

Guidelines for Submitting Specimens for Rabies Testing

I. Testing Criteria

1. Animals under suspicion of rabies that potentially exposed a human or domestic animal to its saliva or neural tissue are tested free of charge at HETL as part of statewide surveillance.
2. If there is no exposure, members of the public may request rabies testing at a cost of \$150.00.
3. For consultation to determine if testing is necessary for public health purposes, contact the Division of Infectious Disease Epi-on-Call at **1-800-821-5821**.

II. Specimen Preparation

1. Bats- HETL accepts live bats, please indicate on the submission form if the bat is still alive. If a bat requires testing, the entire body should be submitted.
2. Domestic and wild animals (with the exception of bats) - animals submitted for testing must be euthanized. HETL does not have the facilities to process large carcasses and they will not be accepted or tested. HETL asks that animals be decapitated by a veterinarian or trained personnel.
3. Safety- always handle the specimen with waterproof gloves and proper protective equipment to prevent an accidental exposure.

III. Packaging

1. If the specimen has sharp protruding parts (i.e., porcupine quills or shattered bones), wrap the specimen in several layers of newspaper.
2. Place the specimen in two leak proof plastic bags that are closed securely.
3. The double bagged specimen should then be placed in a box (cardboard or Styrofoam) along with refrigerant packs (**please do not use ice**) and closed securely with tape. This provides more support and allows for easier handling and labeling of the specimen. Neither the container nor animal can be returned once testing is complete.
4. Complete the Rabies Submission Form (include a complete mailing address) and attach it to the exterior of the container. An easy way to do this is placing the form in an envelope and taping that to the container.
5. If no exposure occurred and testing is still requested by the public, a payment of \$150.00 must be provided when the specimen is submitted at HETL. The payment can be cash or check (made out to "Treasurer of the State").

IV. Transportation and Delivery of Specimens

1. The specimen can be sent by: Uniship- 207-848-7546, FedEx- 1-800-762-3725, General Courier- 207-767-6004, or a personal carrier such as ACO, Game Warden, or a person involved with the incident.
2. All transportation fees must be prepaid, and the sample should arrive at HETL within one day.
3. Specimens can be delivered at HETL Monday-Friday from 7:30 am -5:00 pm. For after-hours delivery, contact Capital Security (207-287-4357) for admittance. A phone is available inside the main entrance of the DHHS building at 221 State St.

V. Test Results

1. For specimens that are received prior to 9:00 am Monday-Friday, results are typically available by late afternoon of the same day. The primary person listed on the submission form ("Send Report to:") is informed of test results by phone, along with persons exposed or the owner of a domestic animal that was exposed. In the event of a positive test, public health officials are involved and advise involved persons of necessary measures to prevent the spread of rabies.
2. Specimens that are received after 9:00 am will typically have results available the following business day.
3. Urgent requests are handled on a case-by-case basis by calling 1-800-821-5821.