

To: Rabies virus Test Clientele
From: Louisiana Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (LADDL)
RE: Changes in Rabies testing fee and policy
Date: July 1, 2009

Beginning July 15, 2009, a \$30 fee will be assessed for each Rabies virus test request received. This fee will be assessed on ALL rabies test submissions, regardless whether the test involves potential human exposure, or whether the submitting authorities are non-profit or public agencies, commercial or private interests, or whether the test result was positive, negative, or unsuitable for testing.

To receive the LADDL rabies testing service, clients that have not yet done so should contact the LADDL business office to establish an account.

Operational aspects of Rabies testing:

- Animal heads or brains should be refrigerated and shipped via next-day delivery.
- Test results generally are available by the end of the next working day following receipt (if not before); submitters must provide a fax number to receive a report by fax.
- As per the CDC standards for rabies testing, the intact brain is required for testing. Brain tissue displaying decomposition or damage (blunt trauma or gun shot) may result in an “unsuitable” test result. (“Unsuitable” results are considered POSITIVE for purposes of determining the necessity of post-exposure prophylaxis on bite cases. The OPH is notified in such circumstances.)
- Rabies testing results are considered public information and are communicated to OPH authorities, especially in instances of human exposure, or to the State Veterinarian’s office when another animal has been definitively exposed to Rabies.

Due to public health concerns when animals bite humans, the OPH rabies testing service should be considered for all cases involving potential human exposure. OPH rabies testing, however, is NOT an on-demand service; ALL test requests must be pre-authorized before submission by contacting Dr. Gary Balsamo, the State Public Health Veterinarian or, in his absence, Dr. Raoult Ratard, the State Epidemiologist. The OPH elicits information on the identity of the victim and the circumstances of the potential exposure. If authorization is granted, submitters are informed on where and how to submit materials for rabies testing, and whether any fees apply.

The OPH has developed rabies testing submission procedures, action diagrams on the management of suspected human exposure to rabies, and suspected animal exposure to rabies. Although the LADDL does not require testing pre-authorization, all other aspects of the OPH procedure are followed when submitting rabies test requests to the LADDL.