



Health Alert from the Larimer County Dept of Health and Environment - 7/5/2013

Early Notification to Larimer County Veterinarians and Animal Control Agencies**Kitten Confirmed with Rabies After Biting Local Veterinarian
3 Adults and 4 Children Undergoing Post Exposure Rabies Prophylaxis**

(Note: a press release is planned soon, either tonight or Saturday. We want veterinarians and animal control officers to be aware and prepared for questions and calls from pet owners and make sure you are updated on current quarantine requirements for cats or dogs if a pet has been exposed.)

- A veterinarian who was assessing a kitten that was unable to use its back legs was bitten during an examination on July 3. This kitten was born to an unvaccinated barn cat on an agricultural property north of Fort Collins. Due to the animal's condition, the vet recommended it be euthanized, but also delivered the kitten to the CSU veterinary diagnostic lab for rabies testing. The test was positive for rabies.
- This is the first cat in Larimer County confirmed to have rabies since the Health Department was established in 1968. Prior to the arrival of skunk rabies in Colorado in 2008, feline rabies was very rare in our state. However there have already been 2 cats with rabies confirmed in Colorado this year, from the northeastern Colorado plains.
- The source of the kitten's infection has not yet been confirmed, but it is being tested to determine whether it carried the skunk or the bat variant of the rabies virus. The influx of rabid skunks in Larimer County since 2012 makes the skunk variant likely.
- Since skunks live on the ground and may seek shelter and food where pets and livestock live, there is more opportunity for pets and livestock to interact with rabid terrestrial mammals, which pose a greater risk.
- 6 additional cats from the property were collected to be euthanized. Livestock on the property were also not vaccinated. The state veterinarian's office is evaluating these animals, and restrictions on their movement may be imposed.
- Barn cats and feral cats in the county, as well as livestock, often have not been vaccinated for rabies.
- In addition to the vet, 3 adults and 4 children had handled and been scratched or bitten by the kitten during the time it may have been sick.
- Veterinarians and their staff should be alert for unvaccinated pets or livestock that have symptoms that may be consistent with rabies.
- We appreciate Larimer County veterinarians' critical efforts to encourage animal owners to have all their (mammalian) pets vaccinated against rabies and kept up to date. For public health purposes, **only animals vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian are considered immunized in the event of a rabies exposure.** An animal is considered protected 28 days after a rabies vaccination.
- Unvaccinated dogs or cats that come into contact with a rabid animal must be destroyed or quarantined for 180 days, 90 days of which is at a licensed veterinary hospital/clinic. (See complete protocol which follows.)
- If a dog, cat or ferret has bitten a human and is euthanized before 10 days of observation has been completed, **state regulations require that the animal be submitted for rabies testing.**
- To report a potentially rabid animal or exposed pet, call the Larimer Humane Society's Emergency animal control line 970-226-3647, option 7. For Larimer County Health Department services, call 970-498-6700.

Note that there is a nationwide shortage of rabies immune globulin (RIG) for human Post-Exposure Prophylaxis. The Health Department was able to locate a total of 9 doses available from all Larimer and Weld acute care hospitals combined. These doses can be replaced only with public health confirmation that these doses were used for exposed patients.

The Larimer County Department of Health and Environment maintains a website with detailed information about rabies for the public at larimer.org/health/ehs/rabies.htm.

There are also maps for 2012 and 2013 locating the site of confirmed rabid animals in the county at larimer.org/maps/rabies.cfm.

Please review the animal exposure algorithm on the next to last page of this fax, which comes from the Colorado Rabies Resource Guide. The protocol for human exposures to potentially rabid animals is also included on the last page of this fax.

Access to this guide is available to veterinarian offices/staff, animal control and shelter managers, and public health workers. Its use is strongly encouraged.

Contents of the guide include a communication protocol; submission guidelines for rabies testing; quarantine requirements for dogs and cats exposed to suspect rabid animals; roles, responsibilities and resources of various agencies and associations; regulations related to rabies; and contact information for animal control, public health, and wildlife officials.

The latest version of this document is available on

- the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) member's only webpage (www.colovma.org),
- the Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers (CAACO) member's only webpage (www.caaco.org), or
- by contacting CDPHE at 303-692-2700. CDPHE staff can email the document to requesters, after validating that the requester is a member of this target audience.

See below the most recent state guidance regarding humans bitten by dogs, cats, and ferrets.

Human Bites must be Reported

State of Colorado

RABIES PREVENTION AND CONTROL POLICY: MANAGEMENT OF DOMESTIC DOGS, CATS AND FERRETS INVOLVED IN HUMAN BITES

(Updated 3/4/2013)

Animal bites, especially dog and cat bites, are a common and serious public health problem. Bites can result in psychological trauma, transmission of disease including rabies, localized infection of the bite wound, permanent physical disfigurement and death. This document outlines the required management of a dog (*Canis familiaris*), cat (*Felis domesticus*) or domestic ferret (*Mustela putorius*) that has bitten a human. These requirements are based on the Compendium of Animal Rabies Control and Prevention, prepared annually by the National

Association of State Public Health Veterinarians and in Human Rabies Prevention--United States, 2008, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Statutory Authority / Reporting Requirements

Authority for the enforcement of this policy is provided under the Colorado Rabies Control Statutes, 25-4-601 et. seq. C.R.S. 1973, as amended. This law includes provisions for the confinement of biting or suspected rabid animals, enactment of local vaccination and running-at-large ordinances, emergency powers of the department, duty of law enforcement agencies to assist and penalties for violations.

In addition, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) statute, 25-1-122 C.R.S. outlines reporting requirements and provides access to medical records for certain diseases and medical conditions including rabies and mammal bites. The associated Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Epidemic and Communicable Disease Control (6 CCR-1009-1) define the manner in which such reports are to be made. Specifically, these laws require anyone having knowledge of a person bitten by a dog, cat, or other mammal to report that fact to the local health department or county health officer. The health department or their representative, usually the local animal control agency, can then conduct the necessary investigation. For dogs, cats, bats, skunks and other wild carnivores such report must be made within 24 hours. This report should include the name, age, sex and location of the person bitten and, if known, the location of the biting animal.

Mandatory Post-Bite Quarantine

Domestic dogs, cats or ferrets involved in a human bite must be quarantined for a 10 day observation period to eliminate the risk of rabies virus transmission. This period is determined from studies demonstrating rabies virus appears in the animal's saliva as clinical symptoms of rabies appear. Animals that remain alive and healthy 10 days post-bite would not have been shedding rabies virus in their saliva, and therefore would not have been infectious, at the time of the bite.

The 10-day observation period applies ONLY to domestic dogs, cats and that ferrets have bitten a human.

Rabies vaccination status should be verified, either by a valid vaccination certificate or the confirmation by the animal's veterinarian. This information can be provided to the bite victim and their physician to reduce concerns that the animal could be rabid. Due

to the possibility of confusing a vaccine-associated adverse event with the onset of rabies, rabies vaccination should be deferred until completion of the observation period. The 10-day quarantine is required regardless of the animal's vaccination status.

Depending on the bite circumstances and local animal control policies, a biting animal may be confined at the local animal shelter, a private kennel, veterinary clinic or the owner's home. For home quarantine the animal should remain confined to the owner's property during the observation period. A veterinary examination must be arranged immediately if the animal becomes ill. If a veterinarian believes the animal is suffering from neurological symptoms consistent with rabies or the animal dies for any reason during the observation period rabies testing is required. The animal owner is responsible for all costs related to quarantine and testing.

Exceptions to Quarantine Period

In some situations the 10-day quarantine may not be feasible. In these cases, euthanasia and rabies testing of a biting dog, cat or ferret would be required. This could include: 1) the owner requests the animal be immediately euthanized and tested; 2) the animal is exhibiting symptoms of a neurological illness consistent with rabies; 3) the animal is injured or terminally ill and would not survive or it would be inhumane to keep it alive for 10 days; 4) the animal is feral, unmanageable and cannot be safely confined. The animal owner is responsible for all costs related to testing, including euthanasia, head removal, shipping and laboratory charges.

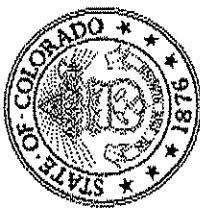
Bites from Other Animal Species

The 10-day observation period applies **ONLY** to domestic dogs, cats and that ferrets have bitten a human. It does not apply to any animal exposed to rabies, such as pets attacked by a wild animal or found with a bat. Pet animals or livestock potentially exposed to a known or suspected rabid animal must be immediately reported to CDPHE.

Bites of rodents, lagomorphs (rabbits and hares), birds and reptiles are not a rabies risk and do not require quarantine or rabies testing. Human bites involving other domestic or wild mammals are evaluated on a case-by-case basis with subsequent recommendations based on the species, circumstances of the bite, incidence of rabies in the area and availability of the biting animal. A separate CDPHE policy exists for the management of bites involving wolf/dog hybrids.

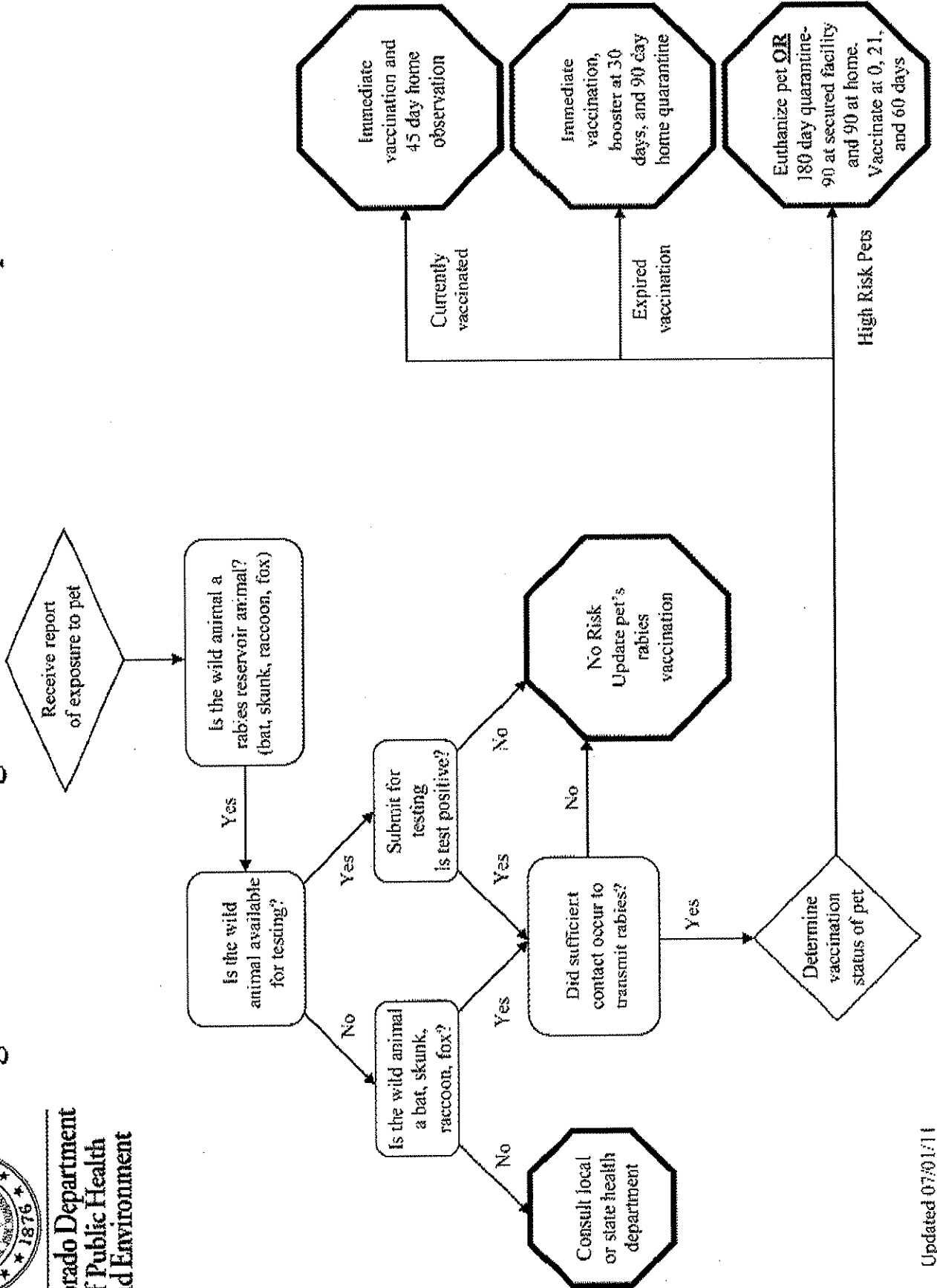
Consultation

The CDPHE is available for consultation on animal bites, rabies exposures, testing and post-exposure rabies prophylaxis on a 24-hour basis by calling 303-692-2700 (regular business hours) or 303-370-9395 (after-hours, weekend or holiday emergencies). Most local health departments have been trained to provide the same consultation.

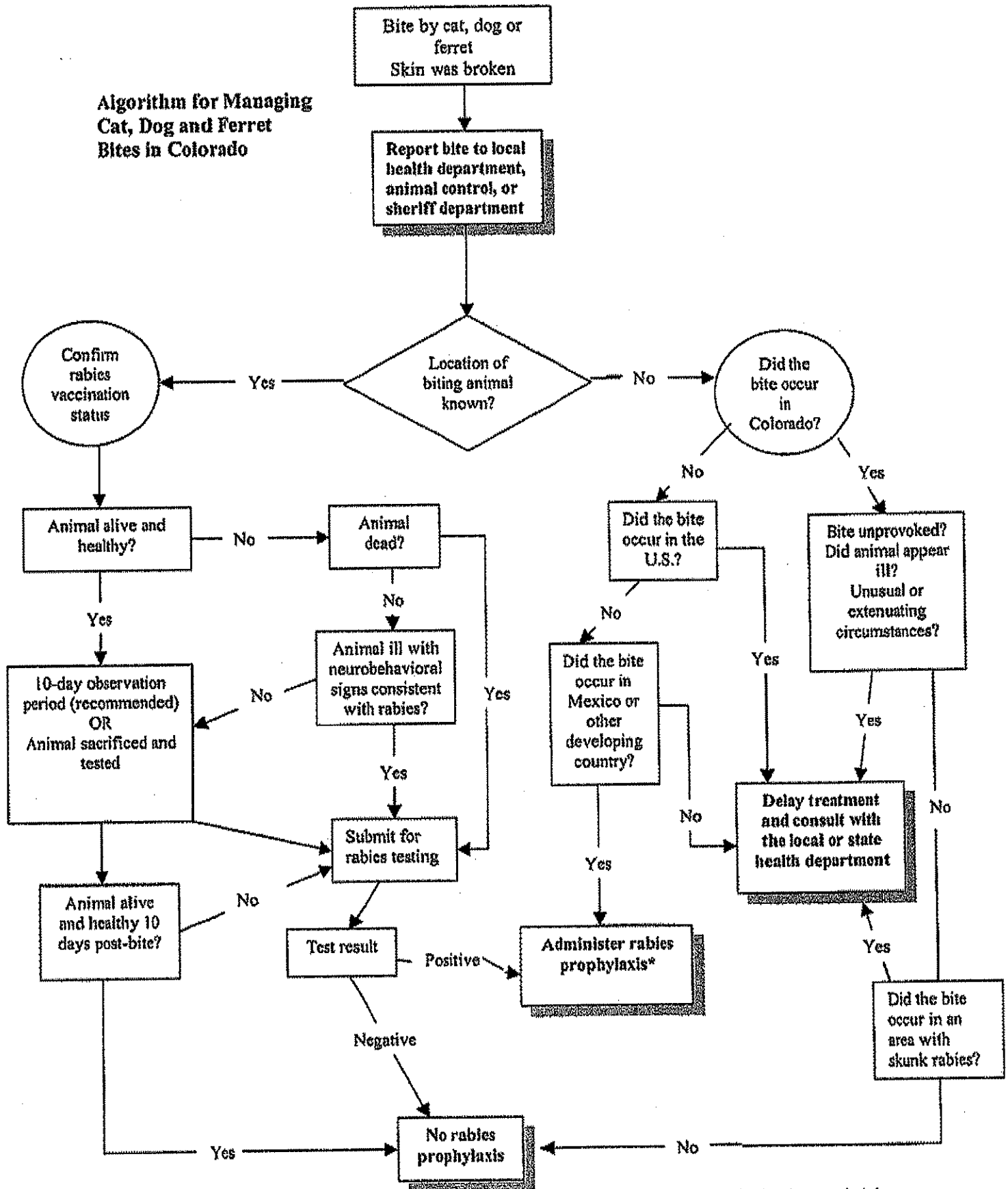


Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

CDPHE Rabies Prevention and Control Policy Algorithm for Management of Domestic Animals Exposed to Wildlife



**Algorithm for Managing
Cat, Dog and Ferret
Bites in Colorado**



*Although not required, the state health department requests reports of persons given rabies prophylaxis