

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
**Communicable Disease Service**

**POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR ANIMAL RABIES VACCINATION**

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has established the duration of immunity from injectable animal rabies vaccines:

[http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/duration\\_of\\_immunity\\_nov2016.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/duration_of_immunity_nov2016.pdf)

**BOOSTERING DOGS AND CATS WITH LAPSSES IN THEIR RABIES VACCINATION SCHEDULE**

In general, all dogs and cats that have received at least one vaccination in their life shall receive a three-year duration of immunity upon booster vaccination (assuming use of a 3-year vaccine), even if the animal is several years overdue for the vaccination. Please refer to the Duration of Immunity guidance document, linked above, for more information.

**RABIES CERTIFICATES**

The licensed veterinarian administering the rabies vaccine to a dog or cat shall provide written certification of the inoculation to the owner by fully completing a rabies certificate (NASPHV Form #51) for each animal vaccinated. Veterinarians shall certify the full duration of immunity, as stated on the rabies vaccine label and according to the Duration of Immunity guidance document. Either a one or three-year duration of immunity should be certified.

The veterinarian administering rabies vaccine shall sign each certificate and include his/her address, telephone number and veterinary license number on the certificate.

**ADVICE TO OWNERS OF DOGS AND CATS NEWLY VACCINATED OR THOSE TOO YOUNG FOR VACCINATION**

Dogs and cats which have received an initial vaccination less than 28 days previously or are too young to receive rabies vaccination (less than 3 months of age) are not considered protected against rabies if they are exposed to the rabies virus.

Veterinarians should advise the owners of these animals to not leave these animals outdoors unattended. Situations have arisen where pet owners have left unvaccinated or newly vaccinated pets outside unattended and they have been bitten by rabid or otherwise exposed to the rabies virus, resulting in euthanasia or a strict 4-month confinement. Veterinarians can help to prevent these situations, which often involve young puppies and kittens, by educating their clients.

July 2017