



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AND HEALTH PLANNING**

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Audrey Tayse Haynes
Secretary

March 10, 2014

To: Kentucky Licensed Veterinarians

Re: Guidelines for Submitting Dogs, Cats and Ferrets for Rabies Testing in Kentucky

Dear Colleagues,

1. Domestic animals for the purposes of this rabies testing guidance are defined as: dogs, cats, and ferrets.
2. The best, safest, easiest, cheapest, most diagnostic and least litigious way to rule out human rabies transmission from a dog, cat or ferret bite is to **QUARANTINE** the offending animal for 10 days. If asymptomatic for 10 days, human rabies exposure is **EXCLUDED** from consideration for anyone bitten prior to the quarantine period.
3. Veterinarians should consider the following before submitting dogs, cats and ferrets for rabies testing:
 - a) Human exposure **has** occurred, most commonly a bite, **AND**
 - b) Animal is currently exhibiting acute **Central Nervous System** signs, **AND**
 - c) Veterinarian should have a **HIGH** clinical index of suspicion for rabies as the disease presents as an acute fulminant encephalitis
4. The following are reasons for **NOT** testing an animal for rabies:
 - a) **No** human exposure
 - b) Animal **NOT** exhibiting acute Central Nervous System signs
 - c) **Low** clinical index of suspicion for rabies
 - d) Animal being treated for non-neurologic condition
 - e) Geriatric animals with a history of rabies immunizations
 - f) Geriatric cats being treated with multiple medical conditions, immunized for rabies
5. If you submit an animal for rabies testing, **Kentucky Revised Statute 258:065 requires you** to notify, within 12 hours or next business day, an animal bite to the **LOCAL HEALTH Dept.** in the county where the bite occurred. Please contact the environmental branch who follows up on all reported animal bites in your jurisdiction. This link will lead you to all necessary Kentucky contacts <http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/D91DAE5F-9740-41E6-A978-BDC10410466F/0/AppendixAContactAgenciesandPersonnel.pdf>

Please do not report animal bites to the state health dept. I thank you for your cooperation in reviewing and following these guidelines.

Respectfully,

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