



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ST. CHARLES COUNTY BAT TESTED, FOUND POSITIVE FOR RABIES**

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO** – The St. Charles County Department of Public Health confirms that a bat found in O’Fallon this week has tested positive for the rabies virus.

[Rabies](#) is a dangerous virus that infects the nervous system and is found in the saliva of mammals. Most commonly spread by bats and skunks in Missouri, pets and humans can become exposed through bites or scratches by infected animals. In both pets and humans, common symptoms of rabies infection include fever, body ache and difficulty moving, neck stiffness, brain swelling, and paralysis. In animals, unusual or atypical behavior and foaming at the mouth also are common. If these symptoms develop, the result is rarely survivable for pets and other animals; human deaths in the United States due to rabies are rare because of effective treatment procedures.

“Since bats and skunks have been found to carry the virus in Missouri, it is possible that your pets might encounter a creature infected with rabies,” says Sara Evers, Director for St. Charles County’s Division of Health Services. “Rabies illness requires mandatory preventative actions and extensive treatment, so it’s always best for people and pets to avoid contact with live or dead wild animals, unfamiliar dogs or cats, and any animals displaying unusual behaviors. The discovery of this infected bat also serves as a reminder that annual vaccination is required for all pets regardless of whether they are located in unincorporated or incorporated areas of the county and is the best way to prevent rabies infection.”

All St. Charles County veterinarians can provide rabies vaccination and the accompanying rabies registration for their clients. This registration comes with an annual rabies tag that must be displayed on the animal’s collar according to County Ordinance. Individuals needing financial assistance to obtain the vaccination and registration tag should contact the St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center at 636-949-7387.

Reporting of animal incidents and stray or potentially rabid animals also will help to prevent the spread of the disease. If an individual or pet is bitten or scratched by an animal, wound should be cleansed immediately with soap and water, seek any necessary medical care and alert the Division of Humane Services or your local law enforcement agency. Residents concerned about the presence of stray or potentially rabid animals on their property should call St. Charles County Animal Control at 636-949-7347 for domesticated animals or the Missouri Department of Conservation’s St. Charles County regional office at 636-441-4554 for wild animals.

**-end-**

### **About St. Charles County's Division of Humane Services**

*The Division of Humane Services protects and enhances the quality of life for St. Charles County residents and animals. The division shelters and adopts animals through St. Charles County's Pet Adoption Center, educates pet owners, provides animal control services, and investigates incidents involving animal cruelty and neglect. To learn more about services provided, to view pets available for adoption or to inquire about volunteer or donation opportunities, please call 636-949-7387 or visit [sccmo.org/Humane](http://sccmo.org/Humane).*

### **About the St. Charles County Department of Public Health**

*Through the efforts of its three divisions — Environmental Health and Protection, Health Services and Humane Services — the St. Charles County Department of Public Health provides a wide range of services that enhance the well-being of the community. To learn how the department assists this region or to find out about volunteer opportunities with any of the divisions, visit [sccmo.org/PublicHealth](http://sccmo.org/PublicHealth) or call 636-949-7400.*

### **About St. Charles County**

*Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state's third largest county in both population and economic share. It is home to 15 scenic county parks, encompassing more than 3,643 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.*

*With a population of 395,504, St. Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.*

*St. Charles County employs more than 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit [sccmo.org](http://sccmo.org).*