

August 19, 2021

**HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE RABIES ALERT
FOR DEAN RD NEAR THE ECONLOCKHATCHEE RIVER**

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ORLANDO, FL – The Florida Department of Health in Orange County has issued a rabies alert for east Orlando near Dean Road and the Econlockhatchee River. This rabies alert is for 60 days and is in response to a pet dog that tested positive for rabies after an encounter with a raccoon.

The alert boundaries are:

- University Blvd. to the north
- East-West Expressway (Toll Road 408) to the south
- Central FL Greenway (Toll Road 417) to the west
- Alafaya Trail to the east

All residents and visitors in Orange County should be aware that rabies is present in the wild animal population and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness.

Please be aware that rabies activities can also occur outside the alert area. Contact with feral cats, stray dogs and all wildlife particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats and coyotes should be avoided.

If you or a family member has been bitten or scratched by an animal in the rabies alert area of Orange County or any animal, **you should seek medical attention immediately** and contact Orange County Animal Services at (407) 254-9150.

An animal with rabies could infect domestic animals that have not been vaccinated against rabies. All domestic animals should be vaccinated against rabies and all wildlife contact should be avoided, particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats, and coyotes.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure will protect an exposed person from the disease.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- All pets and at-risk livestock should have current rabies immunizations.
- Secure outside garbage in covered containers to avoid attracting wild animals.

- Do not leave pet food outside.
- Avoid contact with **all** wildlife, especially feral cats, raccoons, bats, and foxes.
- If bitten or scratched by a suspected rabid animal, wash the wound immediately with soap and water, seek medical attention, and promptly report the incident to Orange County Animal Services (407) 254-9150.
- Rabies is preventable when treatment is provided in a timely manner.
- Do not allow your pets to run free. Follow leash laws by keeping pets and livestock secured on your property. If your pet or livestock are bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Orange County Animal Services at (407) 836-3111.
- Support animal control in efforts to reduce feral and stray animal populations.
- Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with outdoor food sources such as uncovered trash or litter.
- **Never** adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children to **never** handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas, where they might come in contact with people and pets.

For general questions pertaining to animals, contact Orange County Animal Services (407) 254-9150. For more information on rabies, visit the DOH website at doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/rabies/rabies-index.html, the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies or contact the Florida Department of Health in Orange County at (407) 858-1420.

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