

## **Instructions for Submission of Animals to the State Hygienic Lab (SHL) for Rabies Testing**

### **Medium/Large Animals (dogs, cats, cows, horses, etc):**

1. Have a veterinarian remove the head. Submit only the head for testing. An improperly removed head may compromise the integrity of the brain material rendering the specimen unsatisfactory for testing. We **MUST** be able to identify specific brain anatomy for accurate testing.
2. Triple bag the specimen and make sure each of the three bags is securely closed to prevent leakage.
3. Place the triple-bagged specimen into a hard-sided or Styrofoam box and secure the lid.
  - a. **Cow and horse heads only:** If you are unable to find a hard-sided or Styrofoam box large enough to hold the head, please ensure that any bags used for transport are of sufficient strength and size to hold the head.
    - i. Also, even though you have allowed the head to drain sufficiently prior to packaging, ensure that the bag containing the head has absorbent material inside to absorb any fluids that may leak during transport.
    - ii. If there are bones or other sharp portions protruding from the head make sure they are adequately wrapped or padded in order keep them from puncturing the bags.
    - iii. The outermost bag or container must contain enough freezer packs to keep the head cold during transport.
4. Complete a Rabies Test Request Form found at <http://www.kitsquotesforms/rabiesslip.pdf>
  - a. You **MUST** provide the name, address and 24-hour phone number for a medical provider-i.e., a physician, a veterinarian or a public health practitioner. We will not give test results to the client, animal owner, or patient.
  - b. An improperly completed test request form may result in a delay in processing or reporting.
5. Private vehicle is the most efficient means of delivery to UHL. Keep the animal carcass cool during transport.
6. If you must use a commercial courier service (FedEx), pack the double-bagged animal in freezer packs inside another shipping container for shipment-DO NOT FREEZE the animal carcass or head.
7. An improperly packed or shipped animal may compromise the integrity of the brain material rendering the specimen unsatisfactory for testing.
8. Place the completed Rabies Test Request Form in a separate plastic bag to prevent it from becoming wet or contaminated. Place the bagged test request form in the outermost shipper.
9. Ship via overnight courier such as FedEx. Ensure next day delivery and use shipment tracking. If the animal does not arrive at SHL the next day you will need to track it.
10. Delayed delivery may compromise the integrity of the brain material and render the specimen unsatisfactory for testing.

### **Bats:**

1. Submit the whole animal-DO NOT attempt to remove the head.
2. Ensure that the bat is dead but do not crush the skull. A damaged brain may render the specimen unsatisfactory for testing. If you are unsure about the condition of the brain, continue with submission. The technologist will be able to make a final determination on the acceptability of the bat for testing.
3. Double bag or use a hard-sided container to hold the bat for shipping.
  - a. If the bat is still alive, you **MUST** use a hard-sided container for shipping or delivery.

- b. Be sure to secure the lid completely as it only takes a very small opening for a bat to squeeze through and escape.
  - c. If the bat is still alive, please label the container holding the bat “ALIVE.” This ensures that proper precautions are taken at SHL to prevent exposure of staff.
4. Continue with step #4 in “Medium/Large Animal” instructions.

**Small animals (mice, squirrels, etc):**

1. Submission of the whole animal is acceptable and in most cases preferable. Improper procedures for removing the head may compromise the integrity of the brain material rendering the specimen unsatisfactory for testing. We MUST be able to identify specific brain anatomy for accurate testing.
2. Continue with step #2 in “Medium/Large Animals” instructions.

**Delivery**

Specimens submitted for rabies will be accepted at the State Hygienic Lab facility in Coralville Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm. A map is included with the test request form. If you cannot deliver the specimen directly to the Hygienic Lab during these hours, you must call the lab prior to leaving. Please call 319-335-4500 or 319-821-IOWA for instruction on proper delivery. Outside of our normal hours you will be directed to the Duty Officer who will instruct you on proper delivery of your specimen. DO NOT leave any animal specimen at the laboratory without handing it directly to an employee.