

TITLE 4

Animals and Animal Husbandry

CHAPTER 4-13

Dogs

SECTION 4-13-31

§ 4-13-31 Compulsory rabies vaccination.

- (a) For the purpose of preventing the introduction of rabies when rabies appears in any nearby area and its appearance creates a threat of introduction into Rhode Island, or for the suppression, or for the control of rabies, the board shall make regulations requiring compulsory vaccination of dogs, cats, ferrets or any other domestic animal as deemed necessary against rabies in a manner specified by it in any area or areas within the state, which are deemed necessary to prevent that introduction, or for the purposes of suppression and control.
- (b) The board is authorized to engage any personnel within the department of health or department of environment to assist in carrying out any regulation which may be promulgated for the suppression and control of rabies.
- (c) Upon receipt of a written request from any city or town council or the mayor of any town or city and with the consent and approval of the health officers of those towns and cities, the board shall establish in cooperation with local and state health department authorities, public clinics for the vaccination of dogs, cats, and ferrets against rabies. Those clinics shall be conducted in accordance with provisions and regulations proposed by and under the supervision of the board.
- (d) Rabies vaccine for animals may be administered only by or under the direct and specific supervision of a licensed veterinarian.
- (e) Except as otherwise amended by board regulation, the owner or keeper of a dog, cat, or ferret shall have the animal vaccinated not earlier than three (3) months of age nor later than four (4) months of age and at regular intervals as prescribed by board regulations, but at no time to exceed recommendations made by the most current compendium of animal rabies control.
- (f) Any veterinarian or any person directed by a veterinarian who vaccinates a dog, cat, or ferret against rabies must issue a rabies vaccination certificate to the animal's owner. This certificate shall meet the minimum standards approved by the board, which include: the veterinarian's name, the veterinarian's practice name, address and telephone number; the pet owner's name and address, the pet's name, species, age coloration and sex; the rabies vaccine manufacturer's name; the date of inoculation and the signature of the doctor who administered or directed the administration of the rabies vaccine. For dogs, cats, and ferrets, there shall be a record kept which lists the number of the rabies tag issued in conjunction with the rabies vaccination certificate.
- (g) No city or town may register or license a pet that is not vaccinated for rabies in accordance with this chapter. Proof of rabies vaccination shall be a current, valid rabies certificate for any species.
- (h) This chapter shall not apply to any dog or cat imported into this state strictly for exhibition or breeding purposes, and which does not remain in this state for more than fifteen (15) days and which is accompanied by a valid health certificate or certificate of veterinary inspection.
- (i) A person who fails to have or refuses to have each dog, cat, and/or ferret owned or kept by the person vaccinated against rabies violates the provisions of this chapter.

History of Section.

(G.L. 1956, ch. 639, § 34; P.L. 1954, ch. 3364, § 1; G.L. 1956, § 4-13-31; P.L. 1958, ch. 181, § 1; P.L. 1962, ch. 80, § 12; P.L. 1963, ch. 74, § 1; P.L. 1992, ch. 353, § 2; P.L. 1995, ch. 388, § 1.)