
New Hampshire
*Department of Agriculture,
Markets & Food*

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Expected standards at rabies vaccination-only clinics

Rabies is the only vaccination required of domestic animals (dogs, cats, ferrets) in New Hampshire, solely because of the public health benefits it imparts. For a variety of reasons, some dog and cat owners seek this service at rabies vaccination clinics rather than through veterinary practices. Offering your professional services at rabies vaccination clinics provides an important community service. As such, the Board of Veterinary Medicine allows some latitude from the traditional obligations of a regular examination in a veterinary practice.

Veterinarians are not required to document and maintain normal medical records from a rabies clinic nor are they expected to provide follow up emergency coverage.

Veterinarians must still:

- retain copies of all rabies vaccination certificates;
- assure there is no overt illness that would contraindicate vaccination;
- briefly address vaccination risks with the client and how to respond to them (e.g. see your regular veterinarian, take your pet to an emergency hospital, etc.); and
- adhere to all other normal standards of care for any other veterinary appointment

The latitudes in standard of care are limited to rabies vaccination-only clinics and have been granted in support of improving the number of dogs and cats vaccinated against rabies. It is the responsibility of every veterinarian working a rabies vaccination clinic to comply with all other standards of practice.

The most some common pitfall to avoid is the production of incomplete, illegible, or otherwise poorly written rabies certificates. Often these documents are missing some or all of the following – veterinarian's name/signature/license number; pet owner name and address; vaccination date; pet descriptors (name, breed, age, weight, markings); vaccine serial number; rabies tag number. All of this information is required by law, RSA 436:102 – excerpt below. Absent this information, the rabies certificate/vaccination is not considered valid. The owners' of these pets are advised to have their animal re-vaccinated if they cannot track down the veterinarian who was working at the vaccination clinic to provide adequate proof of vaccination.

436:102 Duties of Veterinarian. – *It shall be the duty of each veterinarian, at the time of vaccinating any dog, cat, or ferret, to complete a certificate of rabies vaccination in triplicate which includes the following information: owner's name and address, description of dog, cat, or ferret (breed, sex, markings, age, name), date of vaccination, rabies vaccination tag number, type of rabies vaccine administered, manufacturer's serial number of vaccine, and the expiration date of the vaccination. Distribution of copies of the certificate shall be: the original to the owner, one copy retained by the issuing veterinarian and, within 40 days of the vaccination, one copy to the town or city clerk where the dog, cat, or ferret is kept. The veterinarian and the owner shall retain their copies for the interval between vaccinations specified in RSA 436:100.*

In conclusion, the Board's allowance of this latitude from standard practice applies to rabies vaccination-only clinics. If any other service is rendered or product administered (e.g. other vaccinations, fecal tests, blood tests, anti-parasite medications administered/provided/prescribed, etc.), the veterinarian must conduct a full physical examination, maintain full medical records, and provide for emergency coverage in accordance with standards of practice.

