



Office of the City Manager

August 26, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager 

Re: Increase in Rabies-Positive Bats Identified in 2026 in the City of Berkeley

The Berkeley Public Health Division, in partnership with Berkeley Animal Care Services, Alameda County Vector Control and Public Health, and the California Department of Public Health state laboratories, has confirmed five rabies-positive bats in residential and commercial areas of [West and North Berkeley in 2026](#)¹. This represents an increase over the historical baseline of zero to two rabies-positive bats per year between 2020 and 2025. Separately, Alameda County in June 2026 confirmed [a rabies-positive domestic cat in Pleasanton](#)². No human rabies cases have been identified in the City of Berkeley.

In response, both Berkeley and Alameda County Public Health Officers have issued Provider Updates and Alerts with links below to inform local doctors, hospitals and veterinarians about this increase and recommended treatment.

These coinciding findings are significant because:

- Rabies is treatable, but only if treated early before symptoms begin: Human rabies infection is [rare in the United States, with fewer than 10 cases reported annually](#)³. However, it is nearly always fatal once symptoms appear. Deaths are almost entirely preventable when treatment known as post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is administered promptly after a suspected or known exposure and before symptom onset.
- A possible rabies exposure is a medical emergency: An animal bite or bat exposure involving an animal suspected or known to be rabid constitutes a medical and public health emergency. Exposed individuals and pets should be evaluated by a healthcare or veterinary provider as soon as possible.
- Reporting is required by law: [California Public health regulations require all mammal bites in humans to be reported to the local public health department](#)⁴.
- Local data guides medical care: In deciding whether a patient needs PEP, or whether a biting animal warrants quarantine or euthanasia, clinicians must weigh local factors including the species and number of rabies-positive animals recently identified near the exposure. Timely dissemination of local surveillance findings is therefore clinically important.

Guidance for the General Public

Per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, members of the public should take the following steps:

- **Do not touch or handle bats.** Never touch a live or dead bat with bare hands, and teach children never to touch a bat, alive or dead.
- **If you are bitten or scratched by any mammal,** wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water for 15 minutes and seek medical evaluation immediately. Report the bite to Communicable Disease Prevention & Control Program at (510) 981-5292 and Alameda County Vector Control Services at (510) 567-6800.
- **If a bat is found indoors alive or dead, do not release or dispose it.** Do not attempt to catch or touch the bat. Contact Alameda County Vector Control Services at (510) 567-6800 so the bat can be safely collected and submitted for testing.
- **Keep pets' rabies vaccinations current.** Rabies vaccination is required by law for dogs and strongly recommended for cats. If your pet has contact with a bat or other wild mammal, contact your veterinarian promptly.
- **Bat-proof your home** by sealing gaps and openings that allow bats to enter living spaces.

The City of Berkeley Public Health Division will continue rabies surveillance, healthcare provider consultation, and public messaging in coordination with animal and vector control, healthcare, and veterinary partners as conditions evolve.

cc: David White, Deputy City Manager
Scott Gilman, Director, Health, Housing, and Community Services
Jenny Wong, City Auditor
Farimah Brown, City Attorney
Mark Numainville, City Clerk
Matthai Chakko, Communications Director/Assistant to the City Manager

¹ City of Berkeley Provider Update - https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/Provider%20Alert_Rabies-positive%20bats%20in%20City%20of%20Berkeley.pdf

² Alameda County - Rabies Update: June 29, 2026, <https://health.alamedacountyca.gov/program/rabies/>

³ CDC - Clinical Screening for Rabies Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), August 11, 2026, <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/hcp/diagnosis/index.html>

⁴ California Department of Public Health, Rabies Information for Local Health Departments, December 23, 2025, <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/RabiesLHDs.aspx>