



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Division of Public Health – Epidemiology Section**  
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Jeffrey Engel, MD  
State Health Director

Date: XX xxx 2011  
To: N.C. Camp Directors  
From: Dr. Megan Davies, State Epidemiologist AND Terry Pierce or Larry Michael, NC DEH  
Subject: Prevention of Bat Exposure at Summer Camps

The summer camp season has begun and brings with it increased opportunities to observe and interact with wild animals. While observation of wildlife is encouraged and often one of the primary goals of attending summer camp, it is important to realize that direct contact with wild animals, especially bats, can result in disease transmission. Please identify your local health department and ask them for assistance in developing a safe, bat free, environment for your campers.

Be aware that bats may sometimes seek shelter in camp cabins and can result in mass exposures of campers to rabies. If you receive any reports of bats found in cabins at your camp during camp season, please contact your local health department for a risk assessment to determine whether campers or camp staff may have been exposed. Fortunately these exposures can be avoided by remaining vigilant about bat exclusion and avoidance.

Prior to any camp opening please inspect each structure using the attached checklist.

Consider the following as a matter of policy for summer camps

- If pets or domestic animals are allowed at your camp be certain these animals are immunized against rabies. Proof of current immunization should be maintained on file at the camp for the animals at camp.
- If confinement or capture of a suspect or attacking animal is necessary, who will be responsible for this task? (Address this before an incident occurs!) Identify your animal control officer and environmental health specialist before an incident occurs.
- Potential Exposure - If a bite, scratch or other contact with a suspect animal occurs: IMMEDIATELY wash the victim's wound(s) or exposed site thoroughly with soap and water. Seek medical assistance.

To reduce the risk of rabies transmission while summer camp is in session, instruct campers and camp staff:

- Not to touch or feed wild or stray animals.
- Avoid sick animals and those acting in an unusual manner. If such animals are observed immediately notify camp leaders.
- Cover garbage cans securely and do not leave food outside.
- Maintain building integrity to prevent bats from entering buildings and cabins.
- Inspect buildings and cabins daily, thoroughly, to ensure that bats are not present.
- Following a bite or other exposure to an animal, wash wounds immediately with soap and water.

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system and is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. The virus is transmitted by bites of infected animals. In North Carolina, rabies may occur in raccoons, bats, skunks, foxes, cats, and groundhogs. However, all mammals, including other wildlife, farm animals, and dogs, can get infected with and transmit rabies. When a person has been bitten or otherwise exposed (e.g. scratched) to a potentially rabid animal, treatment to prevent rabies may be warranted. The CDC has an excellent web resource regarding bats and rabies at: <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats/index.html>. In the event of a potential exposure or bite contact your local health department. Additionally the state Division of Public Health may be called anytime at 919-733-3419.

Thank you for your time and assistance in this matter.



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