



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 3, 2017

PRESS RELEASE
CONTACT: JESSE PATTON
Public Communications
jesse.patton@amarillo.gov
(806) 378-5219 (office)
(806) 336-2263 (mobile)

Avoid Rabies by Avoiding Bats and Wild Animals

Amarillo, TX – The City of Amarillo Public Health department along with Amarillo Animal Management & Welfare (AAM&W) would like to remind you that bats and other disease carrying animals are more active this time of year as they migrate back to their summer homes. Because of this migration, there is an increased risk of exposure to rabies.

Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. A person may contract rabies through direct contact such as a bite, scratch, or saliva from an infected animal. A bat bite or scratch may not be seen or even felt by the injured person due to the small size of its teeth and claws. A potential rabies exposure should never be taken lightly. If untreated, rabies is always fatal.

By City Ordinance, health care providers are reminded to report all animal bites to AAM&W through the 911 dispatch system or the non-emergency line at (806) 378-3092. If outside the City of Amarillo, reports should be made to your local sheriff's office. Appropriate wound care and medical management is recommended if a bite occurs. For bites associated with bats and other high risk animals such as skunks, foxes, raccoons, and coyotes, rabies post-exposure prophylaxis may be provided through the Public Health department in coordination with AAM&W. Other recommendations to help prevent the spread of rabies include:

- Do not touch, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly
- Maintain homes and other buildings so bats cannot get inside
- Call AAM&W about removing stray animals in your neighborhood – never adopt wild animals, bring them into your home, or try to nurse sick ones to health
- Bats that are on the ground which are unable to fly or that are active during the day are more likely than others to be rabid – such bats are often easily approached but should never be handled
- If you find yourself in close proximity to a bat, dead or alive, do not touch, hit, or destroy it and do not try to remove it from your home – instead call your AAM&W or your sheriff's office as it may be possible to test the bat and avoid the need to receive rabies treatment
- Call AAM&W through the 911 dispatch system to report a bat in your home or a dead bat on your property
- If you wake to a bat in the room you may need to be treated, if the bat cannot be tested

For more information about rabies, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>.

###