



**MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
RULES GOVERNING THE CONTROL OF RABIES
AND OTHER ZOOZOSES**

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MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH RULES GOVERNING THE CONTROL OF RABIES AND OTHER ZOOZOSES

Be it ordained by the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners (while exercising the power of the Board of Health, which powers it has assumed and conferred upon itself by action taken pursuant to G.S. 153A-77) that the following regulation for the protection of public health and safety are hereby adopted pursuant to authority granted by Chapter 130A-39(a) of the General Statutes of North Carolina, and shall apply throughout Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, including, but not limited to, all cities and towns, whether incorporated or unincorporated.

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

Rabies and other animal-borne infections are recognized as a potential health threat in Mecklenburg County. The following rules and regulations are enacted for the purpose of protecting the health of the people of Mecklenburg County through effective control of zoonotic diseases and animal-inflicted injuries. These rules and regulations have been directed specifically to, but not limited to, the control and elimination of the diseases with zoonotic potential.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

- (a) "**Animal**" means every vertebrate nonhuman species of animal, wild or domestic, male or female, including, but not limited to dogs, cats, livestock, and other mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish.
- (b) "**Bite Wound**" means any penetration of the skin by an animal's teeth; scratches or abrasions which may have been in contact with animal's saliva or animal licks of mucosal surfaces or open wounds.
- (c) "**Cat**" means a domestic feline of either sex.
- (d) "**Certified Rabies Vaccinator**" means a person appointed and certified to administer rabies vaccine to animals in accordance with NCGS 130A-186.
- (e) "**County**" means Mecklenburg County, both incorporated and unincorporated territory.
- (f) "**Dog**" means a domestic canine of either sex.
- (g) "**Harboring an Animal**" means an animal shall be deemed to be harbored if it is fed or sheltered unless the animal is being boarded for a fee.
- (h) "**Health Director**" means the Director of the Mecklenburg County Health Department or his or her authorized agent.
- (i) "**Licensed Veterinarian**" means a professional licensed to practice veterinary medicine in North Carolina.
- (j) "**Owner**" means any person, group of persons, firm, organization, association, society, club, lodge, partnership, syndicate, trustee, estate, corporation, or other legal entity owning, keeping, having charge of, sheltering, feeding, or harboring any animal(s).
- (k) "**Person**" means individual, firm, corporation, association, society or other legal entity.
- (l) "**Quarantine**" means strict confinement under restraint by leash, closed cage, or paddock, or in any other manner approved by the Health Director on the private premises of the owner or at an approved facility, of all animals specified in the order of the Health Director.
- (m) "**Rabies**" means in humans and animals, hydrophobia, an acute viral disease of the central nervous system usually transmitted to humans through the introduction of saliva or other potentially infectious material by an animal bite or scratch or other exposure to

mucous membranes.

(n) "Rabies Vaccine" means an animal rabies vaccine licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture and approved for use in this State by the North Carolina Commission for Health Services.

(o) "Restraint" means an animal is under restraint if it is secured by means of a chain, leash or other device and under the control of a person competent to control its actions or confined within a vehicle or within the boundaries of its owner's real property.

(p) "Shall" means binding and mandatory.

(q) "Vaccination" means the administration of an animal rabies vaccine by a licensed veterinarian, a registered veterinary technician under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian or certified rabies vaccinator.

(r) "Zoonosis" means an infection or infectious disease transmissible under natural conditions from vertebrate animals to humans.

SECTION 3: POWERS OF THE HEALTH DIRECTOR

The Health Director shall be solely and entirely responsible for County programs to monitor and control rabies and other zoonotic diseases and shall have the authority to:

- (a)** Investigate all reported cases of zoonotic diseases;
- (b)** Order quarantines and prevention and containment measures to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases in the community;
- (c)** Organize or assist other City or County agencies to organize at least one rabies vaccination clinics within the County annually or more frequently as deemed necessary by the Health Director;
- (d)** Organize such voluntary zoonotic disease control programs as may be needed to protect the health of county residents;
- (e)** Take other actions as required or allowed to enforce compliance with the provisions of this Rule or state law;
- (f)** In the case of all animal bites or animal bite wounds of humans or other suspected exposures to rabies, the Health Director shall have the authority to determine the need for euthanasia of an animal for the purpose of having that animal's brain tested for the presence of rabies virus.

SECTION 4: STANDARDS RELATED TO THE SALE OF BIRDS

(a) This section is applicable to birds being sold from retail or wholesale facilities and is designed to reduce the stress of birds, newly acquired and existing stock; therefore, lowering the chances of an outbreak of a potentially contagious disease, such as Psittacosis (also known as Chlamydiosis):

- (1) All baby birds shall be separated from the adults until accepting food on their own; and new birds shall be placed in a cage separate from the existing stock and quarantined for ten (10) days for any signs of illness. Clean water and food containers shall be offered on a continuous basis and within easy reach of the quarantined bird. If any quarantined bird does show signs of illness, it shall be isolated from all other birds for proper treatment or be taken to an avian veterinarian. The purpose of a quarantine is to protect existing stocks of birds on premises from the introduction of disease and to determine whether or not the new additions are diseased.

(2) Cages shall have adequate room to prevent tails from touching cage floors when on perch and large enough to allow birds to open wings without touching cage sides. Perches shall be wood dowels of adequate size to afford secure, comfortable grip with enough space to allow all birds to sit comfortably on perches at the same time. Cages shall be cleaned daily and fresh paper placed in the bottom. All cages with adult birds shall have grates in the bottom to prevent contact with feces below.

(3) A good quality pelleted diet and/or seed should be offered continuously in an adequate number of containers to minimize competition for food. Fresh vegetables and fruit, if possible, shall be given on a daily basis. Clean water should be offered continuously. All food and water containers should be washed at least daily with hot soapy water to prevent contamination and the chance of spreading disease.

(4) Records on each bird shall include sufficient information to be able to trace a bird's origin in case of a disease outbreak.

(5) If any bird tests positive for Psittacosis or any disease contagious to humans, the testing veterinarian is required to report the results to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, which reports the results to the Mecklenburg County Health Department. The Health Director has the authority to contact the owner of the bird explaining the health risks and quarantine recommendation. Also, the Health Director has the authority to contact the facility where the bird was purchased requesting to see the records of the bird. The Health Director has the authority to contact the facility where the bird originated and may require testing of other birds at the facility to be assured there are no other infected birds. If there are other infected birds, he has the authority to quarantine the facility for up to 45 days and to require treatment with medicated feed of all birds in that facility.

SECTION 5: RABIES VACCINATION

(a) It shall be unlawful for a person to own or harbor a dog, cat or ferret over the age of four months in the County without a valid rabies vaccination as required by NCGS 130A-185.

(b) The Health Director shall organize or sponsor at least annually a County-wide rabies vaccination clinic for the purpose of vaccinating dogs and cats. Public notice of the time and place of rabies vaccination clinics shall be provided.

SECTION 6: RABIES CONTROL

(a) When the Health Director reasonably suspects that a dog, cat or ferret has been exposed to rabies, the Health Director shall comply with NCGS 130A-197 and the most current edition of the Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control in the post-exposure management of such animals.

(b) All dog, cat, or other animal bite wounds of persons shall be investigated by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Animal Care and Control Bureau and the details of the incident promptly reported to the Health Director for appropriate medical follow-up.

(c) All incidents of an animal being bitten by a known rabid animal or any animal displaying symptoms indicative of Rabies shall be investigated by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Animal Care and Control Bureau and the details of the incident promptly reported to the Health Director for appropriate follow-up.

(d) The Health Director shall develop and promulgate a policy of pre- and post-exposure rabies prophylaxis of humans. In the absence of this, the latest recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shall apply.

SECTION 7: MISCELLANEOUS

(a) The Board of Commissioners shall establish appropriate fees for rabies vaccination clinics during the annual budget process.

SECTION 8: PENALTIES AND REMEDIES

(a) Any person who violates any provision of this Rule shall be guilty of a misdemeanor in accordance with NCGS 130A-197 and punished by a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

(b) The Director may bring a civil proceeding in the Mecklenburg County Superior Court to enforce the provisions of this Rule in accordance with Article 1 Part 2 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes of the State of North Carolina.

SECTION 9: SEVERABILITY

If any provision or clause of this Rule shall be declared invalid, such declaration shall not invalidate any other provisions or clauses of the Rule.

SECTION 10: PRIOR RULES REPEALED

All ordinances, rules and regulations heretofore adopted by the Mecklenburg County Board of Health regulating rabies and other zoonoses are hereby repealed.

SECTION 11: EFFECTIVE DATE

These regulations shall be in full force and effective from and after _____.

Approved as to form:

County Attorney

Clerk to the Board