



Public Information Division

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Rabid skunk prompts reminders for pet owners

San Angelo pet owners are being warned to vaccinate their dogs and cats for rabies after the discovery of a rabid skunk in the PaulAnn neighborhood.

The Texas Department of State Health Services requires that dogs and cats older than 4 months be vaccinated at regular intervals, usually annually.

State officials were unsurprised by the case, noting recent reports of rabid skunks in Mason and Sutton counties.

The rabid skunk was killed by a dog Thursday after the varmint entered the pet's home via a doggy door. The dog shows no signs of rabies, likely because it has been vaccinated yearly. As a precaution, it received a rabies booster shot Thursday and is undergoing a 45-day quarantine.

To protect themselves and their pets, the public is reminded:

- Never approach or handle wildlife. Rabies is most common in skunks, raccoons, coyotes, bats and foxes. Warning signs an animal has rabies include:
 - Nocturnal animals (such as the ones listed above) being active during daylight.
 - Unexplained paralysis, particularly at a bite site, or a sudden inability to move, especially in the rear legs or lower jaw. The animal may be unable to walk, have an unsteady gait or cannot close its mouth.
 - Difficulty in swallowing or an appearance of choking, as evidenced by "foaming at the mouth." This is one of the final signs of rabies.
 - Sudden change in temperament. Wildlife can become friendly. Pets can become aggressive.
 - Hypersensitivity to touch, particularly near the bite site.
- Secure sheds, garages, homes and other buildings so wildlife can't enter.
- Call the City's Animal Services division at 325-657-4224 if you suspect an animal has rabies. Never approach these animals.
- Seek medical care and call animal control immediately if you suspect a human or pet has been exposed to a rabid animal.

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