

Animal Management:

10-Day Confinement of Domestic Dogs, Cats and Ferrets that Bite People: Q&A and Recommendations

When is a domestic dog, cat, or ferret placed in a 10-day confinement?

When a person is bitten by a domestic dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*), cat (*Felis catus*) or ferret (*Mustela putorius furo*), N.C. General Statute §130A-196 requires that the animal be immediately confined for 10 days in a place designated by the local health director. Ten-day confinements do not apply to exotic, wild or hybrid animals, including wolf hybrids (see pp. 6-9 of [Animal Rabies Vaccination: Requirements and Guidelines](#) in this Manual: <https://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/lhds/manuals/rabies/animal.html>).

Who enforces §130A-196? The local health director typically delegates local Animal Control to enforce the conditions of 10-day confinements. This usually occurs in the jurisdiction where the biting incident occurred and where the owner of the animal resides.

Does a currently-vaccinated animal have to be confined? Yes, regardless of vaccination status, by law *any* domestic dog, cat or ferret that bites a person shall be confined.

Why is the animal confined for 10 days? Most domestic dogs and cats in North Carolina are not infected with rabies. However, if the animal was not exhibiting signs of rabies at the time of the bite, 10 days is the established observation period required to determine if the animal was infected and shedding rabies at the time of the bite.

Can the animal be confined at the owner's home? Yes, if certain conditions are met. The law states that the local health director may allow the owner to confine the animal on the owner's property if the circumstances of the particular case warrant. The following conditions are recommended for implementation of a 10-day home confinement:

1. Biting animal is normal and healthy at onset of confinement.*
2. Bite was provoked.
3. There is no history of bite incidents (such as a repeat-offender dangerous dog).
4. Owner agrees to confine the animal at all times, supervise in fenced yard area or leash-walk.
5. Owner agrees to isolate the animal from people (except the immediate family) and non-household animals.
6. The animal will not be vaccinated during the confinement..
7. New medications should not be given during the confinement.
8. The animal shall be monitored daily for changes in behavior or health, and Animal Control shall be notified immediately should any changes occur or if the animal dies.
9. Animal Control shall make unannounced visits to examine the animal's health; the final examination to release confinement shall be after the 10th day (240 hours) from the bite incident.
10. If not currently vaccinated, the animal shall be vaccinated against rabies at the end of the 10-day confinement period.

*If the animal is ill at the onset of the confinement or becomes ill during the confinement period, a veterinarian should be contacted immediately to examine the animal for signs consistent with rabies. If an acute or chronic disease process other than rabies is diagnosed that explains the clinical signs, then the animal should be confined at a veterinary hospital. Any animal that dies during the confinement for any reason shall be submitted by Animal Control to the N.C. State Laboratory of Public Health for testing.

If any of the above conditions are not met, do not apply, or the health director has evidence there is or may be non-compliance by the owner, the animal should be confined at a veterinary practice, a county animal shelter or a county-contracted shelter facility under strict observation.**

The following conditions shall apply:

1. The animal shall be isolated from other animals and not have contact with animals or with people other than the caretaker.
2. The owner may visit the animal but not remove the animal from the facility during confinement.
3. The animal will not be vaccinated.
4. New medications should not be given during the confinement period unless they are needed to treat an acute injury or illness.
5. The animal shall be monitored daily for changes in behavior or health, and Animal Control shall be notified immediately should any changes occur or if the animal dies.
6. The final examination by Animal Control to release confinement shall be after a full 10 days (240 hours) after the bite incident.
7. If not currently vaccinated, the animal shall be vaccinated against rabies at the end of the 10-day confinement period.

**A lapse in or lack of rabies vaccination can be used as evidence of non-compliance and result in the confinement of the animal at a facility designated by the local health director.