

PET BUSINESSES AND RABIES REGULATIONS

What is rabies?

Rabies is a virus that infects the brain and spinal cord of mammals. Rabies infection is almost always fatal once symptoms develop. People and pets can get rabies through contact with saliva of a rabies-infected animal. This typically occurs through a bite, but non-bite exposures are also possible (e.g. scratches, open wounds, or if saliva of an infected animal gets directly into eyes, nose, mouth). Rabies infection can be prevented in dogs, cats and ferrets if they receive proper rabies vaccination throughout life. Rabies can be prevented in people if treatment is given before symptoms appear.

What do I need to do for rabies control?

The King County Board of Health Pet Business regulations (Title 8.03) have specific requirements for pet businesses with respect to rabies vaccination and vaccination records of dogs, cats, and ferrets.

	Pet shop	Animal shelter	Pet daycare & Commercial kennel	Pet groomer
Vaccination requirement	Have every dog, cat or ferret age four months or older vaccinated against rabies before sale or adoption, and provide the purchaser or adopter a certificate of rabies vaccination issued by a licensed veterinarian.	Have every dog, cat or ferret four months of age or older currently immunized against rabies before adoption or release into foster care.	Verify each dog, cat or ferret four months of age or older is currently immunized against rabies by obtaining a copy of a rabies certificate or other verification from a licensed veterinarian, or written acknowledgment from the pet owner. Note for pet groomer: Verification or acknowledgment of rabies vaccination is waived at facilities where only pet owners perform the animal grooming or bathing.	
Records requirement*	Keep veterinary records, including all vaccinations, for each individual animal for not less than 365 days.	Keep record of the date(s) of rabies vaccinations for each individual animal for not less than 365 days after the animal leaves the establishment.	Keep record of the date(s) of rabies vaccinations, or owner's written acknowledgment, for each individual animal for not less than 365 days after the animal leaves the establishment.	At the time of inspection, groomers must be able to demonstrate how they are verifying rabies vaccination is current.

*During inspection, your inspector will ask to review your recordkeeping to determine compliance with the requirements.