



OAVT Public Health Rabies Response Program (RRP)

STORING ANIMALS REQUIRING RABIES TESTING

WHAT WE DO

The OAVT RRP is a joint partnership between the OAVT and the Ministry of Health (MOH). The RRP provides the service of specimen collection and shipping for potential rabies exposures between animals and people. The RRP dispatches trained RVTs to animal hospitals, shelters, wildlife rehabilitation facilities, zoos and farms across the province on behalf of Ontario's local Public Health Units (PHUs).

HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you are reporting an incident involving an animal bite/scratch to your local PHU and the animal is already deceased there is a possibility that rabies testing will be required. If the specimen collection is not occurring within a few hours after death please place the animal in the fridge or freezer to prevent sample deterioration.

Prior to placing the animal in the fridge or freezer, the animal should be positioned with the neck extended and the front legs placed caudally against the chest (see pictures below). Alternately, place a rolled towel around the neck of the animal, like a collar, so that the neck remains extended while being stored. This position allows the RRP RVT easier access to disarticulate the head when there is no time to thaw the animal prior to the RVTs arrival.



REMAINS AFTER COLLECTION

The RRP RVT is only responsible for taking the specimen portion required for rabies testing. The remains of the animal that are left behind can be disposed of immediately after collection. Animals being sent for cremation should be labelled "rabies specimen" as a courtesy to the crematorium staff to ensure proper handling procedures. Animals may be buried according to local laws. Livestock that requires rabies testing must first have a rabies negative result before being sent for deadstock.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any further questions please reach out to us at rrp@oavt.org or 1-844-872-2437