

Canine Rabies Exemption Procedures Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I need to fill out two forms and submit a copy of the animal's medical records?

Two forms are required to apply for exemption from the rabies vaccination: the State of California's "Rabies Vaccination Certificate- Exemption form Canine or Feline Rabies Vaccination," and the County of Fresno Supplemental form. The state of California's Certificate will be forwarded to the California Department of Public Health, Veterinary Public Health Section for statewide tracking of exempted animals. The completed Fresno County Supplemental Form documents an official request for the County of Fresno and allows for internal tracking of such requests. The medical records serve as supportive information for the condition for which exemption is requested. The request will be reviewed by the County of Fresno Health Officer to assess the medical justification for the rabies exemption.

Which medical conditions qualify an animal for exemption from rabies vaccination?

An official list of diseases/conditions has not been established by the State of California that qualify an animal for rabies vaccination exemption, rather, veterinarians advocating for client's should use their professional judgement when assessing the risk of rabies vaccination for that animal's specific health condition(s). Examples of serious medical conditions that may warrant exemption include, but are not limited to, immune-mediated diseases (e.g. IMHA), immunosuppressive therapy (cancer treatment), and severe adverse reactions to the rabies vaccination. Old age, minor reactions to rabies vaccination, reactions to non-rabies vaccinations and positive rabies titers are not conditions that warrant an exemption.

What is the process for applying for an exemption?

Exemption requests must be completed by the animal's veterinarian. All requests must be submitted to the County of Fresno Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division, P.O. Box 11867, Fresno, CA 93775 or via FAX at (559) 600-7629.

How long are the rabies exemption requests valid?

Exemptions are valid for one year from the date of issuance. If the animal's medical condition continues to preclude rabies immunization, a new exemption request must be submitted annually.

What restrictions are imposed on the animal owner/animal for non-rabies vaccinated animals?

The animal must be confined to the premises documented on the Exemption for Canine Rabies Vaccination Form or when off of the premises on a six-foot (6') leash and under the direct physical control of an adult. Additionally, the animal cannot have contact with any animal that is not currently vaccinated against rabies.

What happens if the exempted animal is exposed to a rabid (or untested, potentially rabid) wild animal such as a bat, skunk, raccoon or coyote?

The unvaccinated animal will be subject to the same disposition as other unvaccinated animals as outlined in the California Code of Regulations. For example, *vaccinated* animals exposed to a rabid or potentially rabid animal are quarantined for 30 days while *unvaccinated* animals are subject to a six month quarantine and/or euthanasia.