

	Feline Rescue Policy Manual	Date/ Revised Date
	2.x Bite Hold and Rabies Quarantine Protocol	11/4/2021

Purpose

To protect Feline Rescue cats, personnel, and the public from injury and rabies virus exposure by establishing quarantine protocols for observing and handling any Feline Rescue cat that causes injury to another animal or human being.

Definitions

- **Quarantine** refers to securely housing a cat away from all physical contact with other animals and from unnecessary physical contact with humans. It requires that the cat have access to space, food, water, and litter box resources that meet or exceed humane standards and are not shared with any other animals for the duration of the quarantine. It further requires that all personnel wear personal protective equipment and/or place effective physical barriers between themselves and the quarantined animal during caretaking activities.
 - On-site rabies quarantine will be conducted in kennels in Med Ward A (primary) or Quarantine (if Med Ward A is unavailable).
 - In a foster home rabies quarantine must be completed in an area of the house that meets the requirements above. Personal protective equipment for foster personnel will be provided upon request.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** refers to gloves and/or gauntlets designed to protect the wearer from animal bites or scratches. It may also include goggles or face masks as deemed appropriate or necessary.
- **First aid** refers to first line care given to an injured person or animal. It may include but is not limited to calling 9-1-1, reducing the flow of blood from a wound, wound cleaning, administration of topical or oral medications, application of bandages, and other activities needed to stabilize the health of the affected person or animal. On-site first aid supplies are located:
 - 600 Building- Outside the door to Intake
 - Shelter Building- Med Ward A, Bathroom
- **Clinical signs of rabies virus infection** include but are not limited to lethargy, fever, vomiting, anorexia, cranial nerve dysfunction, dull mentation, disorientation, abnormal behaviors, difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing, excessive salivation, ataxia, weakness, paralysis, seizures, coma, aggression, self-mutilation, or other abnormal behaviors. Any perceived abnormality must be reported to the Veterinary Director immediately.

Responsibilities/Scope

- Personnel are responsible for reporting all injuries caused by cats to their **Shift Leads** (if on-site) or **Veterinary Services** (if in a foster home). This includes scratches and bites to personnel, members of the public, or other animals.
- **Shift Leads** and **Foster Caregivers** are responsible for:
 - Assessing injury severity and administering first aid
 - Advising any bitten person to contact a doctor to discuss further treatment or rabies virus prophylaxis
 - Placing a cat that has bitten and broken the skin into quarantine
 - Monitoring visitors and personnel to ensure that no one violates the cat's quarantine by allowing members of the public to access it or by allowing unnecessary physical contact to occur.

- Completing incident reports and submitting them to the Veterinary Director
- **Shelter Caregivers, Shelter Med Caregivers, Foster Caregivers, and Veterinary Services** are responsible for:
 - Care of quarantined cats in accordance with the guidelines below
 - Logging their observations of the health of quarantined cats
 - Alerting the Veterinary Director to any signs of rabies virus infection
- A **Staff Veterinarian** is responsible for evaluating the cat and releasing it from quarantine at the end of the 10-day quarantine and observation period.
- The **Veterinary Director** is responsible for:
 - Maintaining record of completed Incident Reports and their outcomes.
 - Determining if cats under rabies quarantine should be euthanized.
 - Submitting cats for necropsy if they die or are euthanized during the quarantine period.
 - Notifying any persons injured by a rabid cat while it was under the care of Feline Rescue.

Procedures

Any personnel made aware of any injury caused by a Feline Rescue cat must report it to the Shift Lead or, in the case of a foster cat, to Veterinary Services. The **Shift Lead** or **Foster Caregiver** must immediately confine the injurious cat to its primary living space, except in the case of a cat who has bitten and broken the skin of an animal or person. These cats are immediately placed in a location appropriate for quarantine. If it is not safe to move the injurious cat, even with the use of PPE, personnel must clear people and other animals from the area, secure the area, and notify the **Cat Movement Manager, Veterinary Services**, or the **Veterinary Director** according to who is available. The contacted person will be responsible for arranging movement of the cat to appropriate housing as soon as possible.

Once the injurious cat is confined, the **Shift Lead** or **Foster Caregiver** must assess the wounded, administer first aid, advise injured parties to consult with their doctor for further treatment or rabies virus prophylaxis recommendations, and assist any injured parties in arranging transport to a medical facility as needed. Proof of rabies virus vaccination will be provided as needed. Once all wounds have been managed, the **Shift Lead** or **Foster Caregiver** completes and submits an online "[Incident Report](#)" (click to follow link). The **Shift Lead** or **Veterinary Services** will add a brief summary of the circumstances of the incident as a "Behavior" log in the Log section of the ASM diaries of all Feline Rescue cats involved.

After the "Incident Report" is completed, a cat who has bitten and broken the skin must have its ASM record updated. The **Shift Lead** or **Veterinary Services** must add the "Bite Quarantine (10 days)" and "Not for Adoption" flags to the cat's digital record under the "Animal" tab.

In Shelter, the cat's quarantine enclosure must be labelled with an orange sign identifying it as under rabies quarantine. Rabies quarantine signs are located in the closet of the Shelter Office, and a "Bite Quarantine Daily Health Log" should be found tucked into the back side of each sign's plastic sleeve. The **Shift Lead** must fill out the cat's identifying information and dates of quarantine on the "Bite Quarantine Daily Health Log." The first official day of quarantine is the DAY AFTER the incident occurred. The log must be taped to the front of the rabies quarantine sign that is hung on the cat's kennel door. The log is to be filled out by **Shelter Caregivers** who attend to the cat each day.

In foster care, it is the responsibility of the **Foster Caregiver** to monitor the biting cat's health and behavior each day of its quarantine and report any abnormalities to the **Veterinary Director** by emailing veterinary@felinerescue.org.

Bitten animals who HAVE previously been vaccinated against rabies virus must be re-vaccinated within 3 days of being bitten unless their most recent rabies vaccine was within the past 30 days. They must be kept confined indoors and the **Shift Lead** or **Veterinary Services** must flag them as “Not for Adoption-Medical Hold” and “Not for Adoption” until the biting cat has successfully completed its 10-day quarantine OR for no less than 45 days if the biting cat is found or suspected to have had rabies. **Foster Caregivers** must obtain and pay the costs of appropriate care for their own animals.

Bitten animals who HAVE NOT previously been vaccinated against rabies virus must be vaccinated within 3 days of being bitten. They must be kept in quarantine and the **Shift Lead** or **Veterinary Services** must flag them as “Not for Adoption-Medical Hold” and “Not for Adoption” until the biting cat has successfully completed its 10-day quarantine OR for no less than 180 days if the biting cat is found or suspected to have had rabies. **Foster Caregivers** must obtain and pay the costs of appropriate care for their own animals.

A cat whose bite breaks the skin of a person or another animal must, in general, remain in quarantine for a 10-day period and be observed for clinical signs of rabies virus infection during that time. At the conclusion of the 10-day period, the cat is assessed by a **Staff Veterinarian** and released from quarantine via signature on the “Incident Report” if it appears to be free of rabies virus infection. Quarantine for rabies virus is not legally completed until a veterinarian clears the cat for release. If the cat develops signs suspicious for rabies virus infection, the **Veterinary Director** will determine whether to euthanize the cat and submit it for post-mortem rabies virus testing. In addition, if complicating circumstances that may hasten the development of rabies virus infection in a bitten person are identified, the **Veterinary Director** will consult with the Minnesota Board of Animal Health to determine whether immediate euthanasia and testing of the biting cat is advised.

After a **Staff Veterinarian** releases the cat from quarantine, the **Cat Movement Manager** will coordinate return of the cat to a location where it is eligible for visitors and adoption. The **Cat Movement Manager** will remove the “Bite Quarantine (10 Days),” the “Not for Adoption-Medical Hold,” and the “Not for Adoption” flags from the ASM records of the biting cat and any bitten Feline Rescue cats at that time. The **Staff Veterinarian** will submit the signed “Incident Report” and completed “Bite Quarantine Daily Health Log” to the **Veterinary Director** for review and filing.

Troubleshooting

- This document will evolve over time. Bring any concerns to the attention of the Veterinary Director by emailing veterinary@felinerescue.org.