

RESOLUTION 2008-01

BOARD OF HEALTH OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CRANBURY
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AN INFORMATIONAL GUIDE
CONCERNING RABIES**

WHEREAS, rabies is a viral disease of mammals that targets the central nervous system and is transmitted by a bite or contact with saliva from an infected animal; and

WHEREAS, any mammal can contract rabies, including humans, domestic dogs and cats, and wildlife animals including raccoons, bats, skunks, foxes and groundhogs; and

WHEREAS, within the past two years there have been documented cases of rabid animals being found within Middlesex County, including at least one case within the Township; and

WHEREAS, Township residents have expressed their concerns about rabies and the handling of suspected rabid animals; and

WHEREAS, the Board met with the Township's Animal Control Officer and Township Police Department regarding rabies and the handling of suspected rabid animals; and

WHEREAS, the Animal Control Officer and Police Department indicated their interest in the Board's development of an informational guide about rabies and recommendations for the handling of suspected rabid animals;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of the Township of Cranbury, in the County of Middlesex, as follows:

1. The attached document, prepared by the Board entitled "RABIES, Background Information", is hereby adopted as the Board's Informational Guide to Rabies.
2. The attached document, prepared by the Board entitled "Rabies, Board of Health Recommendations for Police", is hereby adopted as the Board's recommendations to the Police Department for the handling of suspected rabid animals.
3. A copy of the Informational Guide to Rabies shall be forwarded to the Township Administrator and Township Clerk with a request that it be posted on the Township's Website and made available for members of the public.

3. Copies of the Informational Guide and Recommendations for Police shall be forwarded to the Township Administrator, Township Clerk, Chief of Police and Animal Control Officer, with a request that they be considered for incorporation into the Township Police Department's procedures for handling suspected rabid animal calls.

CERTIFICATION

I, Kristen Hamilton, Cranbury Township Board of Health Secretary, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution passed by the Board of Health of the Township of Cranbury at its meeting held on February 4, 2008.

Kristen Hamilton
Board of Health Secretary

**CRANBURY TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF HEALTH**

**RABIES
Background Information**

What is rabies?

- Rabies is a viral disease that is transmitted from a bite or contact with saliva from an infected animal. The virus targets the brain and spinal cord. It is a fatal disease in animals and humans.

Which animals are known to transmit rabies?

- Any mammal can contract rabies. Rabies is most often seen in wildlife: raccoons, bats, skunks, foxes and groundhogs. Small rodents (such as squirrels, rats, mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, and chipmunks) and lagomorphs (such as rabbits and hares) are almost never found to be infected with rabies and have not been known to cause rabies among humans in the United States. Unvaccinated dogs and cats can become infected after a bite from another infected animal, as can cattle. These domestic animals can then transmit rabies to other animals or to humans.

Are ferrets dangerous?

- Ferrets are common household pets that are often not vaccinated against rabies. They can acquire rabies when allowed to mix with wild animals. It is not possible to identify an infected ferret solely by its appearance.

How do people get rabies?

- Contact with saliva or the mouth of an infected animal may result in an infection.

Is it possible to be exposed to rabies and not know it?

- Yes. Usually rabies is transmitted by a bite from an infected bat, but exposure of eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound to bat saliva could result in rabies infection.
- People usually know when they have been bitten by a bat. However, because bats have small teeth which may leave marks that are not easily seen, there are situations in which a person should seek medical advice even in the absence of an obvious bite wound. The possibility of a rabies infection should be considered if a bat is:
 - near a sleeping person.
 - near an unattended child.
 - near an intoxicated or less than fully alert person.
- Non-bite exposures to rabies from any animal are very rare. Scratches, abrasions, open wounds, or mucous membranes contaminated with saliva or other potentially infectious material (such as brain tissue) from a rabid animal constitute non-bite exposures.

What should be done if a bat is found indoors?

- If it is certain that no exposure has taken place, close the doors and allow the bat to exit from an open window. It may be necessary to call the local animal control officer for help.
- If an exposure has or may have taken place, isolate the bat in one room and call the animal control officer to capture the bat for testing purposes.

What should be done in the event of an animal bite to a human or other potential rabies exposure?

- Take precautions needed to prevent subsequent bites or exposures.
- Initiate routine first aid measures, including washing the wound or contact site, and arrange medical care for injured or exposed individuals.
- Contact Police Department and/or animal control officer.

- Verify the immunization records of a domestic animal when possible. Provide this information to the physician who cares for the victim
- If possible, stay aware of the animal's location until the police or animal control officer arrives, but do not approach or take action against the animal.
- Avoid contact with the suspect animal and prevent pets from exposures to potentially infectious saliva or body parts.

What should be done if a pet was in a fight with a rabies infected animal?

- Obtain veterinary help for wounds as needed. Do not allow your unprotected hand to contact the wound.
- Any animal bitten or scratched by either a wild, carnivorous mammal or a bat that is not available for testing should be regarded as having been exposed to rabies. Unvaccinated dogs, cats, and ferrets exposed to a rabid animal should be euthanized immediately. If the owner is unwilling to have this done, the animal should be placed in strict isolation for 6 months and vaccinated 1 month before being released. Animals with expired vaccinations need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Dogs and cats that are currently vaccinated are kept under observation for 45 days.

TO REACH THE CRANBURY TOWNSHIP ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER

Contact the Cranbury Township Police Department

at (609) 395-0031

or emergency at 9-1-1

Based on recommendations of CDC. For more information, view <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>

Rabies
Board Of Health Recommendations For Police

Advise Caller Reporting Sick Animal or Animal Bite (human or domestic animal):

- Do NOT approach or take action against the sick or attacking animal.
- Take preventative measures to prevent (further) exposure or bites.
- Initiate first aid and arrange for medical/veterinary care for injured or exposed individuals.
- Await response from the Animal Control Officer and/or Police Department.
- If possible, stay aware of the animal's general location until Police or Animal Control Officer can arrive.
- Keep pets isolated and away from the animal.
- Consult their personal physician if there is any risk of exposure:
 - directly from the suspected animal
 - contact with their own pet or items which may have come into contact with the suspected animal,
 - sleeping in a room with a bat
 - child is alone with a bat.
- Contact their veterinarian if any pet may have come into contact with or been exposed to the suspected animal or potentially infectious saliva or body parts.
- Refer to www.cdc.gov/rabies for additional information.

Do NOT:

- Approach a sick or cornered animal. Not all animals with rabies appear to be ill.

Do:

- If possible, it is best to isolate the animal until the Animal Control Officer arrives.
- Attempt to verify ownership of domesticated animals. If the owner can be found, request a copy of the vaccination records. If the owner has more than one animal, it is advisable to verify all of the vaccination records. If there are any questions about the vaccination status of the animal, it should be held in isolation.

If lethal force is necessary to prevent escape or attack:

- Do NOT aim for the head or spine. The brain and spinal cord may contain high concentrations of rabies virus that could be infectious to humans and other animals.
- Do NOT allow anyone to handle a deceased animal because of the risk for transmitting rabies.
- Do NOT dispose of the animal remains as they should be sent for laboratory studies or testing.