

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

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CHARLES D. BAKER  
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO  
Lt. Governor

MATTHEW A. BEATON  
Secretary

JOHN LEBEAUX  
Commissioner

Dear Massachusetts Veterinarians:

Based on significant changes to the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians' Animal Rabies Compendium, some significant changes to the Department's rabies regulations at 330 CMR 10 have been made. As these changes will affect a number of people who currently have dogs and cats under quarantine, the changes were put through as emergency regulations and take effect immediately. I apologize for providing no prior notice; we were not expecting the change to go through until September.

I am providing a brief summary of the major changes here, but encourage you to go to our website and review the complete regulations for other changes. There is a copy of the regulation posted on our website here:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/agr/legal/regs/330-cmr-10-00.pdf>

A redline version of the regulations, showing all of the individual changes can be found on our website here:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/agr/legal/regs/330-cmr-10-redline-version.pdf>

You will note that for ferrets and livestock species THERE ARE NO CHANGES. These changes only alter the handling of dogs and cats.

Major changes:

- There is no more "Primary Series" of vaccinations for dogs and cats. Dogs and cats receiving their first shot are considered currently vaccinated 28 days after they receive the shot, and it will be for a period of one year. Dogs and cats that have proof of a prior vaccination at some point in their life are considered currently vaccinated immediately upon receiving a shot, and it will be good for the longest period recognized on the label.
- Veterinarians are now required to sign the rabies vaccination certificate (electronic signatures and stamps are acceptable).

Dogs and cats that are possibly exposed to rabies:

- No change for vaccinated animals. Still administer a booster shot, and still 45-day quarantine.
- Dogs and cats, for which the owner can show proof of prior rabies vaccination **AT ANY POINT IN THEIR LIFE**, can be vaccinated immediately and only have to complete a 45-day quarantine.
- Dogs and cats that have never been vaccinated (or don't have proof of a prior rabies vaccination) get a rabies vaccine immediately and must complete a **4-month** Strict Confinement quarantine. (Category 1 exposures are 3 months isolation and 1 month strict confinement).

**THESE CHANGES ARE ALREADY IN EFFECT, SO ANY DOGS AND CATS THAT YOU CURRENTLY HAVE IN 6-MONTH QUARANTINES, THAT HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED 4 MONTHS, CAN BE VACCINATED AND RELEASED FROM QUARANTINE NOW**

Again, I apologize for providing no prior notice. I expect the next few weeks will be a chaotic adjustment. However, I feel the new rules are far simpler and less burdensome for animals and their owners.

Please let us know if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Michael Cahill, Director  
Division of Animal Health