



# CANINE RABIES VACCINATION EXEMPTION FORMS: FAQs

### Why do I need to fill out two forms?

Two forms are required to apply for exemption from canine rabies vaccination: the State of California's "Rabies Vaccination Certificate – Exemption from Canine Rabies Vaccination" and the "County of Orange Supplemental form for Canine Rabies Vaccination Requests". Cooperative efforts have resulted in rabies being eradicated from the Orange County pet population. However, to ensure that the rabies vaccination exemption program does not result in a resurgence of rabies infections in Orange County, the additional information is deemed necessary for the evaluation of a request. The completed Supplemental Form both establishes an official request specifically to Orange County, and allows for internal tracking. The information will be reviewed by County veterinarians to assess the medical justification for exemption. Every year large numbers of dogs are imported into Orange County from other countries, further increasing the risk of rabies exposure to both human and pet populations. Our goal is to make every effort to protect public health.

## Which medical conditions are accepted for approval of exemption?

A list of diseases/conditions has not been defined for this process. However, veterinarians advocating for clients and veterinarians protecting the public should use professional judgment when assessing the risk of rabies vaccination to that of a dog's health status. Examples of serious medical conditions that may warrant exemption include, but are not limited to, immune-mediated diseases (e.g., IMHA), cancer therapy, and severe adverse reactions to rabies vaccination. Old age and positive rabies titers are not conditions that warrant an exemption.

#### Who will be notified of approval/denial?

Notification will be distributed to the State, local animal control agency, and the requesting veterinarian. The requesting veterinarian should provide the approved/denied certificate and form to the dog owner. This will allow the veterinarian to maintain a copy in the dog's medical record, as well as facilitate a veterinarian-client discussion about issues concerning dogs not vaccinated against rabies.

#### For how long is an approved exemption valid?

For a maximum of one (1) year. If the animal's condition persistently precludes rabies immunization, a new request must be submitted annually.

# What happens if the exempted dog is exposed to a rabid (or untested, potentially rabid) wild animal such as a bat, skunk, fox, raccoon, covote, or opossum?

A rabies vaccination exemption may be used only for the purposes of obtaining a license for the indicated dog. The unvaccinated dog will be subjected to the same dispositions as other unvaccinated dogs as outlined in the California Code of Regulations. For example, *vaccinated* dogs exposed to rabid or potentially rabid animals (i.e., most wildlife, rabies reservoirs) are quarantined for 30 days, while *unvaccinated* dogs would be subject to six (6) months quarantine and/or euthanasia.

#### What restrictions are imposed on the client/dog for not being rabies-vaccinated?

The dog must be confined to the premises indicated on the forms, or else on a six-foot (6') leash and under the direct physical control of an adult. Additionally, the dog cannot have contact with any animal that is not current with rabies vaccination.

