



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

Date: XX xxx 2011
To: County Environmental Health Staff and Local Health 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 will begin soon and bring opportunities for campers and staff members to be exposed to wild animals and the diseases they carry. It is essential to minimize exposure to bats and rabies in these situations. Please identify summer camp and resident camp facilities located in your jurisdiction and assist them in developing a safe camp environment that is free of exposure to bats (see list below). We will be contacting camp directors directly by means of another memorandum asking them to bat proof their facilities and establish contact with you.

1. Assist camp directors to inspect their facilities and eliminate portals of bat entry. A checklist to help accomplish the inspection is attached. This should be accomplished prior to the camp opening.
2. Ensure it is understood that structures are free of bats and bat proofed prior to occupancy or use. In recent years bat exposures at summer camps in North Carolina have resulted in mass exposures to rabies and required a great deal of time and commitment from local health department staff. Exposures to bats at summer camps are avoidable.
3. Ask camp management to consider the following as a matter of policy for summer camps
 - a. If pets or domestic animals are allowed at the 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.
 - b. If confinement or capture of a suspect or attacking animal is necessary, who will be responsible for this task? Ensure they have your contact information as well as information for the animal control officer or wildlife damage control agent.
 - c. Potential Exposure - If a bite, scratch or other contact with a wild animal occurs: IMMEDIATELY wash the victim's wound(s) or exposed site thoroughly with soap and water. Seek medical assistance.
4. Provide education to reduce the risk of rabies transmission while summer camp is in session. The CDC has an excellent website regarding bats and rabies: <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats/index.html>. Instruct campers and camp staff.
 - a. Not to touch or feed wild or stray animals.
 - b. Avoid sick animals and those acting in an unusual manner. If such animals are observed immediately notify camp leaders.
 - c. Cover garbage cans securely and do not leave food outside.
 - d. Maintain building integrity to prevent bats from entering buildings and cabins.
 - e. Inspect buildings and cabins daily, thoroughly, to ensure that bats are not present.
 - f. Following a bite or other exposure to an animal, wash wounds immediately with soap and water.
5. Provide contact information for the state and local health department in the event of an exposure to or recognized bite from a bat. The state Division of Public Health can be reached anytime at 919-733-3419.

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 in the saliva of rabid animals, typically by a bite. 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.

Thank you for your time and assistance in this matter.



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