



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Animal Control

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## Suspected Case of Rabies in Cumberland County

FAYETTEVILLE - This afternoon the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh reported an “unsatisfactory result” of rabies in Cumberland County. For public safety reasons, this is being treated as a positive case although test results were inconclusive.

A man on Hall Park Road in the Gray’s Creek Community was bitten by a stray cat while putting the animal in a carrier to bring to Animal Control on Sept. 29. Upon arrival at the Animal Control parking lot, the cat knocked the top off of the carrier and escaped. Animal Control Enforcement Officers found the dead cat on the side of Tom Starling Road in front of the Coca-Cola Plant, still in the Gray’s Creek area, on Sept. 30. The cat was sent to the State Public Health Lab for testing, but results were unsatisfactory because of the body’s decomposition.

The citizen who was bitten by the cat has already started post rabies-exposure treatment.

This is the 17<sup>th</sup> case of rabies in the county since Jan. 1. Animal Control also reminds the public that two stray dogs killed a rabid raccoon in Linden on Sept. 28 and have not been captured.

**All pet owners are urged to check the vaccination status of their pets. If pets are not vaccinated or are due for a booster shot, they should be taken to a local veterinarian for rabies vaccination immediately.**

The first sign of rabies in animals is a change in behavior. Animals may become aggressive, attacking for no reason, or they may become very quiet. Wild animals can lose their fear of people and act tame. Rabid animals may walk in a circle, drag a leg, or fall over. Some cannot swallow so they are not able to eat or drink and often drool. Animals usually die within a week after first becoming ill.

Avoiding wild animals and keeping your distance from stray dogs and cats is the first step in preventing an animal bite. Any pet, which appears to have been in a fight while outside, should be handled very cautiously and seen by a veterinarian.

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

- Immediately wash the wound under running water for at least 10 minutes with lots of soap. Seek medical attention/advice.
- Call Animal Control at 321-6852 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call the Sheriff’s Office at 323-1500 after 5 p.m., weekends and holidays.
- Go to the emergency room.

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It is also important to vaccinate your pets for rabies and keep their shots current. Pet owners are reminded that all dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies, as required by state law. Pet owners are subject to a fine of \$100 for each unvaccinated dog or cat. Pets must be vaccinated when they reach the age of four months.

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