



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
HEALTH SYSTEM - PUBLIC HEALTH

POLICY NUMBER 2012-201
SUBJECT: Rabies Vaccination Exemption Request Policy
AUTHORITY: John Conley, Director
DATE: July 25, 2012
SUPERSEDES: 2011-166

PURPOSE: To allow owners the option to request a rabies vaccine exemption from animal licensing for their pets based on the pet's health while still ensuring the health and safety of our citizens.

BACKGROUND: State and local ordinances require the licensing of all dogs (and cats in some cities) as a means of rabies control. In some instances, there may be a veterinary reason preventing the administration of the rabies vaccine due to the health of the animal. Over the past several years the process to request a rabies exemption for a pet has become cumbersome and time consuming for pet owners, veterinarians, Peninsula Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA), and County staff. Due to incomplete information, the cost of the rabies titer assessment, and difficulties processing the paperwork, it sometimes takes months to have an exemption approved or denied.

In 2012, the State implemented guidelines for rabies vaccination exemption requests to ensure uniformity throughout the state.

POLICY:

- Veterinarians shall submit packet requesting exemption to the Animal Control Program staff. The packet shall contain the following documents:
 - 1-page State of California "Rabies Vaccination Certificate- Exemption from Canine Rabies Vaccination" Form
 - 1-page SMC Rabies Vaccination Exemption Supplemental Request Form
 - Medical records relevant to the exemption request (no more than 5 pages)
- A microchip is required and the microchip number must be included in the "Rabies Vaccination Certificate".
- Staff will inform licensing contractor of the requests being processed and forward the requests to the PVMA Committee at a minimum of once every two months (odd months).
- PVMA Committee will convene to review the documents and recommend approval or denial.

- Recommendations will be forwarded to the Health Officer or his/her designee for review. PVMA Committee members will be contacted with questions or concerns.
- Staff will forward approvals and denials to the licensing contractor, PVMA Committee members, and the veterinarian submitting the request.
- The licensing contractor will forward the decision to the pet owner and follow up on vaccination information on an annual process.
- A new packet must be submitted each year if an exemption still necessary.
- The same process will apply to both dogs and cats (in applicable jurisdictions – feline rabies vaccination is mandated in, Brisbane, Belmont, Hillsborough, Millbrae, San Mateo, Redwood City, and unincorporated San Mateo County).
- When a rabies exemption is in the approval process or has been approved, the pet owner may only obtain a one-year license for the animal.
- All granted rabies exemptions will be forwarded to the California Department of Public Health Veterinary Public Health Section and a copy of the data submitted will be sent to the PVMA Committee.

This policy shall supersede the existing rabies vaccine exemption policy.

Approved: 7/25/12

History: 08/03/05
11/18/11