



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Changes in Rabies Prevention Program

(Woodland, CA) – Effective now, animal bites incurred in Yolo County should be reported to the Animal Services section of the Yolo County Sheriff's Department at (530) 668-5287. Animal Services will investigate all initial reports. Cases with possible human exposure to rabies will be referred to the Yolo County Health Department for additional medical investigation.

A county rabies prevention program is required by the California Department of Public Health. Rabies can be transmitted to humans through exposure to animals infected with the virus. Because of the risk to human health, as well as the potential for rabies to exist in wild animals and pets, this program requires a coordinated effort between Animal Services and the Health Department. Previously, the Health Department administered the program. In an effort to streamline the program, Animal Services will be taking a lead role in the program which includes animal bite investigation, animal quarantine and bat colony infestation complaints. The Health Department's role will focus on providing medical advice to those potentially exposed to rabies and providing laboratory services for rabies testing.

“With the tough financial times, Yolo County has been looking for ways to become more efficient while still maintaining adequate levels of service,” said Yolo County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman, Helen Thomson. “The Rabies Prevention Program is one of the many programs we are trying to simplify in an effort to maximize our limited resources.”

“We are working closely with the Health Department to transition the reporting and investigation of initial animal bites to our Animal Services Section,” said Yolo County Sheriff Ed Prieto. “We anticipate this will be a smooth process for the public.”

“Rabies is a disease that is 100% fatal, but can be 100% preventable if people do not come in contact with rabid animals, or if they do, treatment is started within a few days of contact with the animal,” said Dr. Joseph Iser, Yolo County Health Officer/Director. “Rabies is ever-present in wildlife which can expose our pets, and possibly our family members, to a deadly disease. Being a rural county, there is even more opportunity for exposure. Rabies prevention starts with the animal owner. The more dogs and cats are vaccinated for rabies, the fewer the opportunities for people to become infected.”

Bats and other wild animals, including skunks and foxes in this area are known to carry the rabies virus. Wild animals should not be kept as pets. Animals that appear sick, are showing abnormal behaviors or are dead should not be handled. A bat on the ground is likely a sick bat and should be reported to Animal Services. It is also very important to report any contact or bites from warm-blooded animals as soon as possible after the incident. To report animal bites, or for more information, contact the Animal Services division of the Yolo County Sheriff's Department at (530) 668-5287.

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