



**Department of Environment  
PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6  
Animal Health Unit**

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## **Rabies risk from dogs originating in the Northwest Territories**

A statement from Yukon's Chief Veterinary Officer, Animal Health Unit, Government of Yukon

**We recommend that humane societies, shelters and rescues do not receive dogs from Tuktoyaktuk.** Rabies is endemic in wildlife in the Beaufort delta and infected foxes have spread rabies to dogs in Tuktoyaktuk this year. Last month, a dog deemed to be high risk for rabies arrived here and though rabies was not confirmed, the human exposure raised public health concerns.

**You can reduce your liability and the risk of rabies for your staff and clients by:**

- Asking for proof of rabies vaccination linked to the dog's permanent identification.
- Not accepting dogs for re-homing from areas where rabies is endemic unless they were vaccinated for rabies more than six months before.
- Ensuring that all staff who work with animals are vaccinated, and have their titres confirmed to be adequate.

**Situation in the Yukon:**

- The rabies risk in the Yukon is believed to be low, but outbreaks occur regularly in neighbouring Alaska, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
- Rabies was last confirmed in the Yukon in the 1970's, but may be under reported because there are few encounters between wild and domestic animals here.
- Rabies could be spread through the natural or human assisted movement of healthy appearing animals, wild or domestic.
- Quarantine of potentially exposed animals is not a viable option to reduce risk of rabies because it can take up to six months for a dog infected by a bite to show signs of illness.

Questions: Contact the Animal Health Unit at [animalhealth@yukon.ca](mailto:animalhealth@yukon.ca) for further information.

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