

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING SPECIMENS FOR RABIES TESTING

Testing for rabies virus is conducted to guide the medical management of persons who have exposure (bite or other saliva contact of a mucus membrane or open wound) to suspected rabid animals. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH) and local health departments are available to assist persons exposed, and responders who evaluate exposures, to determine the need for animal testing. Laboratory analysis will be performed at the DPH Katherine A. Kelley State Public Health Laboratory (CT SPHL) to determine the presence or absence of rabies virus in suspect animals when human exposure has occurred. For additional information about rabies exposure and testing at the CT SPHL, please call the CTDPH Epidemiology & Emerging Infections Program at (860) 509-7994 or visit: <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3136&q=396178>

Types of animals accepted for rabies examination at CT SPHL

1. Raccoons, skunks, other wild carnivores (e.g., fox, coyote, or bobcat) and groundhogs that have potentially exposed a person as described above. Typically, the whole animal may be submitted for testing. However, large wild animals (>= 30 pounds) must be submitted to the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT (UCONN VMDL) at (860) 486-3738 for necropsy, who will then forward tissue specimens to CT SPHL for analysis; or in the case of domestic animals to a veterinarian or for decapitation prior to submission to the CT SPHL.
2. Bats that have direct contact or are found in a room with a person who cannot communicate seeing it or knowing if they may have been bitten (e.g., sleeping person, baby or young child, person with dementia, or someone under the influence of alcohol or drugs).
3. Unvaccinated cats and dogs that have bitten a person. **Submit only the heads of cats and dogs regardless of the size of the animal.**

NOTE: The heads of submitted animals that have exposed a person must not be damaged and the entire head should be submitted as soon as possible.

Submit the following for testing ONLY after consultation with CTDPH, the local health department, or as instructed by an Animal Control Officer

1. Small rodents (e.g., mice, rats, squirrels, chipmunks, moles) and wild rabbits that have bitten or otherwise exposed a person. These animals are rarely found to be rabid and the rabies virus has not been detected in these animals in Connecticut.
2. Bats found in a home, but not in a room with a person
3. Cats, dogs, and other domestic animals that are current on their rabies vaccination and have bitten a person. Vaccinated domestic animals that bite people should be placed in quarantine for 14 days and only euthanized, and submitted for testing if either suspected by a veterinarian of being rabid or ordered by an Animal Control Officer. Contact the Department of Agriculture,

Animal Control Division for questions concerning quarantine of domestic animals, (860) 713-2506.

Types of animals NOT accepted for rabies examination at CT SPHL

1. Live animals
2. Animals that have not bitten or otherwise exposed a person
3. Wild animals in contact only with domestic animals, i.e. no human exposure
4. Bats submitted by nuisance wildlife control operators (NWCOs). **Please Note:** The local health district must be designated as the authorized submitter for bats collected and transported by NWCOs to CT SPHL for testing.
5. Whole cats or dogs
6. Livestock for which no human exposure has occurred
7. Improperly packaged specimens may pose a biosafety risk and may be rejected for testing.

Unacceptable animals submitted to CT SPHL will be disposed of and reported to the submitter as "Unsatisfactory for examination, testing not performed". Where appropriate these animals will be held at CT SPHL for up to seven days for retrieval by the submitter for resubmission to CT SPHL (in the case of live animals or whole cats and dogs); or for submission to UCONN VMDL if testing is desired (i.e. in the case of no human exposure).

Please NOTE: Animals not accepted for testing by the CT SPHL due to no human exposure can be submitted for testing for a fee to the UCONN VMDL. Contact information, submission forms and fees are available at: <http://cvmdl.uconn.edu/> or by calling (860)-486-3738

Authorized Submitters for testing at CT SPHL

1. The authorized person who will be notified of the results and will provide consultation regarding the need for testing the animal include ACOs, Environmental Conservation Police (ENCON) Officers, healthcare providers, local HDs, police officers, veterinarians, and NWCOs. **NOTE: NWCOs are not authorized persons to submit bats.**
2. The local health department where the potential rabies exposure occurred will be notified of results from animals submitted by unauthorized submitters (e.g., the public).
3. **PLEASE NOTE:** It is acceptable for a private citizen or NWCO to transport an animal that has been deemed acceptable for rabies testing to the CT SPHL. However, an authorized submitter must always be designated as the report recipient on the submission form.

REQUISITION FORM

A clearly printed, completed Request for Rabies Examination, form OL-97A http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/infectious_diseases/rabies/rabiestestform_ol97a.pdf **MUST** accompany each specimen submitted. Make a copy of the completed OL-97A, and place each copy in a separate envelope to be used in specimen packaging. Keep an extra copy for your records if needed. Required information on the submission form includes: submitter name, address, and phone number (**MUST** be included for notification of results); name and address of owner or exposed person; and type of exposure encountered.

PROPER SPECIMEN PACKAGING

1. **Double-bag ONE** specimen in leak-proof plastic bags and secure one copy of the OL-97A to the outside of the bags. Place the double-bagged specimen on ice in a rigid leak-proof container, and secure the second copy of the OL-97A to the outside of the container. Deliver each specimen with completed OL-97A forms to the CT SPHL as soon as possible. **Never include more than one animal in each package.**
2. Specimens should be kept refrigerated and delivered to the laboratory as soon as possible.
3. Specimens MUST be packaged in accordance with state and federal regulations

LABORATORY HOURS AND SPECIMEN DELIVERY

The CT SPHL Virology Laboratory is staffed Monday - Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Information regarding specimen submissions is available by calling the laboratory at (860) 920-6662 or (860) 920-6500.

Please bring specimens to the Katherine A. Kelley State Public Health Laboratory located at 395 West Street in Rocky Hill, CT. On-site security requires identification for anyone to be admitted onto the property. After entering through the first gate off the street, follow signs to Sample Receiving and Deliveries located at the rear of the building. At the second gate, press the buzzer and security will allow entrance. Proceed to the first turn-off on the right and park your vehicle. Walk to the loading dock entrance and press the buzzer for admittance to the building. CTPHL staff will take custody of the specimen in the Specimen Receiving Room located off the right side of the rear entry corridor. If specimen is being delivered after normal operating hours, security will escort you to a walk-in cooler where the specimen with attached paperwork can be stored. Specimens submitted after 10:00 AM, including the day before the weekend or a holiday, or when the DPH Public Health Laboratory is closed, will be refrigerated and tested on the next business day. Routine weekend and holiday testing has been discontinued as of October 2015.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- For questions concerning human exposure, prophylaxis, or submission of animals uncommon to rabies infection, contact the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Epidemiology and Emerging Infections Program at (860) 509-7994 or your local health department.
- For questions concerning livestock and domestic animal exposures (e.g., biting, quarantine, or vaccination), contact the Department of Agriculture, Animal Control Division or the State Veterinarian at (860) 713-2506.
- For questions regarding submission of animals that do not satisfy criteria for testing at the CTPH Laboratory, (e.g. animals that have exposed vaccinated domestic animals) contact the UCONN Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory at (860) 486-3738.
- For questions concerning wildlife (unusual behavior, rabies, potential exposures, etc.) contact the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, Wildlife Division at (860) 424-3011. For emergencies call (860) 424-3333.
- For additional information or for reporting incidents of animals biting people or domestic animals, please contact your local Animal Control Officer.