

CHAPTER 14

RABIES PREVENTION AND CONTROL

ARTICLE A GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 14-1 Definitions

The following words, terms, and phrases when used in this Chapter shall have the meaning ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

ACT- The Rabies Prevention and Control in Domestic Animals and Wildlife Act (3 P. S. §§ 455.1—455.12).

ANIMAL - All non-human vertebrate and invertebrate species, whether wild or domestic, commonly considered to be part of the animal kingdom.

AT LARGE - An animal off the premises of the owner, not secured by a leash or lead, or not under the control of a responsible person and obedient to that person's commands.

CERTIFICATE OF VACCINATION - A statement signed by a licensed veterinarian attesting to the vaccination of a dog, cat or ferret and recording the identification, breed, sex, age and color of the animal, the vaccination tag number, the name, lot number, duration of immunity and manufacturer of the vaccine and the date of vaccination.

COUNTY - Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

DEPARTMENT – The Montgomery County Health Department. Also referred to as the local health authority or local morbidity reporting office.

DIRECTOR – Also known as the Health Administrator. The Director of Health for the Montgomery County Health Department.

DOMESTIC ANIMAL - An equine animal, bovine animal, sheep, goat, pig, dog or cat.

EXEMPTION - When a dog that bites or attacks a human being is a service dog or a police work dog in the performance of duties, said dog need not be confined if it is under the active supervision of a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine.

EXPOSURE TO RABIES - Any bite, scratch, or other situation in which saliva or central nervous system (CNS) tissue of a potentially rabid animal may have entered a fresh open wound or come into contact with the mucous membrane by contacting the eye, mouth or nose.

GUARDIAN - Any individual, partnership, association or corporation that temporarily takes on the duties of an owner of an animal.

OWNER – Every individual, partnership, association or corporation having a right of property in any animal which is kept harbored, or cared for within Montgomery County for a period of three (3) or more days, as well as, every individual, partnership, association or corporation occupying any premises within the County which permits any animal to remain on or about its premises for a period of three (3) or more days.

PADOH - Pennsylvania Department of Health.

PDA- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

QUARANTINE - Restriction of the movement, use and disposition of animals, premises, equipment, vehicles and other articles to prevent the spread of rabies.

RABIES - An acute viral disease of the central nervous system usually transmitted to a human through the injection of saliva by an animal bite.

RABIES EXAM FORM – Document required by the Department for verification of the animal’s status which states that no signs or symptoms of rabies were observed by the licensed veterinarian that examined the animal, following an injury to a human.

SUSPECTED OF HAVING RABIES - A mammal exhibiting behavior which, in the opinion of a veterinarian, public health official or official representative of the Department, PDA or the Game Commission, is suggestive of infection with rabies.

USDA - The United States Department of Agriculture

VETERINARIAN - A graduate of a recognized school of veterinary medicine licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE B REQUIREMENTS

Section 14-2 Vaccination of dogs, cats and ferrets against rabies

It shall be unlawful for the owner or guardian of a dog, cat or ferret to keep, harbor or have in custody or control a dog, cat or ferret three (3) months of age or older unless such dog, cat or ferret has a current vaccination against rabies which is licensed and approved by USDA. Proof of vaccination shall be furnished at the request of the Department.

Section 14-3 (Reserved)

Section 14-4 Animal bites and rabid animals

- a. Persons bit by animals - It shall be the duty of any person who has knowledge that a human exposure to rabies occurred in this County to immediately report the facts of the incident and the whereabouts of such animal to the Department.
 - i. The owner of every such animal which is a dog, cat or ferret shall immediately place such dog, cat, or ferret in confinement in such a manner as to prevent it from escaping, running at large or having physical contact with other animals or humans other than the dog, cat, or ferret owner or controller, and maintain such confinement for a ten (10) day period of observation.
 - ii. At the end of said ten (10) day observation period, the dog, cat or ferret shall be examined by a veterinarian employed by the owner, and a written report of the results of such examination shall be documented on a Rabies Exam Form and submitted by the owner or veterinarian to the Department as soon as possible, but in no case longer than seventy-two (72) hours after the end of said ten (10) day observation period. If the report reveals no symptoms of rabies, the dog, cat or ferret may then be released. If the owner fails or refuses to have the dog, cat or ferret examined for rabies by a veterinarian within seventy-two (72) hours of the end of the ten (10) day observation period, in violation of this Article, the Department shall cite the owner in violation of this article.
 - iii. Any cost to the victim for medical treatment resulting from an attacking or biting dog, cat or ferret must be paid fully by the owner of such dog, cat or ferret. The County shall not be liable for medical treatment and/or legal costs to the victim.
 - iv. If at any time during the said ten (10) day period of observation the dog, cat or ferret develops symptoms indicative of rabies, such fact

shall be communicated by the owner and veterinarian at once to the Department, and the dog, cat or ferret shall immediately be removed to a veterinary hospital acceptable to the Department, at the expense of the owner.

- v. If any animal shall die during the quarantine period and is suspected of having rabies, the head of the animal shall be prepared by a licensed veterinarian and transported to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Laboratories. The cost of examination, preparation and disposition shall be the responsibility of the owner.
- vi. If the dog, cat or ferret is clinically diagnosed as rabid, it shall be humanely euthanized. Confirmatory tests for the presence of rabies shall be conducted on the dogs, cats, or ferret's remains as necessary. After such testing, the remains of the dog, cat, or ferret shall be disposed of in such a manner as directed by the laboratory and/or the Department.
- vii. If the dog, cat or ferret is a stray that cannot be identified, it shall be the duty of the Department to consider the need for post-exposure prophylaxis for the victim.
- viii. A wild carnivorous mammal or bat (as well as the offspring of wild animals cross-bred with domestic dogs or cats) which is not at the time effectively vaccinated against rabies, which has bitten or injured any person in this County shall be immediately humanely euthanized and testing for the presence of rabies shall be conducted on its remains. Testing and disposal of such animal's remains shall be done as directed by the Department. Euthanasia of such animal shall be at the expense of the owner or guardian of the animal or by the homeowner of the property where the animal was located.
- ix. If any farm animal, zoological or exhibition animal, bites or injures any person in this County, then and in such event such animal shall be examined by a licensed veterinarian or their designee within seventy-two hours after such incident occurred to determine if it exhibits symptoms of rabies infection, regardless of vaccination status. It shall be the duty of the owner of such animal to cause such an examination to be made, at the expense of such owner. If the examining veterinarian determines that such animal exhibits symptoms of rabies infection, it shall immediately be humanely euthanized.

Euthanasia of such animal shall be at the expense of the owner or guardian of the animal or by the homeowner of the property where the animal was located. Testing and disposal of such animal's remains shall be done as directed by the Department.