

## **Rabies Vaccination Exemptions**

Vermont law, 20 VSA § 3581(d), provides that “[b]efore obtaining a license for a dog or wolf-hybrid six months of age or older, a person shall deliver to the municipal clerk a certificate or a certified copy thereof signed by a duly licensed veterinarian, stating that the dog or wolf-hybrid has received a current preexposure rabies vaccination with a vaccine approved by the commissioner [of agriculture]...”

Although the Commissioner of Agriculture has, by rule, approved certain vaccines, the Commissioner has also adopted a rule providing that no vaccine needs to be administered to a dog or wolf-hybrid if “in the judgment of the veterinarian, the animal’s medical condition would prevent the development of adequate immunity to rabies.” Usually these animals are very old and sick dogs or dogs that have suffered a life-threatening adverse rabies vaccine reaction. In such cases, the municipal clerk should issue a license upon receiving a certificate or a certified copy thereof signed by a duly licensed veterinarian, stating that the animal’s medical condition exempts the animal from vaccination.

Should a licensed but unvaccinated dog bite someone, the dog must be observed for ten (10) days to rule out rabies. The Department of Health will work closely with municipal officials in such situations.

If you have any questions about the above, please contact the Department of Health at (802) 863-7242 or the Department of Agriculture at (802) 828-3434.