

# Recommended Rabies Observation, Confinement, and Quarantine Periods for Animals in Iowa

This table is intended to assist local public health agencies and veterinarians in Iowa when making decisions on the proper period of time to observe, confine, or quarantine an animal that may have exposed a person to rabies or potentially was exposed to rabies after attacked by another animal. For extended observation/confinement/quarantine periods (>10 days), if possible and practical, testing the exposing animal is preferred versus the prolonged time required to monitor the exposed animal for the development of rabies. An exposing animal testing negative automatically ends the observation/confinement/observation period for the exposed animal.

In the table:

- ▶ **Proof of vaccine** equals documentation of receiving at least one USDA-licensed rabies vaccine.
- ▶ **Observation** refers to keeping an animal under the owner's control and observation.
- ▶ **Confinement**, per Iowa Code 351.39, is at the authority and discretion of local boards of health. This can include both in-home and out-of-home confinements, depending on local ordinances.
- ▶ **Strict quarantine** refers to confinement in an enclosure that precludes direct contact with people and other animals.



**Exposing Animal**  
(Animal that attacks)



**Exposed Animal**  
(Animal that was attacked)

When reviewing the table when a timeframe is not specifically indicated for the proper length to observe/confine/quarantine an animal, consult with a veterinarian at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS) or the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS).

### To contact an Iowa HHS Veterinarian

- ☎ 515-336-4287 during business hours
- ☎ 515-323-4360 after hours  
*(the Iowa State Patrol will contact the person on call)*
- ✉ rabies@hhs.iowa.gov

### To contact an IDALS Veterinarian

- ☎ 515-281-5305 during business hours
- ☎ 515-242-0247 after hours



Scan the QR code to learn more

[hhs.iowa.gov/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/rabies-information-public-providers-and-veterinarians](https://hhs.iowa.gov/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/rabies-information-public-providers-and-veterinarians)

Exposure Event		Vaccination Status	Vaccination Schedule	Confinement / Observation Period
Dog, Cat, or Ferret vs. Human	⚠	Exposing Animal is Current	Exposing Animal: none	Exposing Animal: 10 days
	⚠	Exposing Animal is <b>not</b> Current	Exposing Animal: at conclusion of Day 10	
Livestock vs. Human	⚠	Exposing Animal is Current	<b>Case-by-case:</b> Other animals that might have exposed a person to rabies should be reported immediately to the local health department. Management of animals other than dogs, cats, and ferrets depends on the species, the circumstances of the exposure, the epidemiology of rabies in the area, the exposing animal's history and current health status, and the animal's potential for exposure to rabies. The shedding period for rabies virus is undetermined for most species. Previous vaccination of these animals might not preclude the necessity for euthanasia and testing.	
	⚠	Exposing Animal is <b>not</b> Current		
High Risk Wildlife (1) vs. Dog, Cat, or Ferret	⊕	Exposed Animal is Current	Exposed Animal: immediately (2)	Exposed Animal: 45 days
	⊕	Exposed Animal is Overdue (with Proof of Vaccine) (3)	Exposed Animal: immediately (2)	Exposed Animal: 45 days (4)
	⊕	Exposed Animal has <b>no</b> Proof of Vaccine	Exposed Animal: within 96 hour (4 days)	Exposed Animal: 4 months (5)
High Risk Wildlife (1) vs. Livestock	⊕	Exposed Animal is Current	Exposed Animal: immediately (6)	Exposed Animal: 45 days (6)
	⊕	Exposed Animal is Overdue (with Proof of Vaccine)	<b>Case-by-case</b> basis, taking into consideration factors such as severity of exposure, time elapsed since last vaccination, number of previous vaccinations, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology, to determine need for euthanasia or immediate booster vaccination followed by observation or strict quarantine.	
	⊕	Exposed Animal has <b>no</b> Proof of Vaccine	Consider euthanizing livestock that have never been vaccinated. Livestock that are not euthanized should be confined and observed on a <b>case-by-case</b> basis for 6 months.	

(1) High risk wildlife in Iowa includes skunks, bats, raccoons, foxes, and coyotes.

(2) If booster vaccination is delayed consider increasing the observation period for the animal, taking into consideration factors such as the severity of exposure, the length of delay in booster vaccination, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology.

(3) Ferrets that are overdue for a booster vaccination should be evaluated on a **case-by-case** basis, taking into consideration factors such as the severity of exposure, time elapsed since last vaccination, number of previous vaccinations,

current health status, and local rabies epidemiology, to determine need for euthanasia or immediate booster vaccination followed by observation or strict quarantine.

(4) If booster is delayed beyond 96 hours, contact a veterinarian at Iowa HHS or IDALS.

(5) If vaccinated after 96 hours consider extending strict quarantine to 6 months.

(6) For livestock, if not boosted immediately, consult with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.



Department of Health and Human Services

Exposure Event		Vaccination Status	Vaccination Schedule	Confinement / Observation Period
Dog, Cat, or Ferret vs. Dog, Cat, or Ferret (if Exposing animal is located)	⚠️ +	Exposing Animal (any status) & Exposed Animal is Current	Exposing Animal: if not up-to-date, at conclusion of Day 10 Exposed Animal: immediately if Exposing animal fails confinement or tests positive	Exposing Animal: 10 days Exposed Animal: none (7)
	⚠️ +	Exposing Animal (any status) & Exposed Animal is Overdue (with Proof of Vaccine) (3)	Exposing Animal: if not up-to-date, at conclusion of Day 10 Exposed Animal: immediately (2)	Exposing Animal: 10 days Exposed Animal: none (8)
	⚠️ +	Exposing Animal (any status) & Exposed Animal has no Proof of Vaccine	Exposing Animal: if not up-to-date, at conclusion of Day 10 Exposed Animal: immediately (2)	Exposing Animal: 10 days Exposed Animal: none (9)
Dog, Cat, or Ferret vs. Dog, Cat, or Ferret (if Exposing animal is not located) (10)	+	Exposed Animal is Current	Exposed Animal: immediately (2)	Exposed Animal: 45 days
	+	Exposed Animal has no Proof of Vaccine	Exposed Animal: within 96 hours (4 days)	Exposed Animal: 4 months (5)
Low Risk Wildlife (11) vs. Domestic Animal	+	<b>Case-by-case</b> basis (i.e. was the exposing wildlife acting erratically, strangely, etc.).		

(1) High risk wildlife in Iowa includes skunks, bats, raccoons, foxes, and coyotes.

(2) If booster vaccination is delayed consider increasing the observation period for the animal, taking into consideration factors such as the severity of exposure, the length of delay in booster vaccination, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology.

(3) Ferrets that are overdue for a booster vaccination should be evaluated on a **case-by-case** basis, taking into consideration factors such as the severity of exposure, time elapsed since last vaccination, number of previous vaccinations, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology, to determine need for euthanasia or immediate booster vaccination followed by observation or strict quarantine.

(4) If booster is delayed beyond 96 hours, contact a veterinarian at Iowa HHS or IDALS.

(5) If vaccinated after 96 hours consider extending strict quarantine to 6 months.

(6) For livestock, if not boosted immediately, consult with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

(7) None if Exposing animal successfully completes a 10-day confinement period. If not, the exposed animal should be observed for 45 days.

(8) None if Exposing animal successfully completes a 10-day confinement period. If not, the exposed animal should be observed for 45 days. If booster delayed may consider increasing the observation period for the Exposed animal, taking into consideration factors such as the severity of exposure, the length of delay in booster vaccination, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology.

(9) None if Exposing animal successfully completes a 10-day confinement period. If not, the Exposed animal should be placed in strict quarantine for 4 (dogs and cats) or 6 (ferrets) months. If vaccinated after 96 hours can consider extending strict quarantine to 6 months for dogs and cats.

(10) **Case-by-case** basis. If there is a high concern that a rabies exposure occurred, the guidelines outlined here can be applied.

(11) Low-risk animals are those that almost never carry rabies when they are demonstrating normal behavior. These include small rodents, squirrels, opossum, and lagomorphs (rabbits).