

Virginia Guidelines for Rabies Prevention and Control

Full text of guidelines available at:

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/animal-contact-human-health/rabies-control/virginia-guidelines-for-rabies-prevention-and-control/>

Methods for Bat Exclusion and Capture

Note: Bat exclusion should NEVER be performed during any period when bats do not leave their roost on a regular nightly basis. For instance, to prevent trapping young bats in the building, bat exclusion should be performed before April and after August. Exclusion during hibernation periods should also be avoided.

I. Excluding bats from buildings used by humans

A. Observe where the bats exit at dusk. Observation may need to take place over multiple nights in order to identify all entry/exit points.

B. Use exclusion tubes to create exits that bats will use to exit the house. An example of an exclusion tube system can be found at <https://www.batcon.org/about-bats/bats-in-homes-buildings/>. This will allow bats to leave, but make it unlikely that they can re-enter.

C. Exclusion tubes should be left in place until all bats are absent (typically 5 to 7 nights during warmer weather and longer during cold or inclement weather.) After all bats are safely excluded, seal any exits larger than a quarter-inch by half-inch with water-based caulk.

D. Once all bats are absent, install window screens, chimney caps and draft guards beneath attic doors.

E. Once bats are absent, fill interior electrical and plumbing holes with steel wool or water-based caulking.

F. Ensure that all doors to the outside close tightly.

G. For professional assistance, contact a company that has experience dealing with excluding bats from buildings so that humans, pets and bats are kept safe. For professional guidance, contact a Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) wildlife biologist. A directory of DWR offices and information about bats in Virginia can be found at <https://dwr.virginia.gov/>.

II. Individual bats found in living quarters when there has been no human or pet contact

- A. Allow the bat to find its way back outdoors by:
 - 1. Closing off doors and/or windows that do not open to the outside,
 - 2. Turning on the lights,
 - 3. Opening all windows and doors that access the outside, and
 - 4. Observing the bat until it leaves.

- B. If a bat does not leave the building:
 - 1. Wait for it to land,
 - 2. Wearing leather gloves, cover it with a coffee can, cardboard box or similar container,
 - 3. Slide a piece of cardboard under the can trapping the bat,
 - 4. Tape the cardboard tightly to the can*, and
 - 5. Release it out-of-doors, preferably after dark, in a place where the bat can climb (e.g. near a tree).

III. Capture of bats that may have exposed a person or pet

- A. Close windows and doors to the room and closets,

- B. Turn on lights if the room is dark,

- C. Wait for the bat to land,

- D. Wearing leather gloves, cover the bat with a coffee can, cardboard box or similar container,

- E. Slide a piece of cardboard under the can trapping the bat,

- F. Tape the cardboard tightly to the can,*and

- G. Contact the local health department or animal control for additional guidance and assessment which may include testing the bat for rabies.

More information can be found at: batcon.org/about-bats/bats-in-homes-buildings/ and <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/exposure/animals/bats.html>.

***Note:** If the bat must remain in the box for several hours place a soft cloth (non-terry) in the box before securing a cover. Most bats are very small, and can escape from a container with a loose-fitting lid, so be sure your cover is secure, but not air-tight. Small holes can be made for ventilation. Keep the bat in a quiet, safe place until it can be released.

Acknowledgments: This guidance was reviewed by Laura S. Flynn of Fly by Night, Inc., flybynight.org and Rick Reynolds of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.