



**DOUGLAS COUNTY
BUILDING
DEPARTMENT
Environmental
Health Division**

**DOUGLAS COUNTY
SHERIFF'S
OFFICE
Animal Control
Division**



Douglas County Courthouse, Justice Building
1036 SE Douglas Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon 97470

A JOINT RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 11, 2022

ANIMAL BITES AND RABIES PREVENTION

(Douglas County, Ore.) It's 'Spring Time', and that means residents are spending more and more time outside exploring, planting flowers, walking, hiking and camping. The Spring season also brings out all creatures, big and small, who also want to explore nature. Did you know that about 350-400 animal bites are reported every year in Douglas County? Did you know that many of these bites could have been prevented? Douglas County Environmental Health Specialist Angela Scott and Douglas County Animal Control Deputy Lee Bartholomew have a few helpful tips for our residents to help lower the risk of being bitten by an animal.

Tips to Avoid and Prevent Animal Bites:

- Avoid contact or interactions with unknown animals. Even animals that appear friendly can bite if provoked.
- Avoid contact with bats. If you see a bat during daylight hours, it is most likely unhealthy and should definitely not be touched.
- Do not approach or touch a wounded animal, leave that for the professionals. Contact Douglas County Environmental Health at (541) 440-3574 or Douglas County Animal Control at (541) 440-4328.
- Do not feed, try to catch, or play with wild animals such as foxes, squirrels, birds, skunks, opossums, beavers, rats, venomous snakes or raccoons.
- It's very important that you do not disturb or try to touch an animal while its feeding or taking care of its young. Never try to pet or remove a baby or young wild animal from its nest, den or habitat.
- Avoid playing aggressively with any animal. Even the family dog or cat can bite its owner or guests by accident.
- Do not stick your fingers into an animal's kennel or cage.

Scott and Deputy Bartholomew further added, if an animal bites you, especially a wild animal, it is very important to call your doctor or health care provider and seek medical attention immediately. There are effective treatment options to prevent rabies and venom toxicity, as long as the treatment is given soon after a bite or exposure. Rabies is a viral disease affecting the central nervous system. The early signs of rabies can be a fever or a headache, but this can escalate rapidly to advanced central nervous system symptoms, such as confusion, sleepiness or agitation. Sadly, if untreated, someone with a rabies infection that starts to exhibit advanced symptoms can die within weeks. Fortunately, human rabies cases in the United States are rare. Over the past 10 years in Oregon, animals found positive for rabies included bats, foxes, coyotes, and a goat. In the Western United States, bats are our biggest concern, as they represent the largest carriers of rabies. However, dogs, cats, cows, or any warm-blooded animal can pass rabies to humans. Rabies exposure is usually through a bite, but scratches and saliva contact with broken skin are also possible contraction routes. Likewise, a snake bite can also be life-threatening if the snake is venomous. If you are bitten by a snake that you think might be venomous, it's important that you stay calm, restrict movement of the bite area and remove tight clothing or jewelry, and seek emergency medical care as soon as possible. In Oregon, the only indigenous venomous snake is the Western rattlesnake. However, there could be other venomous snakes present that have been transplanted or let loose in the wild. Venomous snake bite symptoms can include pain, swelling, redness, or bleeding at the site of the bite.

In conclusion, Scott and Deputy Bartholomew encourage you to be a responsible animal and pet owner. Keep dogs in a fenced yard at home, or on a leash when out in public. Keep up-to-date on your pet's rabies shots and vaccinations, especially dogs, cats, and ferrets. Please try to keep all pets away from contact with wild animals. If you are the owner of the animal that has bitten someone, file an animal bite report immediately. Information from the report will be used to evaluate the risk of rabies, and in most cases, your pet will only be put on a short-term watch period. If a dog, cat or ferret appears healthy and is eating and drinking normally 10 days after a bite occurred, there is no chance that rabies transmission occurred.

To report an animal bite or if you have questions or concerns related to animal bites or rabies, please call Douglas County Environmental Health Division at (541) 440-4559 or Douglas County Animal Control at (541) 440-4328. For more information, please visit <https://www.douglascounty-oregon.us/386/Environmental-Health> or <https://www.dco.com/170/Animal-Control>.

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Attached: Photos of Angela Scott and Deputy Lee Bartholomew

Douglas County Environmental Health (541) 440-3574 or Douglas County Animal Control (541) 440-4328
