



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Rabid Bat Serves as Reminder**

### **Department Cautions Residents about Interaction with Wildlife**

**Saint Louis County, MO (April 19, 2019)** – A local bat has tested positive for rabies. It was sent for testing on April 17<sup>th</sup>. This is the first bat to test positive for rabies in Saint Louis County this year. The event serves as a reminder that residents should always be cautious around wildlife.

“Residents need to be aware that area bats have awoken from hibernation,” said Spring Schmidt, Acting Co-Director of the Saint Louis County Department of Public Health. “It is extremely important that residents not try to handle or interact with these wild animals because some of them do carry rabies.”

People are urged to be aware of and cautious around all wildlife, especially bats, and to avoid direct contact with any animal that is behaving strangely. Children should be taught to stay a safe distance away from any unknown animals, including unknown pets.

Residents should check their pets’ immunization records. Because rabies can be readily passed from wild animals to domestic pets, the first line of defense is to make sure all cats and dogs are properly vaccinated, as required by county ordinance. Once the symptoms of rabies start, there is no cure and the disease almost always fatal. There is treatment available if it can be started before any symptoms begin.

Any county resident who encounters a bat in their home – alive or dead – is urged to call the public health department immediately. Residents should not attempt to capture a live bat but should confine it to the room where it was discovered so that animal control officers can collect it for possible rabies testing.

Never release a bat found in a home if it was present while people were sleeping or in the same room with anyone who is not able to describe the extent of their exposure.

To report a bat, call Saint Louis County Animal Care and Control at 314-615-0650 during regular business hours (Monday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.). After business hours, call 636-529-8210.

(more on the next page)

Most bats do not carry rabies, and in fact, perform a beneficial service by eating large quantities of insects; but if one bat in a colony contracts rabies, chances are it will spread to other members of the colony.

For more information about bats and wildlife control, visit:

**[www.stlouisco.com/HealthandWellness/MosquitoControl/BatsandWildlifeControl](http://www.stlouisco.com/HealthandWellness/MosquitoControl/BatsandWildlifeControl)**

For more information about rabies, visit:

**<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>**

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