### RABIES PROTOCOL

**MANAGEMENT OF DOGS & CATS EXPOSED TO WILDLIFE**  
(Raccoon, skunk, fox, bat, woodchuck or any carnivorous wild animal)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure Category</th>
<th>If Dog or Cat is Currently or Not Currently Vaccinated</th>
<th>If dog or cat is Unvaccinated</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Category 1**    | Direct contact with or visible bite from a confirmed rabid animal (includes eating viscera) | 1. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector  
2. Booster Immediately  
3. Strict Confinement for 45 days |
|                   |                                                       | 1. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector  
2. Euthanize, or, if owner unwilling: |
|                   |                                                       | a. Vaccinate immediately  
|                   |                                                       | b. Isolate for 3 months followed by 1 month Strict Confinement |
| **Category 2**    | Direct contact with or visible bite from a suspect rabid animal which is unavailable for testing (includes eating viscera) | 1. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector  
2. Booster Immediately  
3. Strict Confinement for 45 days |
|                   |                                                       | 1. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector  
2. Euthanize, or, if owner unwilling: |
|                   |                                                       | a. Vaccinate immediately  
|                   |                                                       | b. Strict Confinement for 4 months |
| **Category 3**    | Wound of unknown origin suspected to be caused by another animal (e.g. cat abscesses) | 1. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector  
2. Booster Immediately  
3. Strict Confinement for 45 days |
|                   |                                                       | 1. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector  
2. Euthanize, or, if owner unwilling: |
|                   |                                                       | a. Vaccinate immediately  
|                   |                                                       | b. Strict Confinement for 4 months |
| **Category 4**    | Exposure by proximity seen near or in close proximity to a confirmed rabid animal (no contact or wounds) | 1. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector  
2. Booster Immediately  
3. Strict Confinement for 45 days |
|                   |                                                       | 1. Notify local director of health and local animal inspector  
2. Vaccinate immediately  
3. Strict Confinement for 4 months |

- Always wear gloves when handling saliva-contaminated wounds or fur.
- Always advise owner of rabies risk.
- Veterinarians must inform the local animal inspector of any potential rabies contact cases seen at their offices.

1. “Not Currently Vaccinated” means there is proof that the animal has received a rabies vaccination at some point prior, but the duration that vaccine was good for has been exceeded.
2. “Unvaccinated” means the animal has never received a rabies vaccine, or the first shot was administered less than 28 days ago.
3. Dog or cat should be examined by a veterinarian to assure there are no wounds.

*This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal Health*

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