

# **Specimens for Rabies Testing**

## **Why do I have to decapitate specimens for rabies testing?**

Never decapitate a bat – always submit the whole body for testing. Do not handle a bat anymore than is necessary.

Specimens need to be decapitated because the Public Health Lab does not have the capacity to store or handle entire bodies. Only the brain is tested for rabies.

## **How do I properly prepare a specimen for rabies testing?**

Follow the step-by-step process as shown in the document, “Preparing a specimen for rabies testing”.

- Do not store specimens in the freezer
- Specimens go in the VPH fridge, not the general shelter fridge
- If you notice that we haven't picked up a specimen, call us to remind us

## **Can I just attach an impound card to a specimen?**

No. The full bite report or bat submission form must be attached to every rabies specimen in the fridge. Impound cards do not carry the information that VPH needs when testing and relaying the results to affected parties. Securely attach the correct form to the specimen (tape, staple, inside pocket) – do not leave the form resting on top of or below a specimen. An unlabeled specimen in the fridge is not acceptable.