

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Positive Rabid Bat identified in the City of Shelbyville (Shelby County, Illinois)

Shelbyville, Illinois, June 9, 2026—The Shelby County Health Department received official laboratory results today from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine of a bat testing positive for rabies. The bat was collected in the city limits of Shelbyville on June 6 and was analyzed using fluorescent antibody examination. "Bats are the most common species with rabies in Illinois and are most active between dusk and dawn especially around sunset when they emerge from their roost to feed. If a bat is found in a room where someone was sleeping, or with a child or incapacitated person, assume an exposure occurred and consult your physician and your local Health Department immediately. Because their teeth are so small, a bat's bite may be difficult or impossible to detect, meaning that if you, a family member, or a pet is exposed to a bat, it is necessary to have the bat tested for rabies so that proper treatment can be started immediately. To protect yourself and your family, all contact with bats should be avoided. However, if a bat gets inside your home, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Shelby County Health Department advises specific containment steps to avoid potential exposure and the need for rabies post-exposure treatment.

* Isolate the Bat: Close interior doors to confine the bat to one room.

- * Provide an Exit: Open an exterior door or window (making sure there's no screen) and leave the room so the bat can fly out.
- * Never Touch with Bare Hands: If you must capture it, put on thick leather gloves, wait for the bat to land, and gently place a coffee can, box, or container over it, sliding a piece of cardboard underneath.
- * Call for Assistance: Contact the Animal Control Department to safely remove the animal and have it tested for rabies.

Also, make sure your dogs and cats are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations, as they are at risk if they encounter a bat on your property or in your home. If you are dealing with a recurring issue, you can consult with the Shelby County Health Department, Environmental Health Division at 217/774-9555 to discuss bat exclusion guidelines and prevention efforts to keep bats from using your home as a roost by sealing entry points and blocking gaps around utility lines, chimneys, louvers, and roof joints using caulk, expandable foam, steel wool, or ¼ inch mesh cloth. Also make sure doors, windows, and vents have screens and are securely framed. For more information contact the Shelby County Health Department at 217/774-9555. “We’re here to help!”