



INSPECTOR OF ANIMALS
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WHAT TO DO IF BAT FOUND IN HOME

- If a bat is found inside a house, do not release the bat outdoors until you can safely rule out that an exposure, as described below, occurred.
- The teeth and claws of bats are so small that a bite or scratch may leave only a very small mark and the wound may not bleed or hurt. This means that under certain conditions, a person may not realize that an exposure has occurred. These conditions include, for example: a sleeping person awaking to find a bat in the room; or an adult witnessing a bat in the room with a previously unattended child, mentally disabled person, or intoxicated person.
- If a bat is present inside a house or building and you cannot rule out that a person may have been bitten, scratched, or had a mucous membrane exposure to the bat, MDPH recommends that the bat be submitted for testing. If the bat is found to be rabid, or the bat is unavailable for testing, post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) should be considered.
- When necessary, bats should be safely captured using the following technique and while wearing thick leather gloves. Wait until the bat lands, cover the bat with a coffee can (or similar container), and slide cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside. Avoid doing anything that might crush the bat's skull and make it unsuitable for testing. **Never handle a bat with bare hands.**
- Owners are legally required to keep their pet dogs and cats up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations. Currently vaccinated dogs and cats exposed to bats that are unavailable for testing, may need to receive a booster shot and/or be quarantined. Unvaccinated animals exposed to bats unavailable for testing pose a significant risk to other animals and people and may need to be quarantined for a prolonged period or occasionally even euthanized, at the owner's expense. Questions about domestic animals exposed to bats should be directed to the Department of Agricultural Resources, Bureau of Animal Health at 617-626-1786.

If you have questions about potential rabies exposures or how to submit a bat to MDPH for rabies testing, please call the MDPH, Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800. More information on rabies can also be found on the MDPH website at <http://www.mass.gov/dph/epi>