

# Rabies Programs

Published: October 2014

Revised: November 2018

## Introduction

The vaccination of animals against rabies is an important public health measure. In Ontario, the majority of domestic biting incidents reported to public health officials involve animals whose vaccines are not up-to-date. In conjunction with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) and local public health units, veterinarians play a key role in the combined effort to increase rabies vaccination rates and reduce the risk of human exposure to the rabies virus. Rabies Programs are one opportunity for veterinarians to contribute to provincial efforts to control rabies in Ontario.

## Definition

**Rabies Programs:** Rabies programs are services provided outside of the regular veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) that facilitate the administration of rabies vaccines to as many animals as possible. Rabies Programs can be offered at accredited veterinary facilities and, under specific conditions, at unaccredited facilities.



## Practice Expectations

A veterinarian meets the *Professional Practice Standard: Rabies Programs* when a veterinarian:

1. Submits an application to the College of Veterinarians of Ontario in the format provided.
2. Veterinarians offering services at a rabies program must hold a certificate of accreditation for a temporary facility.
3. Cooperates with local public health officials to deliver the Rabies Program.
4. Invites local veterinarians to participate in a Rabies Program to be held at an unaccredited facility. This requirement is not applicable to Rabies Programs offered at an accredited facility.
5. Ensures the appropriate storage of vaccines to maintain safety and efficacy.
6. Ensures that the resources to respond to adverse vaccine reactions are available.
7. Establishes infection control protocols to ensure the safe administration of vaccines.
8. Ensures that at a Rabies Program held in an unaccredited facility, vaccinations are performed by a veterinarian. In an accredited facility, the administration of vaccines may be delegated to a suitably qualified auxiliary.
9. Asks basic questions about the general health of the animal in order to determine whether or not the animal should be vaccinated.
10. Creates a record for each animal that includes: information that identifies the animal; the name and contact information of the custodian; date of vaccination; and name and type of vaccine (e.g., lot and serial number).
11. Retains records from the Rabies Program in an accessible, systematic manner for a period of 3 years.

**Continues on next page.**



12. Issues a signed Certificate of Rabies Vaccination<sup>1</sup> to the custodian, and retains a copy (paper or scanned) of the signed original Certificate, for each animal that is vaccinated, in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 567 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.
13. Issues a signed Statement of Exemption from Rabies Vaccination to the custodian, and retains a copy (paper or scanned) of the signed original Statement, for each animal that is determined to have a medical condition which precludes safe vaccination at the time of the Rabies Program, in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 567 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.
14. Submits data on the utilization of the Rabies Program for use by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to the College of Veterinarians of Ontario in a timely manner.

## Legislative Authority

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093: General, s. 12(3), 14(4.1), 17(1)(40), 17(1)(41), 17(5), 18(3)(c), 20, 22(4), 22(5), 22(6) (*Veterinarians Act*)

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 567, s. 4-8 (*Health Protection and Promotion Act*)

## Resources

The following can be found at the College's website at [cvo.org](http://cvo.org):

1. *Legislative Overview: Rabies*
2. *Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent*
3. *Guide to the Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent*
4. *CVO Rabies Program Online Application Form*
5. *Rabies Program Data Report for MOHLTC*
6. *Sample Certificate of Rabies Vaccination*
7. *Sample Statement of Exemption from Rabies Vaccination*

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained. The College encourages you to refer to the website ([www.cvo.org](http://www.cvo.org)) to ensure you are referring to the most recent version of any document.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the case of a cat or dog, a rabies identification tag shall also be provided.