



County of Sacramento
Municipal Services Agency

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Animal Care Services and County Animal Care and Regulation Cautions Residents to Avoid Contact with Bats

Sacramento, Calif – The City of Sacramento, Animal Care Services and Sacramento County Department of Animal Care and Regulation is cautioning residents to avoid contact with bats. There have been several sightings of bats in the downtown Sacramento area that have appeared flying indoors or sighted on the ground away from their colony. Construction, heat, pesticides and other disturbances affect bat habitats and may cause them to stray from their homes. Although bats are beneficial to the ecosystem, it is advised to not handle bats in any manner.

Bats may be carriers of the rabies virus. Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies (a rabid animal). Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, or bat, can have rabies and transmit it to people. It is also possible, but quite rare, that people may get rabies if infectious

material from a rabid animal, such as saliva, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound.

It is not possible from looking at a bat to tell whether it is rabid. Rabies can only be confirmed when the animal is tested. It is important to note however, that people cannot get rabies just from seeing a bat in an attic, in a cave, or from a distance while it is flying.

Parents should teach children never to touch or try to assist a bat or wild animal. Our natural instinct may be to help or pick up a bat or other animal that appears friendly or injured, but the fact is these animals can carry rabies and should be avoided.

Rabies prevention tips:

- Be a responsible pet owner. Keep vaccinations up-to-date for all dogs and cats. This not only protects your pet from getting rabies, it also provides protection for you if your pet is bitten by a rabid animal.
- Keep pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal or bat, seek veterinary assistance.
- Avoid direct contact with unfamiliar animals. Do not handle, feed or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home. Do not try to nurse sick animals to health. Call your local animal control for assistance.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarter or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people or pets.

If you or someone has been exposed to a bat, please seek medical attention.

If you have concerns about your pet's health, please call your pet's veterinarian.

If bat is sighted indoors or away from its colony, leave the bat alone and call City Animal Care Services at 808-PETS (7387) or 311 (within the City limits or 916/264-5011 outside of the City or if calling by mobile phone) or Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation at (916) 368-7387 (PETS).

To learn more about bats, please visit the County Department of Health and Human Services at: <http://www.msa2.saccounty.net/acr/Pages/AnimalInformation.aspx?c=Wild/Feral%20Animals&t=10>.

For more information about bats and rabies, visit the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/rabies/

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