



COMMUNITY HEALTH  
& THE ENVIRONMENT

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DEAD BAT TESTED, FOUND POSITIVE FOR RABIES**

#### *County Ordinance Requires All Dogs, Cats to Receive Rabies Vaccination*

*St. Charles County, Missouri* – The St. Charles County Division of Humane Services confirmed that a dead bat discovered inside a northeastern St. Charles County home this week has tested positive for the rabies virus. Although they were not known to have been bitten by the bat, family members and their pets are being treated and monitored to prevent development of this deadly illness.

Rabies is a dangerous virus in the saliva of mammals that infects the nervous system. Symptoms of rabies infection in people include fever, headache, sore throat and fatigue; followed by severe pain at the bite area, hallucinations, paralysis and a tightening of throat muscles. If these symptoms were to develop in humans, the result is rarely survivable (an estimated 55,000 rabies deaths occur annually around the globe, but deaths in the United States are rare due to the availability of treatment procedures).

Because the rabies illness will likely result in death of those infected without extensive treatment, it's best for people and their pets to avoid contact with live or dead wild animals, unfamiliar dogs or cats, and any animals that are displaying unusual behaviors. For example, some animals may act mad and aggressive while other normally aggressive creatures may appear tame. Another warning is discovering traditionally nocturnal creatures that are active during daylight hours. If you are concerned about the presence of a potentially rabid animal on your property, please contact St. Charles County's Animal Control at (636) 949-7347 or the Missouri Department of Conservation's St. Charles County regional office at (636) 441-4554 for more information.

If a family member or pet is bitten or scratched by another animal, please cleanse the wound immediately with soap and water, seek any necessary medical care and alert the Division of Humane Services or your local law enforcement agency. Humans who are exposed to a potentially rabid animal should seek immediate medical supervision and may require a series of preventative vaccinations to prevent the development of the disease. Any dog or cat bitten or scratched by a wild mammal that may have been infected with rabies should be euthanized immediately or kept in monitored isolation for up to six months.

As a reminder, St. Charles County's Animal Control Ordinance requires that all dogs and cats be vaccinated against the rabies virus and that this vaccination be registered with the Division of Humane Services. The ordinance also requires that the animal display a current St. Charles County rabies tag on their collar to offer proof of this vaccination. Pet owners should contact their local veterinarian regarding this vaccination and registration tag.

For more information about the rabies virus or vaccination, please talk with your veterinarian, call the Division of Humane Services at (636) 949-7387 or visit <http://www.sccmo.org/796/Animal-Bites>.

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