

## ANIMAL BITE PROTOCOL

Animal bites must immediately receive medical attention and be reported to the proper authorities, who will supervise the response. Information about the incident should be transferred with the animal and its paperwork at every point along the path to and from an Emergency Animal Care Center.

1. As soon as a bite is observed or suspected, place the suspect animal in a secure cage or crate that is clearly tagged: "This cage/crate contains an animal that has been involved in a bite."
  - Isolate the caged animal.
  - No one is to handle this animal except professional staff who are specifically authorized to do so.
2. Immediately direct the person who has been bitten to medical attention.
  - As necessary, apply pressure to stop bleeding.
  - Wash wounds thoroughly with plenty of soap and warm water. Run water over the wound for several minutes to make sure it is clean and all soap is rinsed out.
  - After a thorough wash and rinse, apply an antiseptic solution, such as iodine or other disinfectant.
  - See a physician as soon as possible. If a physician of choice is unavailable, go to the nearest emergency-care facility. Explain how the bite occurred, and follow the physician's advice.
3. Determine and clearly document the incident in the animal's paperwork. Include:
  - The date and time of the bite,
  - The identity of the person who was bitten,
  - The rabies vaccination status of the person who was bitten,
  - The rabies vaccination status of the animal involved,
  - The identity of people who witnessed the bite,
  - Any special circumstances associated with the bite,
  - The identity of the owner of the animal,
  - The time/date of notification of the owner.
4. Make proper notifications.
  - If the bite occurred in the Emergency Animal Care Center, notify the Safety Officer and/or Shelter Manager.
  - Notify the RI Department of Health (Weekdays 8:30-4:00 222-2577; Other Hours 272-5952).
  - Notify the Animal Control Officer ("ACO", normally a member of the police department) in the town within whose borders the bite occurred. The ACO will issue an *Order of Quarantine* and determine what other notifications and actions are thereafter required. Note: Once a bite has occurred, options (such as euthanasia, movement, or return of an animal to its owner) are limited by RI laws and regulations.

### **See also:**

- [Rabies – the Facts You Need to Know Now](#) (RI DEM)
- [Who to Call When a Potential Rabies Exposure Occurs](#) (RI DEM)
- [Cat and Dog Bites](#) (American Academy of Family Physicians)
- [Animal Bites: First Aid](#) (Mayo Clinic)
- [Rabies](#) (RI DOH) and [Rabies](#) (CDC)
- [The State of RI Manual for Rabies Management and Protocols](#) (RI DEM)
- [Animal Bite Case Report Form](#) (RI DOH)