



# RABIES ALERT

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Attention: Ben Avon Borough  
7101 Church Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA 15202

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

To whom it may concern:

Wildlife Services  
4820 Route 711  
Suite A  
Bolivar, PA 15923

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, PA Department of Health, PA Department of Agriculture, Allegheny County Health Department, Erie County Department of Health, and other state agencies) has been trying to halt the westward spread of raccoon strain rabies within Pennsylvania and throughout the Eastern United States by distributing oral rabies vaccines aerielly and by hand since 2001. **We are asking for your assistance which will aid in our efforts to determine the incidence of rabies within and surrounding the vaccination zone and evaluating the effectiveness of our baiting program.**

724-238-7320 Phone  
724-238-7274 FAX

Enclosed in this envelope you will find information about the Oral Rabies Vaccination Program. We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in collecting suspected sick or rabid animals. Please review, disseminate, and display the information in the office and/or any other public place you deem appropriate. If your personnel could retain any animals they euthanize that are **suspected of being sick or rabid**, we would be willing to collect those specimens and test them for rabies. We are looking for carnivores only (raccoons, fox, coyotes, and cats), no opossums, woodchucks, or bats please.

If you receive a call regarding a suspicious animal, feel free to dispatch the animal, but **please avoid shooting the animal in the head due to sampling requirements**. Place the animal in a garbage bag and fill out the "Suspect Animal Form" (which I have enclosed). If there are multiple animals taken in one day, please number the bags and forms so we can maintain accurate records. Once notified of an incident, our office will collect the specimen usually within 1 business day.

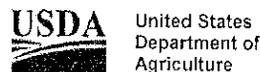
**\*\*\*ALWAYS wear appropriate PPE (i.e. latex gloves and eye protection)\*\*\***

If a human has potentially been exposed to rabies, contact your local Health Department. If a domestic animal has potentially been exposed, contact your regional PA Department of Agriculture. If you need assistance with locating these offices, please contact our program.

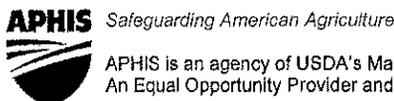
Again, we appreciate your assistance with this public health threat. If you have any questions regarding this important program, please call the Wildlife Services Western Pennsylvania District at 724-238-7320 or 866-4USDA-WS.

Thank You,

Tim Linder  
Wildlife Biologist



**Tim Linder**  
Wildlife Biologist (Rabies)  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Wildlife Services



APHIS is an agency of USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
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4820 Route 711, Suite A  
Bolivar, PA 15923

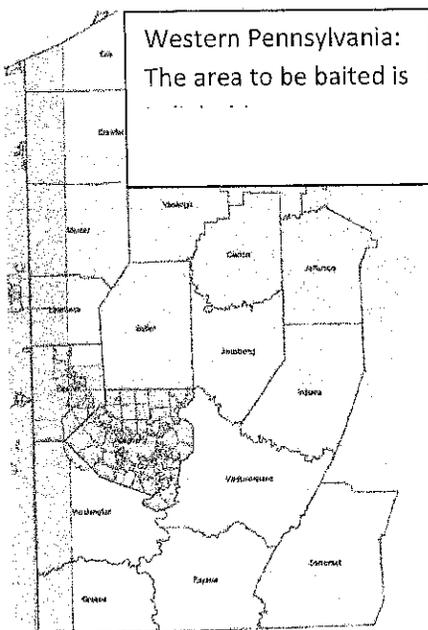
Office: 724-238-7320  
Fax: 724-238-7274  
Cell: 724-672-8686  
timothy.j.linder@aphis.usda.gov

# ORAL RABIES VACCINATION AREA

## NOTICE

Cooperating Federal, State, and county agencies are conducting an oral raccoon rabies baiting project in western Pennsylvania. A vaccine packet is coated or placed inside a fishmeal block, which is very tasty to raccoons. The baits are dropped from low-flying airplanes or helicopters, or by local teams on foot or in vehicles.

This year's operation will run:  
**August – September 2016**



### What if I find rabies baits?

Baits should be left alone – but intact baits can be moved if they are found where children and pets play. Damaged baits should be bagged and disposed in the trash.

- Wear gloves or use a plastic bag when picking up the baits.
- Toss intact baits into a fencerow, woodlot, ditch, or other raccoon habitat areas.
- Wash your hands after any skin contact with a damaged bait.

### What if my pet eats a bait?

- A few baits are not harmful, although eating a lot may cause vomiting or diarrhea.
- Do not risk getting bitten by taking a bait away from your pet.
- Confine your pet for a couple of days, and check the area for more baits.
- If your pet eats a bait, avoid your pet's saliva for 24 hours, and wash skin or wounds that may have been licked.

### For information about the oral rabies baiting program, contact:

USDA Wildlife Services: 1-866-487-3297

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture: 1-717-783-9550

Pennsylvania Department of Health Information Line: 1-877-PA Health

Erie County Department of Health: 1-814-451-6700

Allegheny County Department of Health: 1-412-687-2243

For information concerning accidental contact with baits, call 1-877-722-6725.

# RABIES

## What is rabies?

Rabies is a viral disease which affects the nervous system. It can affect all mammals, including man. Rabies is a fatal disease once symptoms appear.

## How is rabies spread?

Rabies is spread most often through the bite of a rabid animal. It can also be spread through a scratch that breaks the skin or through exposure of an open wound or mucous membrane (eye, nose, or mouth) to saliva from a rabid animal. In Pennsylvania, rabies has been found in raccoons, bats, skunks, foxes, cats, dogs, and other animal species.

## What are the symptoms of rabies?

Early symptoms in humans include irritability, headache, fever, and sometimes itching or pain at the site of the exposure. The disease progresses to paralysis, spasms of the throat muscles, convulsions, delirium, and death. By the time any symptoms appear, rabies cannot be successfully treated. Therefore, infection must be prevented by administration of the rabies vaccine immediately after exposure.

The symptoms of rabies in animals may vary from a quiet, depressed state to a furious, erratic behavior pattern.

## How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

The time between exposure and the onset of symptoms is variable but is normally two to eight weeks in humans. Incubation periods as short as five days or over one year have been reported.

The incubation period for animals also varies. It may range from 2 days to a year after exposure, but is most common within 30-60 days.

## What should you do if you are bitten by any animal?

The first step in rabies prevention is to promptly wash the wound with plenty of soap and warm water. See your doctor immediately for medical treatment. If circumstances of the exposure warrant, the rabies vaccine may be given. The vaccine is a series of five shots given in the arm (or thigh for small children) on days 0, 3, 7, 14, and 28 upon seeking medical care. Rabies immune globulin is also given along with the day 0 vaccine. Day 0 is the day the first vaccination of the series of five is given. Following a physician should be consulted following any exposure to a bat in the home when it is not certain if a bite has occurred and this animal cannot be properly tested.

## What should be done with the biting animal?

If acting normally, dogs, cats, and ferrets may be observed for 10 days from the day of the bite. If these animals stay healthy after 10 days, they were not infectious at the time of the bite. Observation for 10 days is not an option for animals other than normally acting domestic dogs, cats, and ferrets. A veterinarian and local health authority can also be consulted to advise further action. Wild animals should be humanely killed and the head taken to a laboratory for rabies testing. If an animal must be killed to prevent its escape, care should be taken not to damage the brain.

## What can communities do to control rabies?

All animals should be restrained and leashed when in public.

Stray and ownerless dogs should be impounded.

All dogs and cats should be registered, licensed, and vaccinated.

Mass rabies vaccination clinics should be developed and supported.

Wild animals should not be handled or kept as pets.

## Questions and Answers: Rabies and Oral Rabies Vaccination

### Q. What is rabies?

A. Rabies is an invariably fatal disease caused by a virus that affects the central nervous system in mammals. Rabies can be prevented with vaccines that are available to protect people and pets.

### Q. How do you contract rabies?

A. The rabies virus is almost always spread through contact with an infected animal's saliva when an infected animal bites through the skin of an uninfected animal or person.

### Q. Why should I be worried about rabies in wildlife?

A. Rabies is a serious public health concern because if left untreated it is always fatal. The costs associated with detection, prevention, and control of rabies exceed \$300 million annually. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 90 percent of reported rabies cases are in wildlife. As human populations expand into suburban and rural areas there is more interaction with wildlife, increasing the risk of rabies exposure.

### Q. How can I tell if an animal has rabies?

A. To determine if an animal has rabies, it must be euthanized and a brain tissue sample tested. The visible signs of rabies may include any of the following: aggressive behavior, lethargy, confusion, attacking for no reason, or walking in a circle. Wildlife should never be approached at any time. If you have questions about wildlife, please contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Wildlife Services at 1-866-4-USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297).

### Q. What should I do if I am bitten by an animal?

A. Wash the wounds thoroughly with soap and water right away. Contact your doctor, local health department, or hospital emergency room. If it is a domestic

animal, get the name and address of the animal's owner. If it is a wild animal, contact your local health department, animal control, or professional wildlife trapper for assistance. If the animal is dead, wear gloves or use a shovel to move the animal. Put the carcass into a heavy plastic bag and place it in a cold area away from people and other animals. The area can be cleaned with one part bleach to ten parts water. Call your local health department for further instructions.

### Q. What can I do to prevent rabies?

A. Avoid all contact with all wild animals. Make sure your pets are vaccinated in accordance with State and local laws. Report any animal acting suspiciously to USDA's Wildlife Services at 1-866-4-USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297). Do not relocate wildlife.

### Q. What is an oral rabies vaccination (ORV) bait and what does it look like?

A. WS and its cooperators distribute the ORV baits in targeted areas to vaccinate wildlife species—such as coyotes, foxes, and raccoons—to prevent the spread of rabies. An ORV bait consists of a sachet, or plastic packet containing Raboral V-RG® rabies vaccine. To make the baits attractive to wildlife, the baits are either waxed to the inside of a fishmeal or dogmeal outer shell or covered with fishmeal crumbs.

### Q. Can I get rabies from contact with the vaccine?

A. No. The vaccine does not contain the live rabies virus. It contains only a single gene that is passcoded with the outer coating of the rabies virus. The virus that carries this single gene may cause a local pox-type infection in people who are pregnant or immunosuppressed. If you come into contact with the vaccine, wash the exposed area thoroughly with soap and water and contact your local public health officials at 1-877-RABORAL (1-877-722-6725).

### Q. What if I find an oral rabies vaccination (ORV) bait near my home?

A. It is best to leave a bait where you find it unless it is on your lawn, driveway, or other area where it is not likely to attract a raccoon, fox, or coyote. While wearing a glove or other protective covering (i.e., plastic bag, paper towel), you can move bait to a wooded area where a wild animal will be more likely to find it. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after any contact with a bait.

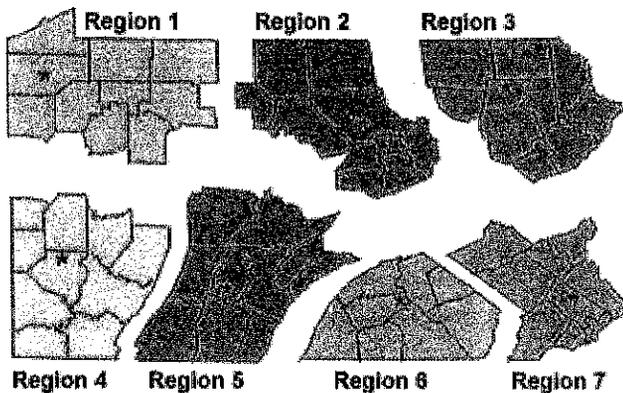
## Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA)

The PDA handles all domestic animal rabies exposures within the State of PA. Contact your regional office for questions about domestic animal exposures.

PDA Rabies Information:

[www.agriculture.pa.gov/Protect/AHDServices/Pages/Rabies.aspx](http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Protect/AHDServices/Pages/Rabies.aspx)

### PDA Regional Offices



#### Region 1:

Counties: Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Mercer, Venango, and Warren

**Office:**

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture –  
Region 1  
13410 Dunham Road  
Meadville, PA 16335-8346  
Phone: 814-332-6890  
Fax: 814-333-1431

#### Region 4:

Counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland

**Office:**

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture – Region 4  
226 Donohoe Road  
Greensburg, PA 15601  
Phone: 724-832-1073  
Fax: 724-832-1013

Additional regions found below:

[www.agriculture.pa.gov/regional-offices](http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/regional-offices)

All domestic animal rabies exposures are tested for rabies at the Pennsylvania Veterinary Laboratory.

#### PDA – Pennsylvania Veterinary Laboratory

2305 North Cameron Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9449

Questionnaire/Form for Rabies Suspect Specimens:

<http://www.padls.org/images/RabiesSubmissionForm.pdf>

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**PA Department of Health**

Health and Welfare Building  
8th Floor West  
625 Forster Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
1-877-PA HEALTH

**Testing (human exposures)**

Pennsylvania Department of Health  
Bureau of Laboratories  
110 Pickering Way  
Exton, PA 19341  
610-280-3464

*This is for all human exposures except those occurring within Allegheny County and City of Philadelphia*

**DISTRICTS**

**Northcentral District**

Water Tower Square  
1000 Commerce Park Drive  
Suite 109  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
Phone: 570-327-3400  
Fax: 570-327-3748

**Northeast District**

665 Carey Avenue  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18706-5485  
Phone: 570-826-2062  
Fax: 570-826-2238

**Northwest District**

19 McQuiston Drive  
Jackson Center, PA 16133  
Phone: 724-662-6068  
Fax: 724-662-6086

**Southcentral District**

30 Kline Plaza  
Harrisburg, PA 17104  
Phone: 717-787-8092  
Fax: 717-772-3151

**Southeast District**

Reading State Office Building  
Room 442 625 Cherry Street  
Reading, PA 19602  
Phone: 610-378-4352  
Fax: 610-378-4527

**Southwest District**

233 West Otterman Street  
Greensburg, PA 15601-2305  
Phone: 724-830-2701  
Fax: 724-832-5327

*Contact information for human exposures occurring within Allegheny County and the City of Philadelphia*

Allegheny County Dept. of Health  
3441 Forbes Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
412-578-8070

*Physical Lab Location:*

3901 Pen Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Philadelphia Dept. of Health Laboratories  
500 South Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19170  
215-565-6748

# Suspect Animal Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

## LOCATION

County: \_\_\_\_\_ Township: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# Suspect Animal Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

## LOCATION

County: \_\_\_\_\_ Township: \_\_\_\_\_

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_