

ERIE COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT RABIES CONTROL REGULATION

On 7/31/2007 and effective 8/10/2007 The Erie County Board of Health, under the authority of Section 3709.21, 955.39, ORC and OAC 1501:31-15-03 adopted this regulation providing for the proactive control of the spread of rabies in Erie County, Ohio. The requirements of this regulation include: vaccination of all dogs, cats and ferrets, timely reporting of all animal bites and exposures to potential rabid animals, quarantine methods and investigative follow-up of animals involved in exposures of rabies, reporting and handling of suspected rabid and exposed animals, prescribing the duties of the Erie County Health Commissioner, and providing for enforcement of this regulation and penalties for violations.

Cross References

Rabies quarantine – Ohio Revised Code 955.26
Reimbursement for rabies bite – Ohio Revised Code 955.42
Report of bite of animal – Ohio Administrative Code 3701-3-28
Biting animal to be confined; veterinarian to report – Ohio Administrative Code 3701-329
Report of suspected rabid animal – Ohio Administrative Code 901:1-17-05
Importation of dogs into state – Ohio Administrative Code 901:1-17-05
Compendium of Animal Rabies Control, National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc.

Section 1 – Vaccination of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets Required

- A. Any person who owns a dog, cat or ferret in the Erie County General Health District shall have these animals immunized against the rabies virus within thirty (30) days after these animals have reached three (3) months of age using a vaccine and method listed in the current Compendium of Animal Rabies Control.
- B. Each dog, cat, or ferret shall be re-immunized one (1) year after the initial rabies vaccination and thereafter at intervals according to recommendation of the current Compendium of Animal Rabies Control for the vaccine used.
- C. Rabies immunizations shall be administered only by a veterinarian or under the direct supervision of a veterinarian.
- D. If rabies immunization of dogs, cats or ferrets is contradicted for medical reasons, these reasons shall be documented in written form by a veterinarian, a copy of, which shall be given to and retained by the owner.
- E. Each dog, cat or ferret imported into the jurisdiction of the Erie County District Board of Health must be accompanied by proof of current rabies vaccination. This requirement does not apply to transient animals.

Section 2 – Vaccination Record Required

- A. All veterinarians, or authorized persons, immunizing or re-immunizing dogs, cats, and ferrets shall keep a record of such immunization or re-immunization and shall give to the owner of the dog, cat or ferret immunized or reimmunized a completed certificate of immunization which shall include a rabies tag number identifying the individual record, a complete description of the dog, cat or ferret, place where the animal is harbored, name of the owner and his address, date and type of immunization or re-immunization and such other pertinent information as needed and the signature and address of the veterinarian or authorized person.
- B. The veterinarian, or authorized person, who vaccinates a dog, cat, or ferret, shall hold the rabies vaccination certificate for the interval between vaccinations.
- C. All veterinarians, or authorized persons, who immunize or re-immunize a dog, cat, or ferret against rabies shall provide a tag which shall be serially numbered and stamped with the year of vaccination and a phone number at which the animal's rabies vaccination status can be verified.
- D. Failure of the owner of a dog, cat, or ferret to provide a certificate of vaccination for the dog, cat or ferret is a presumption that the dog, cat, or ferret is not currently vaccinated for rabies.

Section 3 – Report of Animal Bites Required

- A. Whenever a person is bitten, scratched or otherwise exposed to a susceptible animal, the physician in attendance, person in charge of a hospital, dispensary, clinic, or other institution providing care or treatment, the person bitten, or any individual having knowledge of a bite shall report the bite within twenty-four (24) hours to the Erie County Board of Health.
- B. This report shall include the name, age, address and telephone number of the person bitten, the part of the body where the bite was inflicted and, if known, the name, address and telephone number of the owner of the biting animal. The report shall also include a description of the animal and, if known, the Veterinarian administering the rabies immunization.

Section 4 – MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS/QUARANTINE AND EXAMINATIONS

- A. Whenever it is reported that a dog, cat, or ferret has bitten, scratched, or otherwise exposed a person, the Health Commissioner shall have the animal quarantined, at the expense of the owner, for a period of ten (10) days from the date of the exposure and have the animal observed, by a veterinarian or Board of Health representative, for clinical signs of rabies at the end of the quarantine. Animals confined indoors must be confined to a house, building or other enclosure in such a way that human contact other than the owner and/or owners cannot occur. Animals confined outdoors must be kept on a leash, under direct supervision of a responsible person, or in an enclosure to prevent contact with other susceptible animals.

- B. If at any time during the quarantine there is any doubt as to the diagnosis, or if the animal dies, the attending veterinarian, owner or person caring for the animal shall, after the death of the animal, deliver, or arrange for delivery to the laboratory of the Ohio Department of Health, the head of the suspected rabid animal for rabies examination and analysis.
- C. Quarantined dogs, cats and ferrets shall be examined at the end of the ten (10) day quarantine by a veterinarian or Board of Health representative for clinical symptoms of rabies. The examination shall be at the owner's expense. The veterinarian shall promptly report the conclusions reached as a result of the examination to the Erie County Board of Health. No dog, cat or ferret shall be released from quarantine until it has been examined for clinical signs of rabies by a veterinarian or Board of Health representative and properly immunized against the rabies virus after the quarantine period is concluded.
- D. If the dog, cat or ferret is a stray, the Health Commissioner shall either:
 - 1. Order the quarantine the animal at a suitable location for ten (10) days from the date of exposure and have the animal examined for clinical symptoms of rabies.
 - 2. Direct the sacrifice of the animal by a suitable humane method that does not damage the animal's head. The Health Commissioner shall direct the removal of the animal's head by a veterinarian, animal handler, or Board of Health representative, and submit the head to the Ohio Department of Health laboratory for rabies examination.
- E. Whenever it is reported that any susceptible animal other than a dog, cat or ferret has exposed a person, the Health Commissioner shall either:
 - 1. Direct the immediate sacrifice of the animal in a humane method that does not damage the animal's head. The Health Commissioner shall also direct the removal of the animal's head and submit the head to the Ohio Department of Health laboratory for rabies examination. If the animal is owned, the above will be conducted at the owner's expense.
 - 2. Order the quarantine of the animal for a period to be determined by the Health Commissioner. If the animal dies before the end of the quarantine period, the owner shall immediately inform the Health Commissioner. The Health Commissioner shall direct the removal of the animal's head and submit the head to the Ohio Department of Health laboratory for rabies examination.
- F. No person shall kill a quarantined animal until the quarantine period has been completed and the animal has been examined for clinical signs of rabies by a veterinarian or Board of Health representative, except that this prohibition shall not apply to the humane killing of an animal to prevent further injury or suffering if the animal is diseased or seriously injured, the temperament of the animal makes it unsafe to handle during the quarantine, or if the sacrifice of a stray animal is directed by the Health Commissioner. If an animal is euthanized prior to the completion of its quarantine, the animal must be submitted for rabies testing to the Ohio Department of Health laboratory.
- G. No person shall remove a quarantined animal from the Erie County General Health District until the quarantine period has been completed, without the permission of the Health Commissioner.
- H. No person shall transfer ownership of a quarantined animal until the quarantine period has been completed except that a person may transfer an animal to a location deemed suitable by the Health Commissioner for quarantine.
- I. No animal shall be immunized against rabies while under quarantine.**

J. “Ohio Administrative Code 1501:31-15-03, it is illegal to live trap, move, and release raccoons. Persons dealing with a nuisance raccoon cannot relocate the animal. There are only two legal options for nuisance raccoons; euthanize or release on the same property where they were live trapped. Uninformed people who are relocating nuisance raccoons may be contributing to rabies crossing the barrier.”

Section 5 – Administration

- A . Whenever in the judgment of the Board of Health rabies is prevalent, the Board shall declare a quarantine of all dogs, cats and ferrets in the Health District, or part thereof. During such quarantine, the owner, keeper or harbinger of any dogs, cats or ferrets shall keep these animals confined to the premises of the owner, keeper or harbinger, or in a suitable pound or kennel, if such a pound or kennel is provided by the City or County. A dog, cat or ferret may be permitted to leave the premises of the owner, keeper or harbinger if under leash or under the control of a responsible person. The quarantine order shall be considered an emergency and need not be published. When a quarantine of dogs, cats and ferrets has been declared, the County Dog Warden and all other persons having the authority of police officers shall assist the health authorities in enforcing the quarantine order.
- B. No person shall violate a rabies quarantine order issued under Ohio Revised Code 955.26 (ORC 955.39)

Section 6 – Unconstitutionality Clause

Should any section, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this regulation of The Erie County General Health District be declared unconstitutional or invalid for any reason, the remainder of said regulation shall not be affected thereby.

Appendix – Definitions

- A. “Board of Health” means the Erie General Health District.
- B. “Cat” means any domestic feline animal of the species *Felis catus*
- C. “Contact” means any susceptible animal that directly or indirectly has come in contact with a rabid or suspected rabid animal.
- D. “Dog” means any domestic canine animal of the species *Canis familiaris*
- E. “Exposure” means an animal bite or scratch that breaks human skin, or contact of animal saliva or nervous tissue with a break in human skin or any mucous membrane.
- F. “Feral” means any susceptible domestic animal living in the wild state.
- G. “Ferret” means a carnivorous mammal of the species *Mustela putorius furo*.
- H. “Health Commissioner” means the person occupying the office in the Erie County General Health District which is created by Section 3709.11 of the Revised Code of Ohio
- I. “Immunization” means the administration of a biological product recommended in the U.S. Public Health Service Center for Disease Control Animal Rabies Vaccine Compendium and licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and deemed adequate to provide protection to the animal so vaccinated to rabies
- J. “Isolation” means the placing of a rabid animal or suspected rabid animal or a contact separate and apart from all other susceptible animals or persons so that the transmission of rabies is impossible.
- K. “Owner” means any person who has right of property to a dog, cat or ferret, keeps, feeds or harbors a dog, cat or ferret, has a dog, cat or ferret in his care or shelter, or willingly permits a dog, cat or ferret to remain on any premises owned or occupied by him.
- L. “Person” means any political subdivision, special district, public or private corporation, individual, firm, partnership, association, or any other entity within the Erie County General Health District.
- M. “Quarantine” means the limitation of freedom of movement of rabid or suspected rabid animals or contact for a period of time equal to the longest usual incubation period of the disease, in such manner as to prevent the spread of the rabies virus. Quarantine includes: The isolation of the animal, The control of contacts.
- N. “Rabid Animal” means any animal showing observable clinical signs of rabies or which has been confirmed as having rabies by a laboratory acceptable to the Health Commissioner.
- O. “Stray” means any animal whose owner cannot be identified or any animal that cannot be apprehended and quarantined for observation.
- P. “Susceptible Animal” means any animal to which rabies can be transmitted.
- Q. “Suspected Rabid Animal” means a susceptible animal showing, to a limited degree, observable clinical signs of rabies or a susceptible animal that has bitten a person or has come in contact with a person in such manner that rabies could be transmitted to that person.
- R. “Veterinarian” means a veterinarian duly licensed under the laws of the State of Ohio.
- S. “Wild Animal” means any warm blooded non-domestic animal which is indigenous to the State of Ohio and capable of transmitting rabies.