

Duties of a Local Rabies Control Authority

- Purpose:** To define the duties and responsibilities of the designated Local Rabies Control Authority under the Rabies Control Act.
- References:** Health and Safety Code, Chapter 826, Rabies. Texas Administrative Code, Rabies Control and Eradication §169.21-169.34.
- Designation:** Local Rabies Control Authorities (LRCA) must be designated by the commissioner's court of each county or the governing body of a municipality. The LRCA may be the local health authority, animal control officer, peace officer or some other appropriate entity.
- Responsibilities:** To enforce the state law and rules and local ordinances or rules of the county or municipality pertaining to rabies control.
- Duties:**
- a. Investigate every animal bite and other potential rabies exposure to a human. In the investigation ascertain who, what, when, where, why and how. Also check the status of the animal's rabies vaccination.
 - b. Ensure domestic dogs, cats and ferrets that bite someone are observed for ten (10) days or are humanely destroyed without damage to the brain and submitted for rabies testing.
 - c. Contract or establish where the animals under jurisdiction will be quarantined:
 1. Department of State Health Services-approved facility
 2. Veterinary clinic
 3. Home confinement per Texas Administrative Code
 - d. Upon quarantine or destruction of an animal for rabies testing, notify the bite victim, the victim's doctor, and the owner of the animal.
 - e. Ensure the bite victim, the victim's doctor, and the animal's owner are notified upon release from quarantine or a negative result from rabies testing.
 - f. Upon receiving a positive rabies result, notify the bite victim, the victim's doctor, the animal's owner, the person removing the head, the animal control officer who quarantined the animal and anyone else who handled the animal.
 - g. Observe animals in quarantine for signs of sickness or rabies (required for home confinement or delegated to quarantine facility and/or veterinarian).
 - h. Ensure that dogs and cats are current on their rabies vaccination before releasing from quarantine.
 - i. Ensure high-risk animals (coyotes, skunks, bats, foxes and raccoons) are humanely destroyed and the heads submitted for rabies testing.
 - j. Have low-risk animals (opossums, shrews, moles, squirrels, gophers, mice, rabbits, rats, and armadillos) humanely destroyed and submitted for rabies testing only if you have cause to believe that the animal was rabid.
 - k. Suitably confine for thirty (30) days any animal not classified as a domestic dog, cat or domestic ferret; high-risk; or low-risk OR humanely destroy the animal and submit its brain for testing.
 - l. Ensure that the head of any animal which is destroyed for rabies testing is properly removed by a qualified person, packed, and shipped in accordance with DSHS guidelines (except bats, which can be submitted whole).