

# **Rabies Education and Outreach in Minnesota**

**USAHA Rabies Subcommittee  
October 29, 2019**

**Joni Scheftel DVM, MPH, DACVPM  
State Public Health Veterinarian  
Supervisor, Zoonotic Diseases Unit**

# Agenda

- **Commiserating on how hard this is**
- **Rabies outreach and education to specialized audiences**
  - **Rabies for Law Enforcement**
  - **Healthy Camps**
  - **Family practice residents/veterinary students/ED docs**
- **Rabies outreach to the public**
  - **Spooky night at the Science Museum of Minnesota**
  - **How to capture a bat video**

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*You are invited:*

## Rabies Training for Law Enforcement: Everything You Need to Know about Animal Bites and Rabies Risk

You are invited to attend a rabies training session specifically designed for law enforcement, including police officers and animal control officers.

Topics will include:

- Myth-busting rabies primer
- Minnesota rabies rules
- How to handle animal bite situations
- How to submit an animal for rabies testing
- Important state and local contacts

**DATE, from TIMES (typically 2 hours)**

**Location:**

This training is provided free of charge by the Minnesota Department of Health. Light refreshments will be provided.

Your RSVP is requested; to RSVP, please email Samantha Saunders at [samantha.saunders@state.mn.us](mailto:samantha.saunders@state.mn.us)

\*This training course has been approved by the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). Peace officers successfully completing this course will receive 2 continuing education credits.\*



Minnesota Department of Health  
625 Robert Street N  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Contact:

Contact: Samantha Saunders  
Phone: 651-201-5278  
[samantha.saunders@state.mn.us](mailto:samantha.saunders@state.mn.us)

## Evaluation Results from Most Recent Training 10/2019

- **18 participants from 9 Minnesota counties**
  - **29% Law enforcement, 35% Animal Control, 12% both, 12% LPH**
- **60% reported that their agency does not provide training in handling animal bites**
- **73% were regularly asked on the job about testing animals and rabies PEP**
- **88% strongly agreed that the training was useful for their jobs**
- **Suggestion at a previous training led to creation of rabies business cards**

# Rabies “Business Card”

## Animal Bites & Rabies Risk

Questions about an animal bite, bat encounter,  
or other potential rabies exposure?

Call the Minnesota Department of Health:

(651) 201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414

[www.health.state.mn.us/rabies](http://www.health.state.mn.us/rabies)  DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH

## Animal Bites & Rabies Risk

### If you are bitten:

- Wash the bite with soap and water
- If the bite broke the skin, call your health care provider. You *may* need a tetanus booster, antibiotics, or rabies shots
- If you are bitten by a pet, get the owner’s name, address, telephone number, and the pet’s rabies vaccination history

# Creatures of the Night: Bats in the Cabin



## Healthy Camps 2019

Carrie Klumb, MPH | Senior Epidemiologist, Zoonotic Diseases Unit

[carrie.klumb@state.mn.us](mailto:carrie.klumb@state.mn.us)

# There's a bat in a cabin/sleeping space. What should you do?



Cozy cabins LLC



Model Shown: Sundome 3

# How to safely capture a bat for rabies testing

## How to Properly Catch a Bat for Rabies Testing

**Got bats?**

Did you find a bat in a cabin or tent?

Did anyone potentially have contact with a bat?

Time to catch 'em!

**Each cabin should have a bat capture kit**

Kits should include: a net, container, lid, tape, and gloves.

**Net**


**Container & Lid**

**Tape**

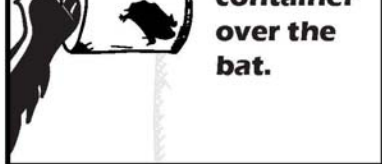
Be sure to wear leather gloves to prevent bites. Bats can bite through sheets or towels!

**Gloves**

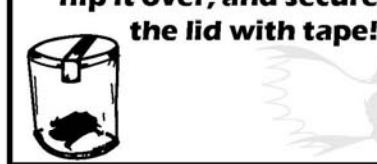
**Wait for the bat to land and approach it slowly.**



**Place the container over the bat.**



**Slide the lid underneath, flip it over, and secure the lid with tape!**



**Send that bat for testing!**

Keep the bat cold but not frozen

Contact a local veterinary clinic to arrange shipment or deliver the bat in person to:  
Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Lab  
1333 Gortner Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108  
1-800-605-8787 | 612-625-8787

If you can't capture the bat or have questions call MDH at 651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414

**MDH** Minnesota Department of Health  
INFECTIOUS DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY, PREVENTION AND CONTROL  
651-201-5414 | 1-877-676-5414  
www.health.state.mn.us

## Every Cabin Should Have a Bat Capture Kit That Includes:

- **Leather gloves**
- **Small net**
- **Container – old ice cream pail is good**
- **Lid/cardboard**
- **Tape**
- **MDH bat capture comic & rabies card**

# Follow the New Bats in Camp Policy



## Bats in Camp Policy

### Background

Finding bats in cabins and other camp buildings is a common occurrence. Bats are active eating insects in the summer months and are an important part of our Minnesota environment. However, sometimes they end up roosting or flying into camp buildings. Bats are experts at squeezing into small gaps in buildings and summer-only buildings are more likely to have these gaps.

Bats in camps are a concern because a small percentage (~3.5%) of bats in Minnesota carry rabies. Rabies is a fatal neurologic illness, which bats can transmit to people through bites. Since these bites are very tiny and might go unnoticed, any direct physical contact with a bat, or waking up to a bat in the room where a person is sleeping are considered potential rabies exposures. Simply being in a room with a bat while awake and alert is not a rabies exposure.

This policy outlines what should happen if a bat is found at \_\_\_\_\_ and was developed in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). It reflects both state and national best practices.

### Who is covered by this policy?

All campers, staff, volunteers, and visitors. Staff should review this policy during yearly training or orientation.

### Bat Scenarios

#### Finding a dead bat in a camp building

- Call MDH at 651-201-5414; these are handled on a case-by-case basis.

#### Any direct physical contact with a bat

- Capture the bat and submit it for rabies testing (see Capture a Bat section below).
  - Wait for test results before anyone starts rabies shots.
- If the bat is not available for rabies testing, then any person who had direct physical contact with the bat is recommended to receive rabies shots. This is an urgent matter but not an emergency; there is no specific window of time for a person to start rabies shots after an exposure.
  - If the direct contact was with a person's head or neck this may be more urgent. Consult with MDH at 651-201-5414.

#### Wake-up to bat in a sleeping area

- Capture the bat and submit it for rabies testing.
  - Wait for test results before anyone starts rabies shots.

# Example of Camp Letter



*Protecting, Maintaining and Improving the Health of All  
Minnesotans*

June 20, 2017

Dear Parent or Guardian,

While staying at Shores of Saint Andrew Bible Camp, your child was potentially exposed to a bat while sleeping in Cabin 4. A bat was found in the cabin during the early morning of June 19 and was not able to be captured and submitted for rabies testing.

Bats are known carriers of rabies. Rabies is transmitted through a bite. The problem is that bats have extremely tiny teeth and their bites may not be felt if a person is sleeping and bat bites may not leave a mark. The Minnesota Department of Health and CDC recommend that anyone who is in a room with a bat while sleeping receive rabies post exposure prophylaxis if the bat is not able to be tested. The rabies post exposure prophylaxis consists of a series of four doses of rabies vaccine given on days 0, 3, 7, and 14 along with human rabies immunoglobulin given on day 0. (Day 0 is the first day of treatment, not the day of exposure.)

We encourage you to discuss this situation with your child and your healthcare provider today so that the rabies vaccine series can be started as soon as possible if that is deemed necessary. The situation is urgent, but not an emergency. If you have any questions, please call Carrie Klumb or Dr. Joni Scheffel at the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-5414.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Joni Scheffel in cursive.

Joni Scheffel DVM, MPH  
State Public Health Veterinarian  
Supervisor, Zoonotic Diseases Unit  
Minnesota Department of Health  
625 North Robert Street

Handwritten signature of Carrie Klumb in cursive.

Carrie Klumb, MPH  
Epidemiologist  
Minnesota Department of Health  
625 Robert Street North  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

# Rabies Training for Any and All Health Professionals


- Second and 4<sup>th</sup> year veterinary students
- Family Practice Residents
- Rounds for ED and other docs
- Local public health, MDH staff



## Why this matters



**PEP is technically difficult and is often given incorrectly**



# Animal Bites and Rabies Risk

a guide for health professionals



[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

6,000+  
Recipients

# Rabies Alert Email

40% avg  
Open Rate

## Rabies Alert

### Roseau County fox kit tests positive for rabies virus

July 10, 2019

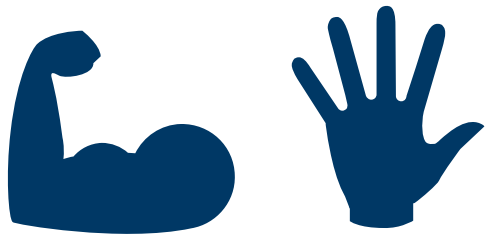
A fox kit found on a Roseau County farm tested positive for rabies on July 5, 2019. The property owner reported that a month prior, an abnormally aggressive skunk wandered onto her farm and was killed by her three unvaccinated dogs. She used a shovel to move the dead skunk onto a burn pile on the property. Less than five days later, the skunk carcass disappeared. The owner noted fox tracks near the burn pile and later discovered skunk remains near a fox den, which had reportedly been on the property for several years. Two fox kits were observed near the den.

On June 29, the property owner noticed one of the fox kits appeared sick and disoriented, "flopping around and biting itself." She captured the kit, placed it in a kennel to monitor it, and was bitten on the arm on July 1. The fox kit was euthanized and submitted for rabies testing to the Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. Rabies was confirmed on July 5. The exact whereabouts of the littermate and vixen are unknown at this time, although the property owner reported seeing both periodically since she was bitten.

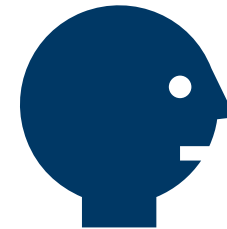
## **We are available 24/7 for consults on rabies risk**

- **Animal bites/rabies risk call line available to the public during business hours and 24:7 for physicians, veterinarians, law enforcement, and local public health**
- **Approximately 2500 calls/ year**
- **Most calls about bat exposures, dog and cat bites**

## Rabies Calls – Bite Locations (N=656)



Hand or arm — 57% (n=375)

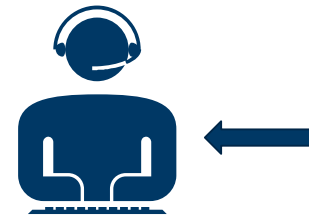


Head/Neck — 14% (n=92)

- 78% (72/92) dog bites



Leg or foot — 22% (n=143)



Torso — 3% (n=19)

## Recommendations Given

- No further action — 25%
- PEP — 24%
- 10-day C&O — 20%
- Test animal & wait on PEP — 20%
- Other — 17%
- Keep looking for animal — 5%
- 2 doses PEP — 1.5%
- Test animal & start PEP — 1%

# Spooky Science: Unbelievable Rabies Myths and Truths



## “How to Capture a Bat” Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNw6hkFEtOk>



