



Southeastern Idaho Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RABID BAT FOUND IN BINGHAM COUNTY

Southeastern Idaho Public Health (SIPH) has confirmed that a bat has tested positive for rabies in Bingham County. This is the first bat to test positive for rabies in Idaho this year. Last year, 12 bats tested positive for rabies in Idaho. While most bats do not carry rabies, rabies is a virtually 100% fatal viral illness in humans and other animals.

To protect yourself and your pets:

- Never touch bats with your bare hands.
- Be very suspicious of bat activity during daylight hours.
- If you or your child wakes up in the presence of a bat, discuss the situation with your medical provider.
Seemingly insignificant exposures have contributed to several fatal cases of rabies in the past.
- If you have an encounter with a bat, seek medical attention immediately. Save the bat in a container and contact your local district health department immediately for testing options. NEVER handle a bat with your bare hands—use gloves, a towel, etc.
- Because household pets and other animals can be exposed to the virus through contact with sick bats, it is important for people to make sure that their animals (dogs, cats, horses, and ferrets) are up to date on vaccinations against rabies. If your dog or cat brings a dead bat home, collect it in a plastic bag without touching it and call your district health department for possible testing. Also, contact your veterinarian to make sure your animal's rabies vaccinations are up-to-date.
- Bat-proof your home or cabin by checking chimneys, roof peaks, loose screening on louvers, dormer windows, or areas where flashing has pulled away from the roof or siding. Bats can enter through holes the size of a quarter. Typically, bat-proofing is best after bats have migrated away in the fall.

For further information about rabies contact Jeff Doerr, District Epidemiologist, at 478-6321, or visit SIPH's website at www.siphidaho.org or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/rabies/.