

## **RABIES SPECIMENS**

All specimens submitted to the state lab for rabies testing must be pre-approved by the Vermont Department of Health 1-800-640-4374 (VT), 802-863-7240 so that the specimen can be tracked.

Only human exposure cases require testing on weekends and holidays.

Veterinarians should send only the head of a domestic pet. Brainstem and cerebellum via the foramen magnum is needed for cows and horses. The entire brain or head is needed for small livestock.

Wildlife specimens that fit into a rabies box can be shipped intact except for skunks. Skunks need to be decapitated or deodorized by sloshing the animal in the following solution: 1 quart hydrogen peroxide, ¼ cup of baking soda and 1 tsp. liquid soap. This solution can be used on pets (avoid eyes, rinse off).

Official rabies boxes (1x1x2' cardboard, insulated, cold packs (never use ice cubes), paperwork, two plastic bags) can be obtained from the state lab or VDH district offices. Many state police stations and veterinary clinics have boxes on hand.

## **SHIPPING RABIES SPECIMENS**

- Rabies specimens should **not** be shipped by US Mail.
- For more information about shipping rabies specimens, please call the State Public Health Veterinarian at the Vermont Department of Health at 1-800-640-4374 or 1-802-863-7240.

## **WILDLIFE AND RABIES**

The Vermont Department of Health is very interested in testing strange acting wildlife for rabies.

Game wardens can be reached by calling the state police.

State police dispatchers should give callers with rabies concerns the Rabies Hotline phone number 1-800-4-RABIES (1-800-472-2437) for general rabies information and the Vermont Department of Health phone number 1-800-640-4374 (802-863-7240) for rabies exposure concerns.

In the absence of a nearby warden, the responsibility to dispatch a threatening wild animal may fall upon a local town official or able neighbor. Wardens help submit rabies specimens when there is potential human exposure or when an unvaccinated domestic animal has contact with a wild animal.