

## **Rabies** **Guidance for Law Enforcement**

### **Animal Bites From Domestic Dogs, Cats and Ferrets**

- Domestic dogs, cats and ferrets include all domestic breeds of dogs and cats and ferrets born and raised in captivity for purposes of being pets.
  - Dogs that are part dog and part wolf are not considered domestic dogs and should be treated as wild animals.
- Persons bitten by a domestic pet should immediately wash the bite wound with soap and water and consult with a physician.
- The following information should be gathered by the investigating officer:
  - Name and demographic/locating information of the bite victim.
  - The date of the bite.
  - The area of the body bitten.
  - The type of animal inflicting bite (for dogs and cats, include breed/color).
  - Name of the animal (ie. Sparky, Daisy, etc).
  - Name and demographic/locating information of the animal owner.
  - Name of the animal's veterinarian.
  - Copy of the animal's latest rabies vaccination record if available.
  - The current health status and location of the biting animal.
- In all domestic dog, cat and ferret bite situations, rabies exposures must be ruled out by one of the following actions
  - Holding the animal in quarantine, or impound, for a ten day period with the day of the bite being day zero.
    - This can be done if the animal is healthy and behaving normally and the owners want to keep the animal
    - The animal should be declared healthy by a licensed veterinarian at the start of the quarantine period AND on day 10.
    - Confinement can occur at the owner's residence provided that the law enforcement officials are comfortable that the owners will be compliant.
    - If compliance is questionable, the animal can be placed in quarantine at an animal pound or with a licensed veterinarian.
    - The animal must be examined by a veterinarian if it develops symptoms, exhibits a change in behavior or dies during the ten day period. If the veterinarian feels the symptoms or behavior change may be due to rabies the animal must be tested for rabies.
  - Having the animal destroyed and the brain submitted to the North Dakota Department of Health for rabies testing.
    - This can be done if the owners no longer want to keep the animal or can be considered in other unusual circumstances.
  - All expenses incurred in quarantining, impounding or destroying and testing a domestic dog, cat or ferret are the responsibility of the animal owner. (The price of being a responsible pet owner).
- If the animal cannot be located, efforts to locate and secure the animal should be made. If the animal cannot be located, contact your local health department or the North Dakota Department of Health.
- Make sure to consult with your local health department or the North Dakota Department of Health if the animal has not been located.

### **Animal Bites From Animals other than Domestic Dogs, Cats or Ferrets**

- These species of animals include
  - Wild animals
  - Captive wild animals (i.e. monkeys, tigers, zoo animals, circus animals, etc)
  - Hybrids of domestic and wild animals (ie wolf and dog cross)
  - Domestic livestock such as cattle, horses, pigs, goats, etc. This includes domesticated wild animals such as bison or elk.
  - Rodents and rabbits
- Persons bitten by any animal should immediately wash the bite wound with soap and water and consult with a physician.

- Contact your local public health department or the North Dakota Department of Health.
- Keep the animal in a secure area to prevent escape until further instructions can be provided.
- Wild animals that bite an individual cannot be held for observation, testing the brain will be needed to rule out rabies.
- The following information should be gathered by the investigating officer:
  - Name and demographic/locating information of the bite victim.
  - The date of the bite.
  - The area of the body bitten.
  - The type of animal inflicting bite.
  - Name of the animal (ie. Sparky, Daisy, etc).
  - Name and demographic/locating information of the owner.
  - Name of the animal's veterinarian.
  - Copy of the animal's latest rabies vaccination record if available.
  - The current health status and location of the biting animal.

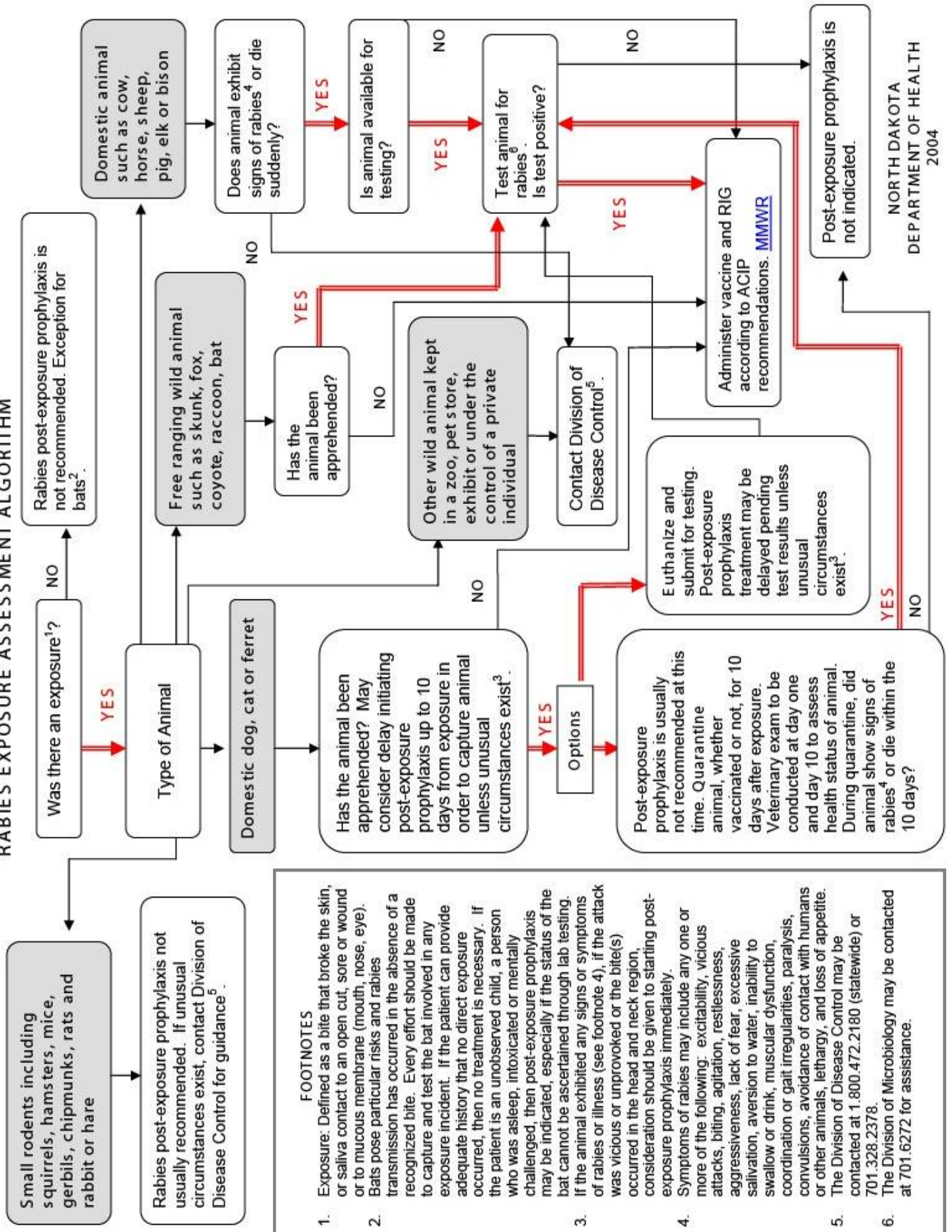
### ***Laboratory Testing Information:***

- Brain should be excised by licensed veterinarian only
- Brain should be sent to the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Laboratory Services, Microbiology.
- Mailing address is:
  - North Dakota Department of Health  
Division of Laboratory Services, Microbiology  
2635 East Main Avenue  
PO Box 5520  
Bismarck, ND 58506-5520
- Cost of test
  - Laboratory analysis is free of charge. Fees may be assessed for multiple specimens from the same incident evaluated on a case by case basis. Please contact the laboratory directly for specific information.
  - Specimens from individuals, and facilities outside of the state will be assessed a fee of \$50.00.
- Brain removal cost
  - Intact heads will generally not be accepted. Exceptions for small animals may be made on a case by case basis following consultation with the laboratory. Whole heads when accepted by the laboratory will be assessed a \$50.00 fee for removal of the brain.
- Brain should never be frozen; it should be shipped on ice.
  - For shipping protocols, questions about weekend services, test times, results, etc. Please contact the Division of Laboratory Services at 701.328.6272.
  - After hours emergency contact number for the laboratory: 701.667.0060.

### ***Animal Bite/Disease Reporting Information:***

- Animal bites and possible rabies exposures should be reported to the Division of Disease Control at 800.472.2180.
  - The Division of Disease Control will notify the Board of Animal Health.
- Information that should be reported to Disease Control:
  - Type of animal.
  - Name and contact information of the owner of the animal.
  - Name and contact information of the person exposed (if different than owner).
  - Rabies vaccination history of animal (if applicable).
  - Rabies symptoms/signs of animal (if applicable).
    - Symptoms such as significant change in behavior or neurologic deficits should also be reported.
  - Date exposure occurred.
  - Circumstances surrounding exposure.
- Disease Control will follow up with owner and the exposed person if warranted.
- After hours emergency contact number for Disease Control: 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378 (local and out of state).

# RABIES EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT ALGORITHM



## FOOTNOTES

1. Exposure: Defined as a bite that broke the skin, or saliva contact to an open cut, sore or wound to mucous membrane (mouth, nose, eye). Bats pose particular risks and rabies transmission has occurred in the absence of a recognized bite. Every effort should be made to capture and test the bat involved in any exposure incident. If the patient can provide adequate history that no direct exposure occurred, then no treatment is necessary. If the patient is an unobserved child, a person who was asleep, intoxicated or mentally challenged, then post-exposure prophylaxis may be indicated, especially if the status of the bat cannot be ascertained through lab testing. If the animal exhibited any signs or symptoms of rabies or illness (see footnote 4), if the attack was vicious or unprovoked or the bite(s) occurred in the head and neck region, consideration should be given to starting post-exposure prophylaxis immediately.
2. Symptoms of rabies may include any one or more of the following: excitability, vicious attacks, biting, agitation, restlessness, aggressiveness, lack of fear, excessive salivation, aversion to water, inability to swallow or drink, muscular dysfunction, coordination or gait irregularities, paralysis, convulsions, avoidance of contact with humans or other animals, lethargy, and loss of appetite. The Division of Disease Control may be contacted at 1.800.472.2180 (statewide) or 701.328.2378.
3. The Division of Microbiology may be contacted at 701.6272 for assistance.