



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Frederick County Health Department

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November 2012

Rabies COMAR for Individual Situations

A simplification of how the rabies COMAR will be applied in different situations.

This is only a guide and COMAR should always be consulted. The state veterinarian is available for unusual situations or if COMAR does not address the situation.

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What to do with the animal that was exposed to rabies from contact with a suspected or confirmed rabid animal

*Confirmed rabies cases are determined by the Maryland State Laboratory or the Maryland Department of Agriculture Animal Health Laboratory and are overseen by the Frederick County Health Department.

1. If the pet is **current** on their rabies vaccination:
 - a. The health department will need a copy of the vaccination records from the vet's office. These can be faxed to the health department at 301-600-3180.
 - b. The pet will need to be given a rabies booster as soon as possible after the exposure.
 - c. The pet will be placed under a 45 day quarantine overseen by the health department / animal control.
 - d. If the quarantined animal is euthanized or dies of natural causes at any point during the 45 day quarantine, it must be tested for rabies. ***
2. If the pet is **not current** on their rabies vaccination but has had a rabies vaccination before:
 - a. The health department will request a copy of the vaccination records from the vet's office.
 - b. The pet will need to be given a rabies booster as soon as possible after the exposure.
 - c. The health department will determine if the pet should be placed under a 45 day quarantine or a 6 month isolation
 - d. If the quarantined animal is euthanized or dies of natural causes at any point during the 45 day quarantine or 6 month isolation, it must be tested for rabies. ***
3. If the pet has **never** had a rabies vaccination:
 - a. The pet will need to be given a rabies booster as soon as possible after the exposure.
 - b. The pet will be placed under a 6 month isolation overseen by Animal Control.
 - c. If the quarantined animal is euthanized or dies of natural causes at any point during the 6 month isolation, it must be tested for rabies. ***

***Unusual circumstances can be put forth to the State Public Health Vet for exemptions from testing.



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What to do with an animal that bites a human or another animal

1. In Frederick County, animal bites should be reported to animal control at 301-600-1544. The owner of the biting animal will receive a Maryland Animal Bite Report (Report & Blue Cards) from animal control:
 - a. The owner of the biting pet has 36 hours to take their pet to a veterinarian for examination.
 - b. The vet has 36 hours from the time of the appointment to fill out the blue card and return it to the health department.
 - c. All cards must be filled out accurately and returned to the health department to ensure that all aspects of the quarantine are followed.

And

2. If the pet has a current rabies vaccine, is not current or has never had a rabies vaccine:
 - a. The pet is placed under a 10 day observation which is overseen by animal control.
 - b. If needed the pet will be given a rabies vaccine after the end of the 10 day observation.
 - c. If the animal is euthanized or dies of natural causes at any point during the 10 day quarantine, it must be tested for rabies.



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Directions for shipping animals to the State laboratory for Rabies Testing

1. Paperwork:
 - a. The updated paper work has been included in this mailing. Please contact the health department if additional forms are needed.
 - b. Fill out the paperwork accurately and as completely as possible.

2. Preparation:
 - a. The head must be removed unless the state lab has given expressed approval for that animal. Exceptions are made for smaller animals such as bats.
 - b. The head should be double bagged and kept cold until transport.
 - c. The bag must be labeled with animal species, owner's name, and date.

3. Shipping:
 - a. The head must be brought to the health department unless other arrangements have been made. Once the health department has received the specimen, it will be shipped down to the state lab in Baltimore.
 - b. Specimens received prior to 3:00pm will be shipped that day; however, specimens received after 3:00pm may be shipped the following day.
 - c. There is no weekend testing done by the state lab. So specimens shipped Friday will be tested on Monday. Exception for weekend testing must be approved by the state public health vet.

4. Notification:
 - a. The health department will call the vet with the lab results.
 - b. The health department will notify the victim and pet owner of lab results.
 - c. Most results are received within 48 hours of shipping the specimen from the health department.

When there has been no human exposure some animal rabies testing may be done at the MDA lab on Rosemont Avenue in Frederick. Contact the lab for details at 301-600-1548.