intact)	\$ _____
Male (neutered)	\$ _____
Female (sexually intact)	\$ _____
Female (neutered)	\$ _____

NOTE: Rabies vaccinations may be recommended for animals other than dogs, cats, and ferrets for which a USDA-licensed vaccine is available; however, a current vaccination history may not eliminate the need for euthanasia and rabies testing if the animal bites a human.

For more information regarding rabies prevention and control, please go to <http://www.nasphv.org/documentsCompendia.html>.

*The license or rabies tag may have to be required to be worn at all times unless specific exemptions are set forth in the local ordinance.