



## MEMORANDUM

Date: September 4, 2024

To: To Whom It May Concern

From: San Joaquin County Public Health Laboratory (SJCPHL)

SUBJECT: **Guidance for submitting animal heads and small animal carcasses to the San Joaquin County Public Health Laboratory for rabies testing**

1. **Contact the Disease Control and Prevention division of the San Joaquin County Public Health Services at 209-468-3822 for testing approval prior to the submission at SJCPHL.**
2. **Please complete SJCPHL Rabies Submission Form and exposure details if approved for testing.**  
[https://www.sjcphs.org/disease/public\\_health\\_Laboratory.aspx](https://www.sjcphs.org/disease/public_health_Laboratory.aspx)
3. It is important to keep the head of the animal intact. The rabies test is performed on the brain of the animal, so it is important that the animal's brain remain intact until it arrives at the San Joaquin County Public Health Laboratory (SJCPHL).

Things to avoid:

- crushing the animal's skull
  - shooting the animal in the head
  - freezing the animal
  - leaving the animal at room temperature for an extended time-period.
4. The animal should be always kept cold (but NOT frozen). An animal left at room temperature can decompose, which prevents rabies testing. All efforts should be made to keep the animal cold by refrigeration, not freezing. If the animal was frozen prior to consulting this guidance, ensure that the animal remains frozen until it arrives at the SJCPHL.
  5. **Animals measuring less than 12 inches (not including the tail) can be submitted whole for testing. If an animal is 12 inches or longer, only send the head.** A veterinarian, animal control officer, or other appropriately trained and vaccinated individual is recommended to remove the head to ensure the brain stays intact. **Note: SJCPHL is unable to perform any head removal for animals equal to or longer than 12 inches.**



6. Place the animal head (or carcass for small animals) into a biohazardous bag and then:
  - Into a box with a leak-proof plastic bag liner, or
  - Use the plastic Rabies receptacles provided for your use by the SJCPHL as applicable.
5. The animal specimen must be taken to the SJCPHL, located at 1601 E. Hazelton Ave. Stockton, CA for the rabies testing.
6. Deliver the animal specimen to the SJCPHL.
  - A security guard is stationed at the San Joaquin County Public Health facility and can direct deliveries Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm. Please call the San Joaquin County **Public Health Lab** at **209-468-3460** with any delivery questions you may have.