



Southeastern Idaho Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Tracy McCulloch
239-5250

RABID BAT FOUND IN BLACKFOOT

Southeastern Idaho Public Health (SIPH) has confirmed that a bat has tested positive for rabies within Blackfoot city limits. This is the seventh bat to test positive for rabies in Idaho this year. Last year, Idaho had 15 bats test positive for rabies.

Rabies is a fatal viral illness in humans and other animals. Household pets and other animals can be exposed to the virus by playing with sick bats. This is why it is important for people to make sure that their animals are vaccinated against rabies.

To protect yourself and your pets:

- Never touch bats.
- Be very suspicious of bat activity during daylight hours.
- If you or your child wakes up in the presence of a bat, discuss the situation with your medical provider.

Seemingly insignificant exposures have contributed to several fatal cases of rabies in the past.

- If you have an encounter with a bat, seek medical attention immediately. Save the bat in a container and contact your local district health department immediately for testing options. NEVER handle a bat with your bare hands—use gloves, a towel, etc.
- Bat-proof your home or cabin by checking chimneys, roof peaks, loose screening on louvers, dormer windows, or areas where flashing has pulled away from the roof or siding. Bats can enter through holes the size of a quarter. Typically, bat-proofing is best after bats have migrated away in the fall.
- Always vaccinate your pets, including dogs, cats, horses, and ferrets. Pets may encounter bats in the outdoors or in the home. If your dog or cat brings a dead bat home, collect it in a plastic bag without touching it and call your district health department for possible testing. Also, contact your veterinarian to make sure your animal's rabies vaccinations are up-to-date.

For further information about rabies contact Jeff Doerr, District Epidemiologist, at 478-6321, or visit SIPH's website at www.siphidaho.org or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/rabies/.