

## **RABIES and ANIMAL HEALTH LAWS In Los Angeles County**

In Los Angeles County, there are several local and state laws that pertain to rabies control and animal health. Veterinary Public Health and Rabies Control Program (VPH-RCP) is responsible for enforcing these regulations in this county.

Rabies is seen yearly in Los Angeles County, with approximately one rabid bat being detected each month. Because of the presence of a wildlife reservoir for rabies locally, the California Department of Public Health has declared the county a “rabies area”. In “rabies areas”, all animal bites are reportable and biting animals must be quarantined (17CCR2606a). In addition, animals exposed to potentially rabid animals also must be quarantined (17CCR2606c).

Veterinarians and animal control agencies are not allowed to euthanize a biting animal without the permission of the local health officer (County Ordinance 11.04.250).

In Los Angeles County, certain animal diseases are also reportable (County Ordinance 10.64.020 and 10.72.010). Practitioners, animal owners and others working with animals are required to report infectious animal diseases to the health department. Animal disease reports may aid the health department in detecting bioterrorist attacks, the introduction of a foreign or non-endemic animal diseases, or public health risks. Below are excerpts from some of the laws pertaining to rabies control and animal health. Required reports should be sent to VPH-RCP, by phone (213-989-7060), by fax (213-481-2375) or by internet (<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet>). If you have any questions, feel free to contact us 213-989-7060.

### **Summary:**

- Animal bites are reportable by all individuals who are aware of bite incident
- Biting animals are quarantined by VPH-RCP.
- Animals that have had contact with a suspected rabid animal are quarantined by VPH-RCP. Certain species of wildlife (bats, skunks, foxes, raccoons and opossums) are considered rabies suspects unless proven otherwise by testing.
- Biting animals are not to be euthanized during the quarantine period, unless approval is given by VPH-RCP
- Infectious animal diseases of public health significance or concern to the livestock industry are reportable to VPH-RCP. Also, individuals should report clusters of animal illness or deaths, even if no diagnosis has been made.

See the following pages for relevant codes and ordinances.

## CODES AND ORDINANCES

### Reporting of animal bites required

**17CCR2606(a). Reporting.** Any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of an animal known to have or suspected of having rabies shall report the facts immediately to the local health officer. The health officer shall likewise be notified of any person or animal bitten by a rabid or suspected rabid animal. In those areas declared by the Director of the State Department of Health Services to be rabies areas, the local health officer shall be notified when any person is bitten by an animal of a species subject to rabies, whether or not the animal is suspected of having rabies.

### Confinement of biting animals required

**11.04.230 Owner of biting animal -- Report required -- Examination of confined animal.** Whenever the owner or person having charge, custody or control of any animal observes or learns that such animal has bitten or otherwise exposed a human being, such owner or person having charge, custody or control of such animal shall report the incident at once to the director and shall confine such animal in an enclosure, or shall securely hold and restrain said animal, by chain or other device, for examination and observation by the director. No owner or person having charge, custody or control of such animal shall fail, refuse or neglect to allow the director to make an inspection or examination of such animal for the purpose of determining whether such animal has symptoms of rabies.

### Length of quarantine for biting animal

**11.04.210 Confinement of biting animals -- Procedure generally.** The biting animal shall be quarantined, confined and observed for at least 14 days (dogs and cats, 10 days) after the day of infliction of the bite...

### Biting animals cannot be euthanized without permission

**11.04.250 Destroying quarantined animal prohibited -- Exception.** It is unlawful for any owner or person having charge, custody or control of any animal that has bitten or otherwise exposed a human being or is suspected of having rabies to destroy such animal, or have such animal destroyed, during the quarantine period, unless permission is granted by the director.

## **Animal in contact with suspect rabid animals (e.g. wildlife) are quarantined**

**11.04.270 Quarantine of animals coming in contact with rabid animals.** Animal contacts of a known rabid or suspected rabid animal shall be quarantined in a place and manner, and for a period of time, designated by the director.

**17CCR2606c. Animal Contacts.** Any animal of a species subject to rabies which has been bitten by a known rabid or suspected rabid animal or has been in intimate contact with a rabid or suspected rabid animal shall be quarantined in a place and manner approved by the local health officer,...

Note: certain wildlife in “rabies areas” are considered rabies suspects, unless proven otherwise by rabies testing.

## **Infectious animal diseases are reportable to VPH-RCP**

**10.64.020 Duty to report infectious diseases and assist enforcement.** It is hereby made the duty of any person suspecting or having knowledge of the presence of any infectious diseases in animals to report same to the director of health services. It shall be the duty of any person owning or having control of animals to assist the director of health services to enforce the provisions of this Division 2, to obey all orders of the director of health services made for the control and eradication of infectious diseases, the sanitation of premises, destruction of animals, and disposal of carcasses, manure, offal, refuse, condemned meat and meat products.

### **10.72.010 Duty to report designated diseases -- Form of report.**

A. All veterinarians, all persons in charge of kennels and all persons making a business of having charge, custody or control of animals, who have knowledge of or have reason to suspect that an animal is infected with tuberculosis, glanders, anthrax, rabies, actinomycosis, cysticercosis, trichinosis, tuleraemia and coccidiosis, or any other infectious disease which might become epidemic and transmissible to mankind, shall, within 24 hours, report to the director of health services the following facts:

1. The name and address of the owner of the animal;
2. The number of animals infected;
3. The probable source of infection;
4. The steps taken for control; and
5. The name and address of the person making the report.