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NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

173 NAC 5

TITLE 173            COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

CHAPTER 5           RABIES CONTROL PROGRAM

001. SCOPE AND AUTHORITY. These regulations are intended to implement the law governing the control of rabies pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute (Neb. Rev. Stat.) §§ 71-4401 to 71-4412.

002. INITIAL AND BOOSTER RABIES VACCINATIONS. Young domestic and hybrid animals must be initially vaccinated against rabies commencing at three months of age and can be considered immunized within 28 days. Regardless of the age of the animal or product used at initial vaccination, a booster vaccination should be administered one year later. Subsequent booster vaccinations should then be given at intervals consistent with the vaccine labeling. A domestic animal is considered immunized immediately after any booster vaccination.

003. RABIES CONTROL. Rabies control requirements are as follows:

003.01 DOMESTIC ANIMALS THAT HAVE BITTEN A PERSON. Any domestic animal which is owned by a person and has bitten any person or caused an abrasion of the skin of any person must be seized by the rabies control authority for a period of not less than ten days if the animal is suspected of having rabies or is not vaccinated. If, after observation and examination by a veterinarian, at the end of the ten-day period the animal shows no clinical signs of rabies, the animal may be released to its owner.

003.02 VACCINATED ANIMALS THAT HAVE BITTEN A PERSON. Whenever any person has been bitten or has an abrasion of the skin caused by domestic animal owned by another person, which animal has been vaccinated in accordance with this chapter, the animal must be confined and observed by the owner or other responsible person, as required by the rabies control authority, for a period of at least ten days and must be examined by a veterinarian at the end of the ten-day period. If no clinical signs of rabies are found by the veterinarian, the animal may be released from confinement.

003.03 LAW ENFORCEMENT OR GOVERNMENT AGENCY ANIMALS THAT HAVE BITTEN A PERSON. A vaccinated domestic animal that bites or causes an abrasion of the skin of any person during training or the performance of the animal's duties must be observed for a period of at least ten days, during which time the agency must maintain ownership, control, and supervision of the animal. Any animal showing any signs of illness during the ten days must be examined by a veterinarian.

003.04 UNOWNED ANIMALS THAT HAVE BITTEN A PERSON. Any domestic animal which has bitten a person or caused an abrasion of the skin of a person and the ownership of which cannot be determined within 72 hours of the time of the bite or abrasion or is a stray or unwanted, must be euthanized, and the head or entire brain, including the brainstem, must be submitted for testing. The 72-hour period includes holidays and weekends and must not be extended for any reason.

003.05 VACCINATION IN CONFINEMENT. Rabies vaccine must not be administered to any domestic animal during a 10-day observation period to avoid confusing rare adverse vaccine reactions with signs of rabies.

003.06 ILLNESS IN CONFINED ANIMALS. Any illness in a domestic animal being confined and observed for rabies must be reported immediately to the Department or local rabies control authority. Such animals must be evaluated by a veterinarian at the first sign of illness during confinement. If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal must be euthanized, and the head or entire brain, including the brainstem, must be submitted for testing unless the Department advises otherwise.

003.07 EXPOSURE TO RABIES BY OTHER ANIMALS. Other animals that might have exposed a person to rabies must be reported immediately to the local rabies control authority who may consult the Department. Management of such animals depends on the species as, the shedding period for rabies virus is undetermined for most species. Previous vaccination might not preclude the necessity for euthanasia and testing.

003.08 EXPOSURE BY RABID ANIMALS. In the case of domestic animals or livestock known to have been bitten by or exposed to a confirmed or suspect rabid animal, the following rules apply:

003.08(A) ANIMALS REGARDED AS RABID. Wild mammalian carnivores, skunks, and bats that are not available or suitable for testing must be regarded as rabid.

003.08(B) UNVACCINATED DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND LIVESTOCK. If the domestic animal has never been vaccinated in accordance with Section 002 or is unvaccinated livestock, it must be immediately destroyed unless the owner is willing to place the animal in strict quarantine under veterinary supervision for a period of not less than six months. If dogs or cats receive rabies vaccination within 96 hours of the exposure, at the time of entry into quarantine, the quarantine period may be reduced to 4 months. Strict quarantine in this context refers to confinement in an enclosure that precludes direct contact with people and other animals.

003.08(C) VACCINATED ANIMALS. Livestock current on rabies vaccination with a United States Department of Agriculture-licensed vaccine approved for that species or a domestic animal that has been vaccinated in accordance with Section 002 or is overdue for booster vaccination but has appropriate documentation of having received a United States Department of Agriculture-licensed rabies vaccine at least once previously, are subject to the following procedures:

- (i) The animal must immediately receive veterinary medical care for assessment, wound cleansing, and booster rabies vaccination. The animal must be kept under

- the owner's control and observed for 45 days;
- (ii) If the animal is not revaccinated within 96 hours of the exposure, it must be confined in strict quarantine under the supervision of a veterinarian and managed as unvaccinated in accordance with Section 003.08(B); or
  - (iii) The animal must be destroyed if the owner does not comply with either item (i) or (ii) above.

003.08(D) ANIMALS OVERDUE FOR BOOSTER VACCINATION. If the animal is overdue for a booster vaccination and is without appropriate documentation of having received a United States Department of Agriculture-licensed rabies vaccine at least once previously, the animal must immediately receive veterinary medical care for assessment, wound cleansing, and be managed as directed by the Department.

- (i) A domestic animal may be treated as unvaccinated, immediately given a booster vaccination, and placed in strict quarantine in accordance with Section 003.08(B); or
- (ii) Prior to booster vaccination, the attending veterinarian will consult the Department in the possible use of prospective serologic monitoring and subsequent management of the domestic animal as the Department directs.
- (iii) Livestock overdue for a booster vaccination must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and managed as directed by the Department.

003.09 OTHER EXPOSED ANIMALS. All animals other than domestic animals or livestock, which are known to have been exposed to a confirmed rabid animal must be euthanized immediately unless the animal is managed on a case-by-case basis as directed by the Department.

004. APPROVED TESTS FOR RABIES DETECTION. The Direct Fluorescent Antibody (DFA) test is approved for rabies diagnosis and must be performed in accordance with the established national standardized protocol by a qualified laboratory that has been designated by the Department. Any test method other than Direct Fluorescent Antibody (DFA) may only be used if approved by the Department.

005. REPORT OF TESTS FOR IDENTIFYING ANIMALS AFFLICTED WITH RABIES. The laboratory must report the results of the test to the Department and rabies control authority which submitted the specimen for testing.