

Rabies Testing of Animals:

Guidelines for Submitting Specimens for Rabies Testing and Obtaining Test Results

The Rabies Laboratory at the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health (SLPH) is the sole source for diagnostic rabies testing in North Carolina. For specific guidelines and instructions on specimen criteria, collection, preparation and shipping; printable forms; access to test results and other important information see the State Laboratory of Public Health web site (<http://slph.state.nc.us/virology-serology/rabies.asp>).

Small animals are submitted directly to the SLPH per the guidelines on the SLPH web site (<http://slph.state.nc.us/virology-serology/rabies.asp>). Properly prepared and packaged specimens may be shipped via State Courier Service (preferred) or may be delivered directly to the SLPH in Raleigh; see the SLPH web site for specific instructions and for times of operation. **Special pre-approval from Veterinary Public Health (919-733-3419) and the SLPH (919-280-8915) are required for weekend or holiday testing.**

Large animals: Note that livestock and horse heads and carcasses must never be submitted directly to the SLPH. Instead, submit the livestock or horse head or carcass directly to one of the N.C. Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories for brain removal (www.ncagr.gov/vet/ncvdl or call 919-733-3986). NCVDLs will remove the brain and submit it to the N.C. SLPH for rabies testing. See Protocol for Submission of Livestock and Equine Specimens for Rabies Testing (http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/lhds/manuals/rabies/docs/testing_submission.pdf) in this Manual.

Pre-approval is required for submission of Low-Risk Animals (rodents, rabbits, opossums, etc.). Contact one of the public health veterinarians (919-733-3419) for prior approval and indicate that contact's name on the animal examination form submitted with the specimen.

Bats: SLPH will contact Veterinary Public Health for testing approval and follow-up if multiple bats are submitted from one address or location.

Note: Individuals who package and ship rabies specimens (Category 3) are required to have CLIA training and certification annually and must be certified for Local Health Department Accreditation. (See SLPH Rabies Packaging and Shipping PowerPoint Presentation at www.quia.com/pages/cmiller20/rabiespackandship; CEUs are available).

Test Results: The laboratory staff will telephone test results for any animal positive for rabies, any unsatisfactory test result, or any test not performed to the appropriate parties at the numbers listed on the completed submission form, as well as to the Public Health veterinarians. Negative results will be reported via U.S. Mail or the State Courier System. Authorized and registered users can access rabies test results online (<https://slphreporting.ncpublichealth.com/lims/ClinicalLims/Login.aspx>); an account is required. Submitters may register for on-line access to rabies results by calling (919) 733-7837.

Important Phone Numbers:

- Laboratory results: (919) 733-7544 - SLPH Virology/Serology Unit
- Ordering rabies vaccine for people: (919) 733-3419 - Public health veterinarians
- Prior approval or patient management: (919) 733-3419 - Public health veterinarians
- Laboratory contact after-hours and some holidays, 4:30 Fri.- noon Sat., (919) 280-8915 (inquire with Veterinary Public Health, 919-733-3419)