Why the Domestic Animal Must Be Confined For 10 Days
And Guidelines for the Confinement.

In accordance with the Health Laws of Virginia, Sec. 3.2-6522.E and Codified Ordinances of Loudoun County, Chapter 612.18.c, domestic animals, such as dogs, cats, & ferrets that have potentially exposed a person to rabies through a bite or other means must be observed for 10 days following an exposure incident to determine whether they were possibly shedding rabies virus.

If a domestic animal was shedding rabies virus in its saliva at the time of exposure, that animal will be showing signs of rabies either at the time of the exposure incident or within several days following the incident.

If a domestic animal remains clinically normal for 10 days following a potential exposure incident, it is assumed that the animal was not shedding rabies at the time of the incident; therefore there was no rabies exposure. The confinement is required regardless of the animal's rabies vaccination status.

The Loudoun County Health Department is the enforcement agency for domestic animal confinements. Any questions relating to the confinement are to be directed to the Loudoun County Health Department at the phone number listed below or to the Health Department representative who handled your case.

NOTE: The Department of Animal Services may also be involved in this investigation. Please refer to the back of this page for their role.

- Rabies is essentially 100% fatal. This is the reason why your complete cooperation is needed to make sure the person your animal may have exposed remains safe.

- The confinement area must be escape-proof. Acceptable methods include a building, pen or within a fenced-in area. The animal may be "walked"/exercised off premises if on a leash AND under the immediate control of a responsible adult. IN MOST CASES, THE ANIMAL IS CONFINED AT THE OWNER'S HOUSE.

- The animal must remain securely confined and cannot be moved to a new location without the consent of the Director of the Loudoun County Health Department or his representative.

- Failure to comply with the confinement may result in the animal being confined at the Loudoun County Animal Shelter at the owner's expense.

- Because a reaction to the vaccination could be confused with early signs of rabies, rabies vaccination during the confinement is NOT recommended.

If you have any questions, please call the Loudoun County Health Department at 703 - 777 - 0234 Monday - Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

See the back of this page for the codes referenced above.
1. Code of Virginia:

TITLE 3.2 - AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL CARE, AND FOOD
CHAPTER 65 - COMPREHENSIVE ANIMAL LAWS
§3.2-6522. "Rabid Animals"

E. At the discretion of the local health director, any animal that may have exposed a person shall be confined under competent observation for 10 days at the expense of the owner or custodian, unless the animal develops active signs of rabies, expires, or is euthanized before that time. A seriously injured or sick animal may be euthanized as provided in § 3.2-6546. (1984, c. 492, § 29-213.88; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.98; 1988, c. 538; 1991, c. 380; 2003, c. 479; 2008, c. 860; 2010, c. 834.)

G. When any animal may have exposed a person to rabies and subsequently expires due to illness or euthanasia, either within an observation period, where applicable, or as part of a public health investigation, its head or brain shall be sent to the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services of the Department of General Services or be tested as directed by the local health department. (1984, c. 492, § 29-213.88; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.98; 1988, c. 538; 1991, c. 380; 2003, c. 479; 2008, c. 860; 2010, c. 834.)

Title 18.2 – Crimes and Offences Generally
Chapter 7 – Crimes Involving Health and Safety
"Withholding information about possibly rabid animal; penalty". § 18.2-313.1.

It shall be unlawful for any person to (i) knowingly withhold information from, or knowingly give false information to, any lawfully authorized governmental agent which would reasonably lead to the discovery or location and capture of any animal reasonably identifiable as one that has potentially exposed a human being to rabies; (ii) upon the request of an animal control officer, a law-enforcement officer, or an official of the Department of Health, willfully fail to grant access to any animal owned, harbored, or kept by that person that is suspected of having caused a rabies exposure to a human being; or (iii) upon notice by an animal control officer, a law-enforcement officer, or an official of the Department of Health, willfully fail to comply with a confinement, isolation, or quarantine order. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1989, c. 491; 2010, c. 834.)

2. CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF LOUDOUN COUNTY
CHAPTER 612 – DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS
612.18 “RABID ANIMALS”

(c) At the discretion of the Director of the Health Department, any animal which has bitten a person shall be confined under competent observation for ten days unless the animal develops active symptoms of rabies or expires before that. A seriously injured or sick animal may be humanely euthanized as provided in Section 612.16 and its head sent to the Health Department, for evaluation. If confinement cannot, in the opinion of the Health Director, be made on the premises of the owner, the animal shall be confined in a manner approved by the Health Director, and the owner shall be responsible for an impoundment fee, if applicable, and the daily board in accordance with the fee schedule (Section 612.28). Upon written direction from the Health Director, the Animal Control Officer shall confine the animal at the Animal Shelter for the required period at the expense of the owner.

Title 54.1 – Professions and Occupations
Chapter 38 – Veterinary Medicine
Release of Animal Rabies Immunization Records

§ 54.1-3812. Release of records.

A. A veterinarian licensed by the Board shall release or authorize the release of rabies immunization records and other relevant treatment data of an animal under his care to (i) a requesting physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner who is contemplating the administration of the rabies treatment protocol to any person under his care who has been the victim of a bite or other possible rabies exposure from such animal; (ii) a requesting animal control officer or law-enforcement officer who needs to identify the owner of such animal or verify the rabies vaccination history of such animal; or (iii) a requesting animal control officer or an official of the Department of Health who is investigating the incident.

B. Any veterinarian licensed by the Board who in good faith releases or authorizes the release of an animal's rabies immunization records and other relevant data pursuant to this section shall not be liable for civil damages resulting from the release of such information. (2000, c. 592; 2004, c. 855; 2006, c. 396; 2010, c. 834.)

Please note that the Department of Animal Services is the agency for enforcing State and County Animal codes. The codes that they enforce are different from those the Health Department enforces. Animal Control's jurisdiction includes, but is not limited to verifying current license for dogs and investigating dog bites under § 3.2-6540. "Control of dangerous or vicious dogs; penalties" of the Code of Virginia.

2013-04-22