

Canine Rabies Vaccination Exemption Requests

Background and Important Information

Per Health and Safety Code 121690, an exemption may be granted for the rabies vaccine if “a rabies vaccination would endanger the dog’s life.” Our office has developed consistent standards for reviewing requests, referring to peer-reviewed veterinary literature on adverse reactions to rabies vaccinations in dogs. In accordance with Health and Safety Code 121690, the exemption is valid for one year, after which the animal must either be vaccinated for rabies or another request must be submitted and approved. The law also requires the condition warranting the exemption be verified and documented by a veterinarian. OC Animal Care has jurisdiction over all rabies related issues in the County of Orange, regardless of whether your city is serviced by another animal care and control department; all requests must be approved by OC Animal Care.



Cases where an exemption may be approved include, but are not limited to:

- Life-threatening anaphylactic reaction immediately after administration of a rabies vaccine:
 - Signs consistent with anaphylactic shock
 - Mild facial angioedema, hives, lethargy and/or localized reactions do not qualify as life-threatening
- Dog is currently prescribed immunosuppressive therapy for cancer or immune-mediated disease (low dose prednisone is not considered immunosuppressive therapy)
- Immune-mediated disease (such as IMHA), if:
 - Dog is still within first year after diagnosis, or
 - Onset was within one month of a rabies vaccination, or
 - More than one episode (i.e. relapses)
- Terminal prognosis - Life expectancy is three months or less in the opinion of presiding veterinarian.
- Short term exemptions (e.g. one-month exemption for recovery from acute illness)

Exemptions will not be approved in the following cases: Old age, minor reactions to rabies or other vaccinations, positive rabies titers, severe reaction to vaccinations other than rabies, medical condition is not documented, or no documentation submitted, illegible requests.

Submitting a Rabies Vaccination Exemption Request (**Forms + Medical Records + \$65 application fee**)

1. Owners and their private veterinarians must complete and submit the following forms:
 - a. State of California’s Rabies Vaccination Certificate – Exemption from Rabies Vaccination
 - b. County of Orange Supplemental Form for Canine Rabies Vaccination Exemption Requests
2. Submit up to 5 pages of medical records documenting the dog’s condition. Written letters from the presiding veterinarian will not be accepted in lieu of medical records.
3. Remit a \$65.00 annual non-refundable rabies exemption application processing fee to OC Animal Care.
**Application processing fee does not include the cost of a dog license. Contact your local animal control agency to obtain a dog license.
4. Owners will be notified of the results of their request by mail. Please contact our Rabies Control Department at (714) 796-6421 if you need assistance with a rabies vaccination exemption request.