

## Information on Exemption from Rabies Vaccination

### What are the steps involved in receiving a rabies vaccination exemption?

1. The attending veterinarian consults with the State Veterinarian. Please note that an exemption may only be requested if the vaccine would endanger the animal's life due to disease or other medical considerations.
2. If the animal is a candidate for the exemption, the State Veterinarian will mail an application form directly to the attending veterinarian. The veterinarian fills in all information on the application, attaches supporting medical documentation, and signs the application.
3. The owner signs the statement that they understand that their pet will be considered unvaccinated in any circumstances involving exposure to wildlife and will be subject to lengthy quarantines.
4. The completed signed form is returned to the Office of the State Veterinarian. If the application is approved, the original exemption certificate is mailed to the pet's owner, and a copy is mailed to the veterinarian and the Animal Control Officer for the town in which the pet resides.
5. Granted rabies exemptions are valid for one year, after which time the animal will be vaccinated or the attending veterinarian will request a renewal application.

### Frequently asked questions:

Q: Can I take my pet to the groomer, a boarding kennel, a pet day care, a training facility, or another veterinary practice with a rabies exemption certificate?

A: All of these facilities have the legal right to refuse to service your pet unless it receives a vaccination for rabies. The purpose of a rabies exemption is to enable an owner to legally license their dog when the dog has a medical reason for exemption.

Q: My dog or cat is very old. Is he eligible for a rabies exemption?

A: Age is not a disease. Rabies vaccination is required for dogs and cats of all ages, and an unvaccinated pet will be subject to lengthy quarantines in situations involving exposure to wildlife. It is far better to vaccinate an elderly pet than to risk a quarantine in an unfamiliar environment.

Q: Can I request a rabies exemption for my cat?

A: Yes, you may request an exemption; however, keep in mind that the purpose of an exemption is to enable a dog owner to have a legal means to license their dog. Your cat will still be legally considered unvaccinated.

Q: Why do rabies exemptions need to be renewed annually?

A: The best option for all pets is to receive the rabies vaccine. The health of the pet needs to be evaluated annually to determine whether an exemption needs to be continued.