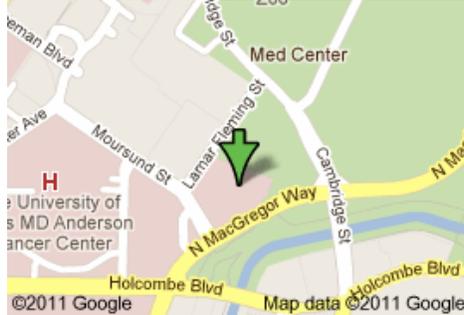


Houston Department of Health and Human Services Rabies Laboratory

The Houston Department of Health & Human Services (HDHHS) laboratory is the primary Rabies testing facility for Houston and several of its surrounding counties. Rabies specimens are accepted at the HDHHS main laboratory located at:

**1115 South Braeswood
Houston, TX 77030**



Specimens are routinely accepted between the hours of 8am – 5pm Monday through Friday. General questions regarding specimens, test/result status, or submission requirements can be directed to the Rabies laboratory at **713-558-3468**. Rabies submission forms can be found online at www.houstontx.gov by typing rabies submission form in the search box, or by copying and pasting the following link into your web browser.

www.houstontx.gov/health/Lab/Rabies%20Fillable%20Form.pdf

General:

- The laboratory must examine a **complete** cross section of the brain stem and either the cerebellum or hippocampus to be confident that adequate samples have been tested. If the animal head has been compromised due to trauma or decomposition, the laboratory may not be able to generate a valid result.
- Specimens shipped by bus are routinely picked up twice a day Monday through Friday.
- Specimens shipped by the various overnight services (Federal Express, UPS, etc.) are accepted by the laboratory in the same manner as specimens delivered by individuals. Please note, however, that these delivery services will not deliver the packages to the City of Houston Laboratory on weekends and holidays.

Acceptance criteria:

- The laboratory only accepts animal heads for testing, except for bats or small rodents. We request that bats and small rodents be submitted intact.
- Specimens should be kept cold with cold packs and packaged with absorbent material. If ice must be used, please double bag it in sturdy plastic bags. Also keep current weather conditions in mind when packing the specimen and provide enough cold packs to keep the specimens cold for at least 48 hours. *The specimens should not be frozen*
- Submission request slips should be packaged in a waterproof bag

Fee for Rabies testing is as follows:

Submitter	Fee for Rabies testing
Identified public animal control agencies (e.g. BARC, HCVPH) and surveillance.	No Charge
All priority 1* and priority 2** cases as identified by HDHHS epidemiology or medical professional	No Charge
All privately owned veterinary clinics that are not identified by HDHHS as priority 1*, or 2** cases	\$40
Private citizens that are not identified by HDHHS as priority 1*, or 2** cases	\$40

Prioritization of Specimens:

- The Rabies Section of the HDHHS laboratory will assess the urgency of test requests via the laboratory established case priority and/or approval by HDHHS epidemiology department

Priority 1* – Known Human Bite

Priority 2** – Known Human Exposure or Bat found inside residence

Priority 3 – Pet Exposure

Priority 4 – Other

- All Priority 1 specimens will be tested in-house within 24 hours of arrival of normal business operation
- Priority 2 specimens will be tested within 48 hours of arrival unless otherwise indicated by a medical professional
- Priority levels 3 and 4 will be tested within 72 hours of arrival to the laboratory
- Decomposed and destroyed specimens are not tested and are reported as decomposed or destroyed.
- Each specimen should be accompanied by an HDHHS request for Rabies Testing form.
- The HDHHS Rabies laboratory recognizes all City of Houston approved holidays and does not routinely operate on said holidays.

Please Note: Approximately two percent of specimens appear suspicious on primary testing and can not be conclusively reported positive or negative. These specimens must be repeated. This will delay reports on these specimens until 5:00 p.m. on specimens normally reported by noon or until the next morning on specimens normally reported by 5:00 p.m.

Emergency Testing of Rabies Specimens

- The HDHHS Rabies laboratory has provisions in place to accommodate needs for “emergency testing”
- Emergency tests on known human bite cases will be performed at the request of medical professionals, veterinarians, and epidemiologists upon approval by the Bureau Chief and/or Virology supervisor
- The requesting agency should contact the Bureau Chief or the Virology Supervisor
Bureau Chief of Laboratory Services: Vern.juchau@houstontx.gov
Virology Supervisor: Cynthia.turner@houstontx.gov
- Emergency tests will be performed within 8 hours of arrival when advised by a medical professional or Epidemiologist

Please Note: In the event that specimens are sent to the State Health Department please see contact information below.

DSHS:

Texas Department of State Health Services Rabies Identification Team:

Attn: Letha Zuckero,

1100 W 49th Street,

Austin, TX 78756.

Tele # (512) 458-7595

http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lab/rab_testing

If you are going to ship a specimen, you must notify the Laboratory using the Rabies Hotline: **(800) 252-8163**

This Laboratory accepts rabies specimens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.