



SPECIMEN SUBMISSION FOR RABIES TESTING AT THE PENNSYLVANIA VETERINARY LABORATORY

Specimens for Rabies Testing:

Acceptable Specimens for Rabies Testing:

- Whole Carcasses
- Animal Heads
- Animal Brains
- Bats (must be intact for identification)

Unacceptable Specimens for Rabies Testing:

- Any live animal or bat
(Euthanasia and decapitation, if necessary, must be performed by the local veterinarian at the submitter's expense)

Specimen Handling:

Specimens must be chilled, but *not frozen*, as soon as possible after death. Care must be taken to minimize damage to the animal head prior to submission to the laboratory.

Transportation of Specimens to PVL:

Hand Delivery:

- Hand delivery of specimens for rabies testing to PVL between 7:00am and 3:00pm weekdays is recommended when possible.
- A refrigerator is available for after-hour submissions.
- Specimens other than whole large livestock carcasses being hand delivered must be in a waterproof container.
- If plastic bags are used when delivering specimens, double bagging is necessary to prevent puncture by claws, teeth or bone fragments.

Courier:

- The PA Department of Agriculture (PDA) has a contract with a courier service to carry samples and smaller animal carcasses for rabies testing.

**QUICK COURIER
1-800-355-1004**

(Account # PAVETE23)

Calls made to the courier service Monday -Thursday before noon will be picked up the same day. Calls made to the courier service after noon will be picked up the following business day.

- When using the courier services, federal packing regulations apply. If leakage occurs during shipment, the package may be rejected.
- The courier can refuse packages if not packaged properly.
- There is a charge to use the courier service to ship a specimen to PVL (usually around \$15). You will be billed by PVL, not the courier service.

***NOTE:** Only PVL has a contract with the current courier service. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) in Lionville does not have the same contracts and may have different shipping policies. Please contact PA DOH laboratory in Lionville at 610-280-3464 with inquiries regarding shipping to that lab.



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Specimens must be accompanied by a Rabies Submission Form. The submission form for PVL can be accessed at www.padls.org/notes/rabies.html or search PADLS, then Rabies in Pennsylvania. Blank submission forms are also available at PVL. The submission form must be filled out completely.

Specimen Packaging:

- Specimens must be packaged in at least two plastic bags tightly closed to insure a leak proof seal.
- The bagged specimen is then put into a leak-proof, unbreakable, insulated container along with some type of refrigeration.
- Do not use ice cubes, crushed ice, block ice, snow or dry ice.
- Include absorbent packing material adequate enough to absorb all fluids in the event of leakage.
- **NEVER** ship on a Friday or the day before a government/postal holiday. The lab will not be staffed to receive samples.
- Do not wrap submission forms around samples: If the sample leaks, the form may be unreadable. Enclose the submission forms for all samples in a single zip-lock bag and place it on top of the samples.
- Label the outside of the box clearly. Remove old conflicting labels that could confuse delivery.
- Mark packages with a Diagnostic Specimen label on the outside of the box.
- Include your return address. This is one way to track packages received by the laboratory.
- Do not ship in unprotected Styrofoam containers: These break easily if squeezed or dropped. Styrofoam within a cardboard box is recommended.

Testing and Results:

- If further diagnostic work is to follow a negative rabies test, the laboratory must be informed at the time of submission.

Please Note: For the safety of laboratory personnel, no additional tests (except for chronic wasting disease or scrapie) will be performed on specimens following a positive rabies test.

- No part of any animal submitted for rabies testing will be returned, regardless of the test result.
- A Fluorescent Antibody test will be performed on all rabies suspect cases to be tested at PVL.

Negative Results:

- The submitting agent will be notified of negative results by telephone directly from the laboratory.
- A printed report will also be sent in the mail.

Positive Results:

- The PDA Bureau of Animal Health and Diagnostic Services in Harrisburg and the regional or local Department of Health are notified.
- PDA regional staff will contact submitters in the event of a positive test and will, if necessary, administer the quarantine of exposed domestic animals.