

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff James L. Manfre

Departmental Standards Directive



TITLE:	CONTROL OF ANIMALS SUSPECTED OF RABIES
NUMBER:	41.19
EFFECTIVE:	1/3/07
RESCINDS/AMENDS:	12/01/03
STANDARDS:	34.14

Purpose

This policy establishes the guidelines and duties in the reporting, investigating, and quarantining of animals suspected of being infected with rabies. Rabies is a virus, which infects the brain and nervous system of fur-bearing animals. It CAN be transmitted to humans.

Discussion

The most frequent means of human exposure is from a bite or scratch from an infected animal, or when saliva from the infected animal comes in contact with the mucous membranes or any open lesions on humans.

In Florida, raccoons, cats, dogs, foxes, skunks, and bats have the highest risk for transmitting rabies to humans.

Guinea pigs, hamsters, ferrets, lagomorphs (rabbits and hares), livestock, squirrels, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, mice, and other rodents rarely carry rabies.

Each animal species exhibits different rabies symptoms.

Most often there is a behavior change.

- Dogs may avoid family members, become restless, or unusually quiet.
- Cats may attack suddenly.
- Wild animals may lose their fear of humans and appear to be friendly or violent.
- Nocturnal bats may roam during the daytime hours.

There are no reliable symptoms or behaviors to determine if an animal is rabid or not, except for sacrificing the animal for laboratory analysis.

Policy / Prevention

First Aid for Bites or Scratches

1. The most effective rabies prevention is the immediate and thorough cleansing and flushing of the wound with soap and water or preferably, quaternary ammonium compounds. Contact a physician and obtain medical advice as soon as possible.

Communications Responsibility

2. Communications shall dispatch a deputy to all calls concerning animals acting suspiciously or suspected of being rabid, vicious, or injured.

3. Communications shall notify Animal Control Humane Society once the deputy has verified the location of a domestic animal (dogs) that are abandoned (stray) and or injured rabid, or vicious found in the County. The Health Department will be notified if the animal is believed to be Rabid.

Responding Deputy's Responsibility

4. The responding Flagler County Sheriff's Office member should assure the area is safe from the suspected rabid animal.

5. The injured person(s) or animal(s) should be aided appropriately. Any and all injuries to be reported via Agency form and forwarded to the records branch.

6. The victim and the animal's owner (if known) should be advised to call the Flagler County Health Department and be advised of the quarantine procedures.

Quarantine Procedures

7. Any dog, cat, or other animal that bites, scratches, or otherwise exposes a human being or animal to suspected rabies shall be captured alive, if possible, and quarantined under observation for a period of ten (10) days.

Vaccinated Animal

8. Dogs, cats, or other animals having a current rabies vaccination administered by a licensed veterinarian within twelve (12) months prior to the date of the bite, scratch, or exposure may be quarantined on the owner's premises.
9. It is the animal owner's responsibility to provide verification of rabies vaccination.
10. Either a fenced yard, cage, inside the living quarters or related buildings or on a leash, or chain, or other humane restraining device must confine the animal.
11. The owner must assume complete responsibility for reporting immediately to the HEALTH DEPARTMENT any unusual behavior observed in the suspect animal, or if the animal is killed, dies, or escapes during the quarantine period.

Animals Without Vaccinations

12. Dogs, cats or other animals not having a current rabies vaccination administered by a licensed veterinarian must be quarantined at the Humane Society Animal Shelter or a veterinary clinic or hospital of the owner's choice, at the expense of the animal's owner.

Captive Wild Animals

13. Captive wild animals such as those kept in zoos, tourist attractions, and private homes that bite, scratch or expose a human to rabies must be examined individually in accordance with their history of possible exposure.

Unable to Locate the Animal

14. If the animal cannot be located, the person that may be infected or the owner of an animal that may be infected shall be notified.

Free-Roaming Wild Animals

Endangered Species

15. The Fresh Water Commission shall be notified and given the chance to capture the specimen.

16. Other free-roaming wild animals that have bitten, scratched, or exposed a human being to possible rabies, shall be disposed of immediately, in a manner that the head can be submitted to the HEALTH DEPARTMENT for examination of rabies.

Use of Deadly Force

17. If deadly force has to be used on an animal suspected of rabies, and no danger exists to persons, other animals, or property, and on the advice of a supervisor, the suspect animal may be shot by the deputy.

a. The suspect animal should be shot through the shoulder to the heart (not in the head where brain tissue could be damaged).

b. An incident report in New World shall be required for all animal destruction.

c. Statements should be taken from several witnesses as to the animal's behavior.

d. The Watch Commander shall be notified.

Disposal of Animals Exposed to Humans or Animals

18. The deputy will double bag the body, and attach a tag or label with the Flagler County Sheriff's Office case number and a brief description. Protective equipment should be used when handling the animal.

19. The deputy will have Communications notify one of the Health Department employees to advise them a possible rabid animal needs to be picked up and sent to the lab for testing.

a. During normal business hours, call the Health Department for further instructions.

b. After normal business hours, contact the on call Humane Society Warden to meet at the Humane Society for storage.

c. The Health Department sends the animal to a laboratory, for testing on the following workday.

Disposal of Animals not Exposed to Humans or Animals

20. If an animal that is suspected of rabies dies on private property but has not had contact with humans or pets, the homeowner should contact the HEALTH DEPARTMENT for disposal advice.

21. If an animal that is suspected of rabies dies on a county maintained road, Road and Bridge will be notified to dispose of the body.

22. If an animal that is suspected of rabies dies on a state road, the Department of Transportation will be notified to dispose of the body.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Manfre". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Manfre
Sheriff, Flagler County