

What constitutes a RABIES exposure?

Local Rabies Contact:

- *Dogs, cats and ferrets with a current rabies certificate that are exposed to a rabies positive or high risk animal that is not available for testing should receive a rabies vaccine booster and be confined for 45 days of observation.*

- *Any dog, cat or ferret that is unvaccinated, or has an expired vaccine status, and is exposed to a rabies positive animal or high risk animal that is not available for testing may need to be euthanized or vaccinated and placed in strict isolation for up to 6 months. Exceptions must be approved by the local health department. **The local health department must approve the isolation unit.***

Exposure is defined as any situation where saliva or central nervous system tissue from a rabid or high risk animal did or could have had direct contact with the mucus membranes or a break in the skin of a domestic animal. Any high risk animal that is not available for testing should be presumed to be positive.

Call your local health department or local animal control office if you think a domestic animal may have been exposed to rabies.

Wild, carnivorous mammals are a high risk for spreading rabies. The animals most often diagnosed with rabies in VA are raccoons, skunks, and foxes.

In VA, opossums, beavers, groundhogs, and bats are also considered to be high risk.

Low risk animals include rodents and rabbits.