

VERMONT COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REGULATIONS

CHAPTER IV - RABIES CONTROL

4-401. REPORTING OF ANIMAL BITES:

(a) It shall be the duty of every physician to report within 24 hours to the local health officer the full name, age and address of any person under his or her care or observation who has been bitten by an animal of a species subject to rabies.

(b) If no physician is in attendance and the person bitten is a child, it shall be the duty of the parent or guardian to make such report within 24 hours. If the person bitten is an adult, such person shall make the report, or, if incapacitated, it shall be made by whoever is caring for the person bitten.

4-402. Principles of Rabies Control

1. Human Rabies Prevention. Rabies in humans can be prevented either by eliminating exposures to rabid animals or by providing exposed persons with prompt local treatment of wounds combined with appropriate passive and active immunization. The rationale for recommending preexposure and post exposure rabies prophylaxis and details of their administration can be found in the current recommendations of the Advisory Committee Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Public Health Service (PHS). These recommendations, along with information concerning the current local and regional status of animal rabies and availability of human rabies biologics, are available from the Vermont Department of Health. Persons who regularly handle animals such as trappers, slaughterhouse workers and taxidermists should consider receiving rabies preexposure vaccination.

2. Domestic Pets and Wolf Hybrids. Local governments are encouraged to initiate and maintain effective programs to ensure vaccination of all domestic pets and wolf hybrids and to remove strays and unwanted animals in accordance with Titles 20, Chapters 191 and 193 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated.

"Domestic pet" and "Wolf-hybrid" are defined in Title 20, Chapter 193 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated. An owner of a domestic pet or wolf-hybrid must have that animal inoculated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian in accordance with Section 3581 of Title 20 if applicable, and with rules adopted by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

The current recommendations of the Compendium of Animal Rabies Control, National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, endorsed by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, serve as the basis for the animal rabies control program and procedures in Vermont and facilitate standardization of procedures throughout the United States.

4-403. Control Methods in Domestic and Confined Animals

1. Postexposure Management. Any animal bitten or scratched by a wild animal not available for testing must be regarded as having been exposed to rabies.

a. Dogs, Cats and Ferrets. Unvaccinated dogs, cats and ferrets exposed to a rabid animal must be euthanized immediately. If the owner is unwilling to have this done, the animal must be placed in strict isolation for 6 months and vaccinated 1 month before being released. Dogs, cats and ferrets that are currently vaccinated must be revaccinated immediately, kept under the owner's control and observed for 45 days. Animals with expired vaccinations need to be evaluated on a case by case basis.

b. **Livestock.** All species of livestock are susceptible to rabies; cattle and horses are among the most frequently infected of all domestic animals. Potential for exposure of livestock to rabies must be assessed on a case by case basis. Neither tissues nor milk from a rabid animal should be used for human or animal consumption. However, since pasteurization temperatures will inactivate rabies virus, drinking pasteurized milk or eating cooked meat does not constitute a rabies exposure, although exposures will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

c. **Other Animals.** Other animals exposed to rabies should be evaluated on a case by case basis.

2. Management of Animals that Bite Humans.

The local health officer shall cause an apparently healthy dog, cat or ferret that bites a person to be confined and observed for 10 days. It is recommended that rabies vaccine not be administered during the observation period. Such animals must be evaluated by a veterinarian at the first sign of illness during confinement. Any illness in the animal must be reported immediately to the local health officer. If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal must be humanely killed, its head removed, and the head shipped under refrigeration for examination by the state health department laboratory.

Other biting animals which may have exposed a person to rabies must be reported immediately to the local health officer. Prior vaccinations of an animal may not preclude the necessity for euthanasia and testing if the period of virus shedding is unknown for that species. Management of animals other than dogs, cats or ferrets depends on the species, the circumstances of the bite, and the epidemiology of rabies in the area, and the biting animal's history, current health status, and potential for exposure to rabies.

4-404. Control Methods in Wildlife

The public should be warned not to handle wildlife. Wild mammals (as well as the offspring of wild species cross-bred with domestic dogs and cats) that bite or otherwise expose people, pets or livestock should be considered for euthanasia and rabies examination. A person bitten by any wild mammal should immediately report the incident to a physician who can evaluate the need for antirabies treatment.

4-405. REMOVAL: A confined animal being observed for signs of rabies shall not be removed from one health district into another prior to the conclusion of the prescribed isolation period except with the permission of the health officer from whose district such animal is to be removed and the health officer to whose jurisdiction the animal is to be transferred, except that if removal is to be to another state, he or she shall give permission only after securing the consent of the commissioner of health of the state of Vermont. Such removal shall be private conveyance, as to prevent the escape of the animal or its coming in contact with other animals or persons.

4-406. LABORATORY SPECIMENS: Whenever any animal that has or is suspected of having rabies dies or is killed it shall be the duty of the health officer to cause the head of such animal to be removed and sent immediately, properly packed, with a complete history of the case to a laboratory approved for this purpose by the state commissioner of health. The health department shall be notified of the specimen's intended arrival.

4-407. DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS, SUBJECT TO RABIES; PRECAUTIONS: Whenever an animal, subject to rabies, is brought to a veterinarian to be destroyed, an attempt shall be made to ascertain that the animal has not bitten any person within the previous ten day period; before destroying the animal, he or she shall require the owner to sign a statement to this effect, and he or she shall not destroy an animal which has bitten a person within ten days. The health officer must be notified of any such biting incident.

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