



**CITY OF PEABODY  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

24 Lowell Street  
Peabody, Massachusetts 01960  
(978) 538-5926  
Fax: (978) 538-5990

BOARD OF HEALTH  
BERNARD H. HOROWITZ, CHAIRMAN  
STEPHEN S. KALIVAS, R.Ph.  
LEIGH ANN MANSBERGER, MD, MPH

SHARON CAMERON  
DIRECTOR

## **RABID FOX IDENTIFIED IN PEABODY**

September 8, 2016

The Peabody Board of Health has been notified that a fox that had bitten an individual on Johnson Street in Peabody on Monday, September 5 has tested positive for rabies. A second, unrelated individual in the same neighborhood has also reported being attacked by a fox on September 5. Although it is likely that both incidents involved the same fox, we cannot be certain.

The fox that attacked the individual on Johnson Street has been killed. Since it is unknown whether this is the same animal in the second incident, in an abundance of caution, we are issuing this community notification to alert residents about steps to minimize the risk of exposure to rabies.

### **Here are some important facts about rabies.**

- Rabies is a very serious disease that affects the brain and spinal cord of mammals.
- Rabies is caused by a virus and, without prompt treatment, almost always causes death.
- Rabies is usually a disease of animals, but it can spread from an infected animal to a person.
- Rabies spreads when an animal with rabies bites another animal or person. Infected animals can also spread rabies if their saliva gets into a scratch or other wound, or the eyes, nose or mouth of another person or animal.

### **How can you help prevent rabies exposure?**

- Never approach animals you don't know – even if they appear friendly. You cannot tell if an animal has rabies by looking at it.
- Report any animal that behaves oddly to your local animal control official (978-538-6385).
- Do not keep wild animals as pets.
- Make sure your pets are vaccinated against rabies.
- Don't feed or water your pets outside. Even empty bowls will attract wild and stray animals.
- Keep your pets in a fenced yard or on a leash and do not let them roam freely.
- Keep your garbage securely covered. Open garbage will attract wild or stray animals.
- Keep your chimney capped and repair holes in attics, cellars, and porches to help keep wild animals like bats and raccoons out of your home.

### **What to do if you think you or your pet have been exposed:**

#### If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

- Wash the wound with soap and water **right away** for ten minutes.
- Call your health care provider or veterinarian, or your local board of health. They can help you determine if you or your pet needs to be treated for a rabies exposure. There is an effective treatment for rabies (immune globulin shots) as long as treatment is started before the person or animal starts to get sick.
- Your local animal control officer may be able to catch the animal that scratched or bit you. Animals may be tested immediately for rabies, or placed under quarantine for observation.

For more information, please visit [www.mass.gov/dph/rabies](http://www.mass.gov/dph/rabies). If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact the Peabody Health Department at (978) 538-5926.