

Sample U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Rabies Prevention Plan

Project Leaders/supervisors who oversee staff that are eligible for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) rabies pre-exposure (PrEP) vaccination program must develop a rabies prevention plan per the requirements outlined in the Deputy Director’s Memo (Add memo reference # here if applicable) The following sample may be used as a reference when developing a plan for your duty station/office.

Location: National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex XYZ

Date: [Current date]

Summary: This plan serves as the National Wildlife Refuge Complex XYZ’s Rabies Prevention Plan in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Deputy Director’s Memo describing how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will better protect those at higher risk of exposure to the rabies virus.

Record of Review and Changes

Project Leaders/supervisors overseeing this duty station will review the rabies prevention plan annually, or sooner if necessary, and record any changes.

Review/Change No.	Description of Change	Date Entered	Posted By
1	Annual review: no changes made	[current date]	NWR Complex XYZ Project Leader

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Relevant links:

[Job Hazard Assessment \(JHA\) \(FWS Form 3-2279\)](#)

Rabies Pre-Exposure Vaccine Series Consent Form ([FWS Form 3-2577](#))

Rabies Pre-exposure Vaccination Eligibility Criteria Assessment

[Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' rabies pre-exposure vaccination](#)

1. Job Hazard Assessment (JHA) for work tasks that involve potential exposure to rabies virus

Project Leaders/supervisors will ensure all Service employees, volunteers, Youth Conservation Corps members, and student interns they directly supervise complete a Job Hazard Assessment (JHA) ([FWS Form 3-2279](#)) for any official duties that may place Service personnel at higher risk of exposure to rabies.

- A JHA is a systematic process for identifying hazards and eliminating or minimizing their risks. First, break down a job or activity into basic steps and examine each step for potential hazards. For larger or more complex operations, divide the operation into several activities or sub-steps. For each hazard identified, develop a means of eliminating or controlling the hazard.
- Examples of job tasks or projects that place employees at higher risk of exposure to the rabies virus include:
 - Directly handling bats or working in high density bat environments such as in bat roosting areas.
 - Frequent interactions with wildlife that are considered rabies reservoirs (e.g., raccoons, foxes, skunks, bats, etc.).
 - Performing necropsies on wild mammals.
 - Work with live or concentrated rabies virus in a laboratory setting.
- Employees may work with their direct supervisor, the Wildlife Health office, and/or JAO Safety and Occupational Health to complete the JHA. More information about JHAs and example JHAs can be found on the JAO [Safety and Occupational Health](#) and [Industrial Hygiene](#) SharePoint sites.

2. Rabies prevention training and guidance for NWR Complex XYZ

Rabies prevention training and guidance from the [Wildlife Health office SharePoint](#) site and from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) is provided to new Service personnel who are determined to be at higher risk for exposure to rabies during orientation. For both new and current Service personnel, rabies prevention training is provided by the Collateral Duty Safety Officer during recurring occupational safety and health meetings in collaboration with the Wildlife Health office staff and JAO Office of Safety and Occupational Health, as needed. The rabies prevention training and guidance is distributed via 508-compliant electronic content and printed materials. The following information is covered:

- What is rabies?
- How you can be exposed to rabies?
- Which animals are more likely to get the rabies virus?
- Specific behaviors to avoid that might precipitate a rabies exposure.

- Recommendations for rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for employees considered at higher risk for exposure to rabies.
- The types of animal contact that require rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)
- Recommendations for personal protective equipment (PPE) and when and how to use recommended PPE if handling animals, animal parts, or laboratory specimens.
- Steps to take and reporting procedures following a potential rabies exposure.

3. Determining employee eligibility for rabies pre-exposure vaccination, booster or titer checks

Service personnel at NWR Refuge Complex XYZ who directly supervise employees determine which employees are eligible for rabies pre-exposure vaccination based on the following guidelines:

- Rabies pre-exposure vaccination eligibility criteria assessment and associated resources such as guidance from the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' \(ACIP\) rabies pre-exposure vaccination](#).
- The employee's position description.
- Employee's risk of exposure to the rabies virus based on completed JHA or risk assessment.
- History of previous rabies pre-exposure vaccination and potential need for rabies booster or titer check based on ACIP guidance.

4. Supporting rabies prevention efforts for employees at higher risk of exposure

The Service offers employees the choice to receive rabies PrEP for those employees determined to be higher risk for exposure to rabies based on the rabies pre-exposure vaccination eligibility criteria assessment. Costs will be incurred by this duty station or from other Service funds. Project Leaders/supervisors must ensure that Service employees at higher risk for exposure to rabies complete a rabies pre-exposure vaccination consent or declination form ([FWS Form 3-2577](#)). The form must be electronically submitted through mySupport following the directions provided on the Wildlife Health office SharePoint site located [here](#).

5. Providing rabies pre-exposure vaccination, booster or titer check guidance to eligible employees

The Project Leader/supervisor at Refuge Complex XYZ must provide 508-compliant information on rabies pre-exposure vaccination from the current [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' rabies pre-exposure vaccination](#) recommendations and CDC guidance. Employees must review the information and discuss any questions they have with their supervisor, the Wildlife Health office, and/or the JAO Office of Safety and Occupational Health.

6. Ensuring employee understanding of the vaccination program

Project Leaders/supervisors will ensure the employee understands rabies pre-exposure vaccination simplifies the rabies post-exposure treatment, and it may add protection in cases of unrecognized rabies exposure or when post-exposure treatment is delayed and that it does not eliminate the need for appropriate treatment following a known or suspected rabies virus exposure.

Procedures for a potential rabies exposure at NWR Complex XYZ

The following procedures must be initiated for potential rabies exposures and associated injuries (e.g., bite or scratch from a potentially rabid animal) that occur during an employee's official tour of duty at NWR Complex XYZ:

- Employees should seek medical attention immediately for any injuries and/or exposure associated with an encounter with a potentially rabid animal. A healthcare provider can conduct a medical evaluation following a possible rabies exposure and provide appropriate diagnostics and a treatment plan.
- Employees must work with their supervisor to report the exposure and record the information in the Safety Management Information System ([SMIS](#)).
- Employees should provide any documentation of rabies pre-exposure vaccination or rabies antibody titer testing to medical providers and the State and/or local public health department as necessary. This information will help the medical provider and health department determine the most appropriate course of action following a possible rabies exposure.
- The Project Leader/supervisor and the employee should consult with the State public health department for a rabies risk assessment and discuss factors to consider when determining the need for rabies post-exposure prophylaxis. The health department can also help facilitate submission and testing of animals that are suspected to have rabies.