

ORDINANCE FOR RESPONDING WHEN HUMANS ARE BITTEN BY ANIMALS IN TOWNSHEND

I. Justification:

To prevent rabies in humans. Rabies is transmitted through the saliva of a rabid animal, usually by biting. When a human is bitten by an animal, either wild or domestic, it must be determined whether the animal has rabies. If it tests positive then treatment of the human must be started immediately for once symptoms develop the disease is fatal. To diagnose rabies, the animal's brain is examined at the Public Health Lab of the Vermont Department of Health. A wild animal that has bitten a human should be captured or killed in such a way that the brain is not damaged and the head sent on ice to the State Lab by the Town Health Officer. Domestic animals must be observed for ten days for any signs of disease or abnormal behavior. If these occur then the animal is humanely killed and the head sent to the State Lab. The animal should never be destroyed until after the ten day quarantine except by a licensed veterinarian or other official in preparation for rabies testing.

Rabies vaccination of domestic animals has greatly reduced the prevalence of this disease but unfortunately the vaccine is not 100% effective. Therefore the same precautions must be followed whether or not the biting animal was vaccinated.

II. Purpose:

- A. To improve safety of animal bite victims.
- B. To standardize response to animal bites.

III. Reporting:

All animal bites must be reported immediately to the Townshend Health Officer. All dog bites must also be reported to the Dog Officer.

IV. Procedures:

- A. 10-day quarantine.

1. On the owner's or custodian's property, the following guidelines must be met:
 - a. Animal shall not leave the property during the quarantine period.
 - b. Animal shall be inside a building with controlled human access and either hitched by a chain or caged.
 - c. The animal may be taken outdoors on a leash for urination or defecation purposes only.
 - d. The animal will be observed at the beginning and end of the 10-day period by either the Dog Officer or a veterinarian. Any signs of illness or abnormal behavior developing during those 10 days must be reported immediately to the dog officer.
 - e. If the animal develops symptoms which a veterinarian or other health official deem suggestive of rabies then the animal shall be humanely killed and the brain sent to the State Lab in accordance with Vermont Department of Health Protocols.
2. In a veterinary facility re:
 - a. All dogs that cause face or throat bites.
 - b. All cats that cause bites.
 - c. Any animals where quarantine on the owner's or custodian's premises cannot be provided to the satisfaction of the Townshend Health Officer or the Dog Officer.
3. The owner or custodian of any animal shall be liable for all veterinary custodial or treatment (including destruction) charges. No animal shall be released to its owner or custodian

until such charges are paid. Upon the termination of the quarantine period if the owner or custodian fails to pay said charges to the veterinary facility within 48 hours of termination, the Town of Townshend is authorized to pay said charges and recover same through the Town Attorney under Paragraph VI, infra.

- B. Immediate destruction of the animal and transportation of the head to the Public Health Laboratory of the Vermont Department of Health for rabies testing. The animal's brain must not be damaged.
 - 1. This option may be used for all animals if the animal is wild, has no owner or custodian, is injured or sick, or if quarantine is deemed not practical for any reason deemed reasonable by the Townshend Health Officer.
 - 2. No one may destroy or otherwise dispose of an animal except for a Veterinarian, Town Official or someone acting under instructions to secure the head for proper testing.

V. Precautions:

- A. Animals in quarantine shall not be vaccinated for rabies.
- B. Rabies vaccination shall not guarantee an animal is not rabid nor relieve any owner or custodian of an animal from complying with this ordinance.

VI. Fine:

Any person violating this ordinance, whether owner or custodian of an animal, shall be liable for fine not exceeding \$100.00 per day. The Town Attorney is specifically authorized to bring any appropriate legal action on behalf of the Town, including injunctive relief, to insure compliance with this ordinance.

VII. Appeals:

When any decision called for under this ordinance is disputed, the Townshend Town Health Officer's opinion shall prevail, subject to review by the Townshend Board of Health.

Any appeal shall be in writing, lodged with the Townshend Town Clerk and reviewed by the Townshend Board of Selectmen, acting as the Board of Health, at the next regularly scheduled Selectmen's meeting.

Passed and adopted by the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Townshend this 18th day of February 1991.

This ordinance shall be effective sixty (60) days after the date of its adoption unless a petition pursuant to 24 V.S.A., Section 1973, calling for a special Town meeting at which the voters may disapprove the Ordinance is signed by five percent (5%) of the voters and presented to town officials within forty-four (44) days of adoption.

Adopted on February 18, 1991.

William Eckhardt (signed)

James Montenieri (signed)

Richard F. Jackson (signed)

Jonathan Bevins (signed)

Selectmen

Received for record February 18, A.D., 1991 at 8 o'clock and 30 mins. P.M. and recorded in Town Record Book 13 at Pages 104-106

Cynthia Davis (signed)
Town Clerk