### Clinical criteria for case classification
Rabies is an acute encephalomyelitis that almost always progresses to coma or death within 10 days after the first symptom.

### Laboratory criteria for case classification
One or more of the following:
- Detection by direct fluorescent antibody of viral antigens in a clinical specimen (preferably the brain or the nerves surrounding hair follicles in the nape of the neck),
- Or isolation (in cell culture or in a laboratory animal) of rabies virus from saliva, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), or central nervous system tissue,
- Or identification of a rabies-neutralizing antibody titer \( \geq 5 \) (complete neutralization) in the serum or CSF of an unvaccinated person.

### Epidemiological criteria for case classification
Not applicable.

### Case classification
**Confirmed:**
A clinically compatible illness in a person with laboratory criteria.

### Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports
Not applicable.

### Comments
Laboratory confirmation by all of the above methods is strongly recommended. CDC requests the following specimens: CSF, serum, or saliva (not sputum), biopsy of skin from the back of the neck just above hairline. Neck biopsy and saliva specimens should be sent packed in dry ice.