

Rabies quarantine guidelines for dogs, cats and ferrets

All rabies quarantine guidelines are based on the [2016 Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control](#) created by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians. These recommendations are designed to protect the health and safety of everyone involved in rabies quarantines as well as the community. The protocol in each local jurisdiction may vary, however, and local animal control agencies have the ultimate authority in rabies quarantine management. Please see the “Guidance for Dog, Cat and Ferret Quarantine Requirements Based on Exposure” decision tree posted on the [Utah Department of Health rabies webpage](#) for more help to decide which type of quarantine should be performed.

10-day quarantine

- This should be performed when a domestic animal bites a person, regardless of the animal’s rabies vaccine status.
- This may be performed either in a professional shelter/veterinary facility or at the owner’s home, provided the owner is able and agrees to comply with the quarantine requirements described below.
- **Do not administer rabies vaccination** to the animal during this time, even if not current on vaccination. Rare adverse reactions to vaccination could be confused with signs of rabies.
- During this quarantine period the animal should not leave the property.
 - Cats and ferrets should be kept indoors 100% of the time.
 - Dogs should be kept inside as much as possible, with limited, supervised outside time for bathroom breaks only.
 - Dogs should be kept on a leash at all times while outside.
 - Owners (or limited shelter staff) may interact with the animal as usual, but no outside visitors or anyone else should have contact with the animal.
 - The animal should not be allowed to have contact with any other animals apart from its normal housemates.
- The animal should be monitored closely during these 10 days for any signs of illness. Animal control should check on the animal’s status at a minimum on day five and day 10.

- If the animal shows any signs of illness report it immediately to the [local health department](#) and to [animal control](#) The animal should be evaluated by a veterinarian.
- If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized and the head or entire brain submitted to the Utah Public Health Laboratory (UPHL) for rabies testing.
 - If the animal tests positive, the bite victim should immediately receive post-exposure prophylaxis.
- If the animal remains healthy during this quarantine period and no signs of rabies develop, the animal may be released from confinement and the bite victim does not need to receive post-exposure prophylaxis.
 - If the animal is not up-to-date with its rabies vaccination, a booster rabies vaccine should be administered AFTER the 10 days of quarantine has been completed.

45-day quarantine

- This should be performed when a domestic animal is exposed to a confirmed rabid animal or an at-risk species (bat or wild carnivore such as raccoon, skunk, or fox) that was unable to be tested, **AND** the domestic animal has proof of prior rabies vaccination .
 - Exposure is defined as a bite, scratch, or any contact with saliva or brain/nervous tissue through open cuts in the skin, scratches, or mucous membranes. Any uncertainty around contact with a bat is also considered a risk for rabies exposure, since bites or scratches from a bat can be too small to see or feel, especially if there's a chance it occurred while the person was asleep.
 - If the wild animal is not available for rabies testing, the animal should be assumed to be rabid out of caution.
- This may be performed either in a professional shelter/veterinary facility or at the owner's home, provided the owner is able and agrees to comply with the quarantine requirements described below.
- Immediately following the bite or exposure, the wound of the dog/cat/ferret should be cleaned and the animal should be given a **booster rabies vaccination** under the supervision of a veterinarian. The booster vaccination is recommended within 96 hours of exposure.
 - If the exposed animal is past due for their rabies vaccination at the time of exposure **AND** the rabies booster is not administered within 96 hours, quarantine time may need to be extended longer than 45 days. Consult with your [local health department](#) to make an individualized quarantine plan specific to these cases.

- During this quarantine period the animal should not leave the property.
 - Cats and ferrets should be kept indoors 100% of the time.
 - Dogs should be kept indoors as much as possible, with limited, supervised outside time for bathroom breaks.
 - Dogs should be kept on a leash at all times while outside.
 - The animal should not have contact with any other animals. If this is not possible, contact should be restricted to the animal's normal housemates only.
 - Verify that all other dogs, cats, and ferrets in the home are up to date on rabies vaccination. If past due, they should be given a booster.
 - If the animal is up to date on its rabies vaccination, owners (or limited shelter staff) may interact with the animal as usual, but no outside visitors or anyone else should have contact with the animal.
 - If the animal is past due for its rabies vaccination or has had a confirmed rabies exposure, it may be recommended to minimize the number of people who have contact with the animal. Consult with your [local health department](#) for guidance.
- Monitor the animal closely during these 45 days for any signs of illness. Animal control should check on the status of the animal at least once during the first week of confinement and at the end of the 45 days.
- If the animal shows any signs of illness report it immediately to the [local health department](#) and to [animal control](#). The animal should be evaluated by a veterinarian.
- If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized and the head or entire brain submitted to UPHL for rabies testing.
 - If the animal tests positive:
 - Any persons who could have been exposed to the animal's saliva during its quarantine should immediately receive post-exposure prophylaxis.
 - Any animal that may have been exposed to the animal's saliva during its quarantine should be quarantined and monitored for signs of rabies as appropriate based on that animal's vaccination status.
- If the animal remains healthy during this 45-day period and no signs of rabies develop, the animal may be released from confinement.

4- or 6-month quarantine

- This should be performed when a domestic animal is exposed to a confirmed rabid animal or an at risk species (bat, or wild carnivore such as raccoon, skunk, or fox)

that was unable to be tested, **AND** has NEVER been vaccinated for rabies, **AND** the owner doesn't want to euthanize the animal.

- Exposure is defined as a bite, scratch, or any contact with saliva or brain/nervous tissue through open cuts in the skin, scratches, or mucous membranes. Any uncertainty around contact with a bat is also considered a risk for rabies exposure, since bites or scratches from a bat can be too small to see or feel, if there's a chance it occurred while the animal was asleep.
- If the wild animal is not available for rabies testing, the animal should be assumed to be rabid out of caution.
- Dogs and cats must be isolated for four months; ferrets for six months.
- This quarantine **MUST** be performed either in a municipal/county animal shelter or an approved licensed veterinary facility. This is done at the owner's expense.
 - If a professional quarantine facility is not available or quarantine is not an option for the animal for other reasons, the animal instead must be euthanized.
 - Testing the animal for rabies is not necessary unless that animal has exposed a person or is showing current signs of rabies.
- Immediately following the bite or exposure, the wound of the dog/cat/ferret should be cleaned and the animal should be given a **booster rabies vaccination** under the supervision of a veterinarian. Booster vaccination is recommended within 96 hours of exposure.
- During this quarantine period the animal must have NO CONTACT WITH HUMANS OR ANIMALS.
 - The animal should be confined in an enclosure that prevents any direct contact with people and other animals.
- Monitor the animal during this quarantine period for any signs of illness.
- If the animal shows any signs of illness report it immediately to the [local health department](#) and to [animal control](#). The animal should be evaluated by a veterinarian.
- If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized and the head or entire brain should be submitted to the UPHL for rabies testing.
- If the animal remains healthy during this 4- or 6-month quarantine and no sign of rabies develops, the animal may be released from confinement.

Summary

Type of quarantine	Wild mammal exposure?	Person bitten?	Booster rabies vaccine?	Normal contact with the owner allowed?
10-day	No	✓	NO	✓
45-day	✓	No	✓	✓ (in most cases)
4 months (6 for ferrets)	✓	No	✓	NO