

PROCEDURE MANUAL

07-08



MICHIGAN STATE POLICE

Investigating Animal Bites

Purpose: This manual provides guidance and procedure for members responding to incidents involving animal bites.

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Definitions:

None

Section 1: Investigation of Animal Bites

1.1 Reporting Requirements

- a. According to the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services \(MDHHS\) Administrative Rule 325.180](#), persons with knowledge of an animal bite, where rabies is suspected, are required to report the bite to the local health department where the bite occurred within 24 hours. This includes members of the law enforcement, animal control, and veterinary/medical communities. This rule does not require that law enforcement complete an incident report of an animal bite, even in cases where rabies is suspected.
- b. When a call about an animal bite is received at a worksite, the member taking the call shall first advise the victim to seek medical attention and then attempt to determine the nature of the incident.
 - i. Incidents involving aggressive animals at large shall be investigated and reported using a 5500 (Health and Safety) file class.
 - ii. Criminal incidents involving animals, such as when a dog is ordered to attack an animal or human by its owner, shall be investigated and reported using the appropriate file class.
 - iii. It is the responsibility of medical/veterinary personnel to assess the victim and suspect animal for rabies and report the incident of suspected rabies to the MDHHS.

1.2 Post Commander Responsibilities

- a. Post commanders shall ensure that their local department of community health, county or city animal control resources, and emergency medical providers understand the department's obligations in animal bite cases.

Post commanders shall make clear that MDHHS rules do not require an incident report for minor cases involving an animal bite, such as when a family dog has nipped a friend or relative, and that post personnel should become involved only in extreme and/or criminal cases such as when an animal has attacked another animal or human and the attack results in severe injury or death.

- b. If available resources allow, post commanders may direct their enforcement member to take the report of an animal bite upon the request of the victim or the animal's owner. In such cases a 99009 (General Non-Criminal) file class shall be used.

1.3 Handling Suspected Infectious Animals

- a. Because of the serious risk of infection involved with exposure to rabies-infected blood and/or saliva, members shall not kill quarantined animals suspected of having rabies, nor shall they decapitate the animal in preparation for its brain analysis. Such actions are the responsibility of veterinary, animal control, or other community health personnel.
- b. Members may immediately destroy an animal suspected of having rabies for safety reasons.
 - i. If an animal suspected of having rabies is destroyed, members shall not handle its carcass unless absolutely necessary. They shall wear the goggles and latex gloves supplied in their first aid kit when doing so. The exposed gloves and/or goggles are considered a biohazard and shall be disposed of appropriately.
 - ii. Members shall request their local animal control or health department to retrieve and dispose of the animal's carcass as soon as possible.