

What is a RABIES exposure?

Response to **horses and livestock** that may have been exposed

Local Rabies Contact:

Vaccinated horses and livestock that are exposed to rabies should receive a rabies vaccine booster as soon as possible. They should also be confined in a way that is routine for that species and be observed for signs of rabies for 45 days.

Unvaccinated horses and livestock that are exposed to rabies can be immediately slaughtered. Otherwise, they should be confined in a manner that is routine for that species and observed for signs of rabies. The local health department (LHD) determines the length of confinement. Post-exposure response may include rabies vaccination of a herd or flock. The LHD determines the response to animals with expired vaccines.

Rabies is transmitted through bites or when wet saliva or central nervous system (CNS) tissue from a rabid animal enters an open wound or mucous membranes like in the eyes, nose, or mouth. An exposure is any situation where saliva or CNS tissue from a rabid animal, a high-risk animal*, or a low-risk animal** behaving abnormally could have had direct contact with the mucus membranes or a break in the skin of a domestic animal. Exposing animals will be presumed rabid if not tested.

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

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/local-health-districts/>

***High-risk animals for rabies include raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats. In Virginia, large rodents, like groundhogs, are also considered high-risk. All of these animals are considered high-risk regardless of behavior or health at the time of the exposure.**

****Low-risk animals, like small rodents and rabbits, are only a concern if they are acting ill or behaving abnormally at the time of the potential rabies exposure.**

