



**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
BUNCOMBE COUNTY
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Rabies Precautions

Due to a recent incident involving a confirmed case of rabies in a dog in this locality, Buncombe County Animal Services is issuing the following precautionary statement to residents and pet owners:

Call the number at the top of the page immediately to report any sick, injured, oddly behaving, or aggressive pets or wildlife in the area. Please also report the presence of animals that are normally nocturnal, such as foxes, skunks, or raccoons, during hours of daylight.

Pet owners:

- Make sure your pets are up to date on their rabies vaccinations. If they have expired or you cannot readily locate proof of current rabies vaccinations, get your pets to a veterinarian and have them vaccinated **IMMEDIATELY**.
- If your pet becomes involved in a fight with any other animal (domestic or wildlife) or in contact at all with wildlife take the following steps immediately:
 - Confine your pet outside of your home or in a non-living or easily decontaminated area of your home. **DO NOT HANDLE YOUR PET UNTIL IT HAS HAD TIME TO AIR DRY.** The rabies virus could be present in saliva on your pet's coat.
 - **DO NOT PHYSICALLY INTERVENE IN AN ALTERCATION BETWEEN YOUR PET AND ANOTHER ANIMAL.** Doing so places you at risk for getting bitten by the foreign animal or even your own pet, as well as placing you at risk for a potential exposure to the rabies virus. Residents may dispatch animals on their property that are acting aggressively towards them, their family/household members, or pets, but must do so in a manner that does not place any neighbors or bystanders in danger. Anyone doing so should make a reasonable effort to avoid damaging the head of the other animal in the event that the animal needs to be tested for the rabies virus. If the other animal is killed during or subsequent to the contact with your pet, cover the animal or otherwise secure it without handling it and in a manner that will keep other animals from getting to it, and call animal services for instructions.
 - Get your pet to your veterinarian within 48 hours to have it re-vaccinated for rabies. If you fail to have your pet re-vaccinated in that time frame or if your pet is not current at the time of its exposure, you could be facing a costly and lengthy quarantine or risking your pet's life, as well as your own and the lives of those in your household or community. It could take up to 6 months for your pet to contract rabies after an exposure, at which time it would become contagious.