



Rappahannock Area Health District News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rappahannock Area Health District Reports Rabies Case in Stray Cat in Spotsylvania County

Rabid cat confirmed in 11800 Block of Fillmore Lane (Sheraton Hills South Subdivision)

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY, VA – The Rappahannock Area Health District (RAHD) has confirmed a stray cat has tested positive for rabies. The cat was collected in the 11800 Block of Fillmore Lane in Spotsylvania County and confined for observation at the Spotsylvania Animal Control where it later became ill and was euthanized. The cat is known to be part of a feral cat population of the neighborhood (Sheraton Hills South Subdivision).

The Health Department is notifying the public in case any people or pets may have had contact with this rabid cat on or shortly before May 9, 2026. The rabid cat was black in color, domestic short hair, and an intact male. If there has been any contact/exposure between humans and/or domestic animals with this cat, or any wild or domestic animal behaving abnormally, please report this to the Spotsylvania Animal Control (540-582-7115) and the Spotsylvania Health Department (540-507-7386). On weekends or after hours, call the Virginia Department of Health 24-hour answering service at 866-531-3068 and ask for the staff member on call for the Rappahannock Area Health District/Spotsylvania County Health Department.

Any exposed/potentially exposed individuals should seek medical advice promptly to evaluate whether rabies prevention medication is needed. Likewise, please consult your veterinarian if your pet was exposed/possibly exposed to a potentially rabid animal (such as a fox, raccoon, skunk, opossum, etc.).

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. It is preventable in animals through vaccinations but is fatal to both animals and humans if left untreated. Exposure to rabies is considered anytime there is a bite or scratch, or other circumstance, where saliva or **central nervous system** (brain or spinal cord) tissue from a rabid or potentially rabid animal enters an open, fresh wound or comes in contact with a mucous membrane by entering the eye, mouth, or nose.

The Code of Virginia requires owners of dogs and cats to maintain current rabies vaccinations for animals four months old and older. In addition, residents should not approach or touch wild animals or unknown domestic animals and should report any abnormal behavior involving these animals. All animal bites and rabies exposures (from both wild and domestic animals) must be reported to **Spotsylvania County Animal Control at 540-582-7115.**

To prevent the spread of rabies:

- **AVOID** contact with wild animals and domestic animals you do not know.
- **REPORT** unusual acting animals.
- **VACCINATE** all dogs, cats and ferrets and keep their vaccinations current.
- **CALL** your doctor and the local health department if you are exposed, or call your veterinarian and local animal control if your pet is exposed.

Vaccinating domestic animals (dogs, cats, ferrets) also protects **people** from getting rabies. If the domestic animal is properly vaccinated, it breaks the transmission cycle of a wild animal infecting a domestic animal (pet), and that animal infecting the pet owner.

While intentions are good, please do not put food out for stray or feral (wild domestic) animals. This will bring domestic and wild animals into close contact where transmission of the rabies virus is more likely to occur. If you have pets that live outside, feed and water them in a manner that does not attract wild animals.

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