

# Animal Bite Protocol: What's Next?

Your reporting agency (police, medical facility, veterinary clinic) will submit a bite report to DuPage County Animal Services (DCAS) for processing. An animal control officer from DCAS will be in contact to discuss the incident and provide guidance on any rabies observation and/or rabies vaccine requirements for animal(s) involved.

## Next Steps for Owners:

### Household/Owner or Animal/Animal Bite

- Owners are required to provide proof of a current rabies vaccine for the biting animal.
- Owners also need to contain their pet in a manner that prevents them from having contact with anyone outside of the immediate household for 10 days.
- If the biting animal does not have a current rabies vaccine, they will first need to complete the 10-day home confinement and be scheduled with their vet to receive an updated vaccine.

### Animal/Person Bite Outside of the Household

- Owners are required to provide proof of a current rabies vaccine for a biting animal.
- The owner must also contact their attending vet clinic immediately and schedule a **rabies observation**. A rabies observation is a 10-day confinement period where a biting animal is observed by a veterinarian for rabies.
- Owners are permitted to confine their animals at home during the 10-day confinement period and attend their vet appointments as scheduled. Animals under observation should not have contact with anyone outside of the immediate household during the observation.
- If the biting animal does not have a current rabies vaccine, they will first need to complete the 10-day home confinement and be scheduled with their vet to receive an updated vaccine.



DuPage County  
**ANIMAL  
SERVICES**  
Saving Animals. Serving People.

DuPage County Animal Services  
120 N. County Farm Road Wheaton, IL 60187  
(630)407-2800 | [animalservices@dupageco.org](mailto:animalservices@dupageco.org)

# Common FAQs

## **Why are animal bites reported to DuPage County Animal Services?**

While the likelihood of an animal having the rabies virus is low, all animal bites must be treated as a potential exposure. DCAS processes bite reports to maintain rabies control for DuPage County. Bite reports also allow our officers to make contact with the community in regards to bite prevention and public safety with animals.

## **Will I have to surrender my animal if they bite a person or another animal?**

No. DCAS cannot force an owner to surrender their animal. If an owner feels they cannot safely maintain their pet, they have the option to responsibly rehome the animal, schedule a surrender appointment with DCAS, or schedule an appointment for humane euthanasia with their attending vet clinic. If an owner opts to keep their animal, they are expected to maintain their animals so that they are not a safety risk to others.

## **Does DCAS operate on a strike system?**

No. Animal bites are maintained in a database primarily for rabies control. Animal control officers may refer owners to training/behavioral/veterinary resources as needed. Dangerous/vicious dog investigations may occur as a result of a bite incident, depending on the circumstances. Owners should take biting behavior seriously and take necessary action to prevent them.

## **What happens if I do not maintain a current rabies vaccine for my animal?**

Owners should maintain a current rabies vaccine for their pet to protect both their animal and their household. While rabies is not commonly observed in wildlife, there are positive findings in DuPage County every year. Pets are especially vulnerable to exposure, as they are more likely to come into contact with wildlife. Failure to vaccinate a pet for rabies can result in a citation.

## **What happens if I fail to complete a rabies observation?**

Rabies observations are required when a person outside of the animal's household is bitten by that animal. Owners of biting animals must complete a rabies observation for their pet so that the victim party can be notified of any potential exposure concerns. Failure to complete a rabies observation can negatively affect the victim party and results in a citation.

## **My animal exhibits biting behavior. What should I do?**

Pet owners are responsible for maintaining their animals so they cannot harm others. Speak to your veterinarian to rule out any medical concerns that may be affecting your pet's behavior. Some pets will benefit from behavior modification through a trainer or a veterinary behaviorist. DCAS can provide a list of local training resources for owners seeking professional help for their pets.



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