

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND & PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
RABIES CONTROL BOARD

**RULES & REGULATIONS GOVERNING RABIES
CONTROL WITHIN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

MARCH, 1993
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1.00 ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS AND POLICY

1.01 Authority - These rules and regulations are adopted by act of the Rabies Control Board pursuant to their authority provided under Rhode Island General Laws ("R.I.G.L.") ' ' 4-13-29 and 42.17.1-2 for the purpose of carrying out the functions required to prevent, control and/or suppress rabies. Issues not addressed in these rules and regulations or for which a party seeks clarity are to be construed in light of Chapter 4-13. These rules and regulations shall become effective twenty (20) days after filing.

1.02 Administrative Findings - Rabies vaccination of companion and livestock animals is the most effective method for protecting humans from rabies. Proper disposition of suspect rabid animals and their bite victims is also essential for the diagnosis and treatment of rabies where necessary. Rabies testing can only be performed by testing brain tissue therefore, euthanasia is, at times, necessary in an effort to diagnose and prevent the spread of rabies. To avoid the destruction of domestic animals and pets, quarantines are necessary to avoid further exposures to rabies, thereby preventing the spread of rabies.

1.03 Purpose - The purpose of these rules and regulations is to suppress and control rabies found within the state and to prevent the spread of rabies when rabies appears in any area, and its appearance creates a threat of infection of animals or humans.

2.00 DEFINITIONS

As used in these rules and regulations, the following terms shall, where the context permits, be construed as follows:

- (a) The term "**Animal Control Officer**" as used in these Regulations shall mean any person(s) employed by a city or town as a canine control officer, a dog or animal warden or a police officer responsible for animal control.
- (b) The term "**Bite**" or "**Bitten**" as used in these Regulations shall mean the possible exposure to rabies virus via a direct bite, contact between infectious material (i.e., saliva or CNS tissue) and the eye, inside the nose or mouth or pre-existing break in the skin.
- (c) The term "**Cat**" as used in these Regulations shall mean any member of *Felis catus* (excluding hybrids with wild felines).
- (d) The term "**Compendium**" as used in these Regulations shall mean the Compendium of Animal Rabies Control as published by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc.
- (e) The term "**Conservation Officer**" as used in these Regulations shall mean those employees of the RIDEM Division of Enforcement.
- (f) The term "**Currently Vaccinated**" as used in these Regulations shall mean properly injected by or under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian with a rabies vaccine licensed for use in that species by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and satisfying the following criteria:
For dogs, cats and ferrets:
 - (1) the animal must have been at least three months of age at the time of the vaccination; and
 - (2) at least thirty (30) days have elapsed since the initial vaccine; and
 - (3) not more than twelve (12) months have elapsed since the last vaccine if last vaccine was the initial vaccine, or if the animal is a ferret, or if the vaccine has an annual booster recommendation, otherwise, not more than twenty-four (24) months have elapsed since the most recent vaccine. For other domestic animals for which a species and USDA approved rabies vaccine exists shall be considered currently vaccinated if the last booster was administered within the time frame specified by the most current compendium of animal rabies control. For all other species for which there exists an unconditionally licensed rabies vaccine, the animals must be vaccinated against rabies in accordance with the most current compendium of Animal Rabies Control.

- (g) The term "**Director**" as used in these Regulations shall mean the director of the Department of Environmental Management or his/her duly authorized designee.
- (h) The term "**Dog**" as used in these Regulations shall mean any member of *canis familiaris* (excluding hybrids with wild canids).
- (i) The term "**Domestic Animal**" as used in these Regulations shall mean animals which, through extremely long association with humans, have been bred to a degree which has resulted in genetic changes affecting the temperament, color, conformation or other attributes of the species to the extent that makes them unique and distinguishable from wild individuals of their species. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- (1) Domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*);
 - (2) Domestic cat (*Felis catus*);
 - (3) Domestic horse (*Equus caballus*);
 - (4) Domestic cattle (*Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus*);
 - (5) Domestic sheep (*Ovis avies*)
- (j) The term "**Euthanasia**" as used in these Regulations shall mean the humane destruction of an animal accomplished by a method that involves nearly instantaneous loss of consciousness followed immediately by death or by a method that involves anesthesia produced by an agent which causes painless and rapid loss of consciousness and death during that period of unconsciousness.
- (k) The term "**Ferret**" as used in these Regulations shall mean any member of the family *mustela putorius* or Common European Ferret.
- (l) The term "**Manual**" as used in these Regulations shall mean the current State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Manual for Rabies Management and Protocols.
- (m) The term "**Owner/Keeper**" as used in these Regulations shall mean any person or agency keeping, harboring or having charge or control of or responsibility for control of an animal or any person or agency which permits any dog, cat, ferret or domestic (or wild) animal to habitually be or remain on or be lodged or fed within such person's yard or premises. This term shall not apply to veterinary or kennel or shelter operators temporarily maintaining on their premises, animals owned by others.
- (n) The term "**Person(s)**" as used in these regulations shall mean any individual, partnership, firm, joint stock company, corporation, association, trust, estate, or other legal entity.
- (o) The term "**Quarantine**" as used in these Regulations shall mean the isolation and physical confinement of an animal for purpose of observation at a State or City/Town approved facility.
- (p) The term "**Target Species**" as used in these Regulations shall mean those animals at high risk for incubating rabies, including, but not limited to, raccoons, foxes, skunks, bats and woodchucks.

3.00 COMPULSORY RABIES VACCINATION AND RABIES RISK SIGNAGE

For Animals Residing within Rhode Island

3.01 Any owner or keeper of a dog, cat, or ferret that is three (3) months of age or older and which resides in Rhode Island shall have such dog, cat or ferret currently vaccinated against rabies.

For Animals Exhibiting within Rhode Island

3.02 Any owner/keeper of any animal species other than dog, or cat, for which United States Department of Agriculture(USDA) licensed unconditionally approved rabies vaccine exists, and who uses such animals for show or exhibit purposes, or who allows such animals, to come into direct physical contact with the public shall keep such animals currently vaccinated against rabies, (including, but not limited to: petting zoos, nature centers, riding stables, fairs, shows, exhibitions, pony rides or educational programs).

3.03 Posting of SIGNAGE Notifying of Rabies Risk for Dogs and Cats Imported for Exhibit

- Any dog or cat imported into Rhode Island strictly for exhibition or breeding purposes, and which does not remain in this state for more than fifteen (15) days and which is accompanied by a valid health certificate does not require proof of current rabies vaccination. Such animals, if not accompanied by proof of current rabies vaccination must be either:

- (a) Separated from the public by sufficient means so as to disallow direct animal/public contact and/or;
- (b) Identified as possible rabies carriers by conspicuously posted and readily legible signs stating.

RHODE ISLAND RABIES CONTROL BOARD NOTICE

FEED AND TOUCH THESE ANIMALS AT YOUR OWN RISK.

(c) Facilities covered by these regulations shall include but not be limited to the following: shows, petting zoos, zoos, nature centers, fairs, exhibitions, or education programs involving animals.

3.04 Posting of SIGNAGE Notifying of Rabies Risk for Dogs, Cats, and Ferrets Maintained At Municipal Or Private Facility(ies)

– Dogs, cats, and ferrets maintained at facilities (municipal or private) where animal/public contact is allowed must be either:

- (a) Currently vaccinated against rabies and/or;
- (b) Separated from the public by sufficient means so as to disallow direct animal/public contact and/or
- (c) Identified as possible rabies carriers by conspicuously posted and readily legible signs stating:

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Facilities covered by these regulations shall include but not be limited to the following: pet shops, dog pounds, and animal shelters.

3.05 Animals for which no USDA Licensed unconditionally approved vaccine exists and which are used for public display exhibition or show must be either:

- (a) Separated from the public by sufficient means so as to disallow direct animal/public contact, and/or
- (b) Identified as possible rabies carriers by conspicuously posted and readily legible signs stating:

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Facilities covered by these regulations shall include but not be limited to the following: show, petting zoos, zoos, nature centers, fairs, exhibitions, or educational programs involving animals.

3.06 EXEMPTIONS: Low risk rabies species such as rodents, reptiles, birds, and in addition, those rabbits which can be documented as being born and raised indoors need not be isolated from direct physical contact with the public nor have posted any public notice of rabies risk.

3.07 Variances - Any person seeking exception to Section 3.01 through 3.05, inclusive, shall apply in writing to the Rhode Island Rabies Control Board for such variance. The Rabies Control Board, may, if satisfied that the variance conditions do not constitute a threat to public health or safety, grant said variance.

The applicant shall demonstrate:

- 1) that the regulation causes undue hardship or the impossibility of performance,
- 2) that the applicant for a variance can demonstrate that the procedures are as protective as the section from which they are requesting relief.

4.00 RABIES VACCINATION PROTOCOL

4.01 Rabies Tags - All rabies vaccinations shall be administered by or under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian. Beginning January 1, 1995, the licensed veterinarian, or person working under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian who administered a rabies vaccination must issue a rabies tag to the owner/keeper of any dog or cat that (s)he vaccinates against rabies. Such tags shall clearly identify the veterinary hospital/clinic at which the animal was vaccinated, the telephone number of that clinic, the year of rabies vaccination, and also contain an identification number unique to that animal.

4.02 Record Keeping - The Veterinarian must maintain a record identifying the vaccinated animal, the owner's name and address, the rabies tag number issued as well as the date of inoculation and the date the next booster is due. Such records must be maintained for three (3) years following vaccination.

4.03 Rabies Certificates - The licensed veterinarian or person directed by a licensed veterinarian must issue a rabies vaccination certificate to the animal's owner or keeper.

(a) If the animal vaccinated is a dog, cat ferret or horse, the rabies vaccination certificate shall include, but not be limited to, the following items:

- (1) Name of the licensed veterinarian, his/her practice name, practice address and telephone number;
- (2) The Animal Owner or Keeper's name and address;
- (3) The animal's name, species, age, sex and coloration;
- (4) The name of the rabies vaccine manufacturer;
- (5) The date of rabies inoculation and the date when the next rabies booster shall be administered;
- (6) If a dog or cat, number of the rabies tag issued; and
- (7) Signature of the licensed veterinarian who administered or supervised the administration of the rabies vaccine.

(b) If the animal vaccinated is a bovine, sheep or domestic animal other than a dog, cat, horse or ferret for which a species approved rabies vaccine exists, the rabies vaccination certificate shall include, but not be limited to, the following items:

- (1) Name of licensed veterinarian who gave or directed rabies vaccine administration, his/her practice name, practice address and telephone number;
- (2) Animal owner/keeper's names and address;
- (3) The animal's individualized eartag number or breed registration number or individualized tattoo number;
- (4) The animal's species, breed, age and sex;
- (5) The name of the rabies vaccine manufacturer;
- (6) The date of rabies inoculation and the date when the next rabies booster shall be administered;
- (7) The signature of the licensed veterinarian who administered or supervised the administration of the rabies vaccine.

(c) The owner/keeper of a rabies vaccinated animal shall keep such certificate or a copy thereof stating that such animal has been vaccinated and shall make such certificate or copy available to an Animal Control Officer or Department of Environmental Management or Department of Health personnel upon request.

4.04 Failure to Present Rabies Certificate

- Failure or inability by the owner/keeper of an animal to present or make available such rabies certificate or a copy thereof to Animal Control Personnel, police personnel, Department of Environmental Management, or Department of Health personnel upon request shall result in classification of the animal in question as not currently vaccinated against rabies. Such animal may then be seized and placed in quarantine or euthanized at owner's expense for rabies testing according to Rabies Manual recommendations.

4.05 Release of Information

- Veterinarians, shall, upon request from any Animal Control Officer, Police Department, Department of Environmental Management, or Department of Health personnel investigating a possible rabies exposure, release any and all requested patient information pertinent to such investigation. Such information may include, but is not limited to: Animal's species, name, breed, sex, coloration, age, date of last rabies vaccination, the date when the next rabies booster is due, eartag, registration, and/or tattoo number, owner/keeper's name, address, and telephone number(s), the rabies tag number, the name of the rabies vaccine manufacturer, and the name of the Veterinarian who administered the most recent rabies vaccination. The Release of such information by a veterinarian to said officials investigating a possible rabies exposure shall be considered in the interest of public health.

5.00 IMPORTATION OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS - HEALTH CERTIFICATES

5.01 Imported Dogs, Cats, Ferrets

- Any dog, cat or ferret transported into the State of Rhode Island must be accompanied by an official Certificate of Health signed by a duly licensed veterinarian from the State of Origin stating that the animal is not showing signs of infectious, contagious and/or communicable disease, did not originate within an area under quarantine for rabies, and has not been exposed to rabies.

(a) For all dogs, cats, and ferrets three (3) months of age or older, the health certificate must also show proof of rabies vaccination administration not more than one (1) year nor less than thirty (30) days prior to entry into Rhode Island.

(b) An owner or keeper of any dog or cat who imports any dog or cat into the State of Rhode Island for exhibition or breeding purposes when such dog or cat will only remain in the State for fifteen (15) days or less need not have a Certificate of Health as described in 4.01 above.

5.02 Other Imported Species

- All age appropriate domestic animals other than dogs and cats for which species approved rabies vaccine is available and which are being imported into Rhode Island for exhibition or show purposes must be accompanied by proof of rabies immunization administered not more than one (1) year nor less than thirty (30) days prior to entry into Rhode Island. The certificate must also state that the animal did not originate within an area under quarantine for rabies, and has not been exposed to rabies.

5.03 All rabies vaccines described within this section must be administered by or under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

6.00 ADOPTIONS

6.01 Notice to New Owner of Rabies Vaccination

- It shall be unlawful for any pound, protection league, animal shelter, kennel, pet store, humane society, or any other duly licensed facility to sell, give away, or adopt out any dog, cat or ferret without providing the new owner with a form indicating that inoculation against rabies is required by law within two (2) weeks of adoption for all such animals three (3) months of age or older.

6.02 Signing of Register by New Owner - The pound, protection league, animal shelter, kennel, pet store, humane society or other duly licensed facility shall require the new dog, cat or ferret owner to sign a register indicating that the new owner has received such a form and such register shall also contain the name, address, and signature of the new owner and shall be permanently maintained by the facility.

7.00 RABIES EXPOSURES

Any adoption facility, veterinary hospital, protection league or rescue league which administers to, is given or picks up any animal that has bitten a human within the past 14 days shall notify an ACO in the town wherein the bite occurred within twenty-four (24) hours or the next business day. Any adoption facility, veterinary hospital, protection league or rescue league which administers to, is given or picks up any animal which shows evidence of exposure to a known or suspect rabid animal shall contact the ACO in the town wherein the exposure occurred within twenty-four (24) hours or the next business day. Such facility must provide the ACO with the victim's name, address and telephone number.

7.01 In the event that any human being is bitten by a target species for rabies, the individual bitten may call a Conservation Officer ("CO") at the Department of Environmental Management's Division of Enforcement.

- (a) The target species shall be euthanized if possible by the CO.
- (b) The euthanized animal's head shall be submitted to DOH Laboratory for rabies testing.

7.02 In the event that any dog, cat or other domestic animal is bitten or attacked by a target species for rabies, the owner of the domestic animal may contact a CO for DEM.

- (a) The target species shall be euthanized if possible by an order of the CO and the head shall be submitted to the DOH Laboratory for rabies testing.
- (b) The owner and/or the CO must contact the ACO in the town within which the bite occurred.

8.00 APPLICABILITY

These Regulations shall apply to any owner or keeper of a domestic or non-domestic animal kept or housed within the State of Rhode Island.

9.00 SEVERABILITY

If any section or provision of these Regulations is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining Sections or provisions of the Regulations shall not be affected thereby.

10.00 CONSISTENCY

No provision of these Regulations shall be construed to prevent enforcement of any other state, federal or local laws and regulations duly adopted for the purpose of protecting the public health.

EFFECTIVE DATES

These rules shall take effect on the date specified in the attached certification promulgation by the Director of Environmental Management and the Environmental Standards Board. The foregoing rules and regulations, after due notice and an opportunity for hearing, are hereby adopted and filed with the Secretary of State this 3rd day of November , 1994 to become effective twenty (20) days after filing, in accordance with the provisions of the General Laws of 1956, as amended, specifically Chapters 42-17.1 and 42-35 and 4-12.

Susan Littlefield, VMD

Chairperson

R.I. Rabies Control Board

Notice given on: _____

Effective: _____

TDD (401) 277-6800