# Chelan-Douglas Health District

200 Valley Mall Parkway, East Wenatchee, WA 98802


| FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | News Release 2026-06 | October 1, 2026 |
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## Rabies Positive Bat Found in Chelan County

East Wenatchee, WA – Chelan-Douglas Health District (CDHD) confirms that a bat found outside a residence in Chelan County and submitted to the Washington State Public Health Laboratories (WAPHL) for testing was confirmed to be positive for rabies on September 29, 2026. A human and their pet had direct contact with the bat and were referred to medical providers for preventive treatment against rabies. CDHD is coordinating closely with the Department of Health and implementing all appropriate response measures.

We would like to take this as an opportunity to remind the public to avoid contact with wildlife, particularly bats, as they can carry rabies, a fatal disease. Rabies is a fatal disease in both people and animals, but it can be prevented with prompt, appropriate medical care and treatment before any symptoms develop. Rabies virus is found in an infected animal's saliva and brain tissue. It is usually spread to people by animal bites or scratches. CDHD would like to share important precautions to take when encountering bats or other wild animals:

1) **Avoid Direct Contact:**
   **Never touch or handle bats or other wild animals directly**, even if they are dead**.** If you find a bat on the ground or in your home, do not attempt to pick it up. Teach children not to touch or handle bats or other wild animals.
   Have children tell an adult if they find a bat at home, at school, or with a pet.
2) **Maintain a safe distance.** Observe bats from a distance to appreciate their natural behavior without putting yourself at risk. **Secure Your Home:**
   **Seal entry points.** Check and seal your home for any gaps or holes where bats might enter, such as chimneys, vents, or attic spaces. The Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife provides more information on how to keep bats out of your home.
3) **If bitten, scratched, or concerned about contact with a bat:**
   If you are bitten or scratched by a bat, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and running water for at least 10 minutes and seek medical attention as soon as possible. If the bat is available for testing, testing can help prevent the need for medication to prevent rabies if the animal tests negative. Call Chelan-Douglas Health District if you had any direct contact with a bat or other potentially rabid animal or were bitten or scratched by a potentially rabid animal to discuss the potential for rabies exposure and the need for animal testing and/or rabies prevention treatment.
4) If you find a bat in your living space, call Chelan-Douglas Health District at (**509) 886-6400** so that we can help determine if the bat needs to be tested for rabies. Never handle a bat with bare hands and only capture bats that have had direct contact with a person or pet or bats found in the room

with a person or pet who may have had contact with it. Public Health will advise you on how to safely capture a bat if it needs to be tested for rabies.

Additionally, it is required by Washington State Law (WAC 246-100-197) to keep your dogs, cats, and ferrets up-to-date with the rabies vaccine. Protect your pets by getting them vaccinated against rabies on a schedule recommended by a veterinarian. Contact your local veterinarian immediately if you believe your pet was in contact with a bat. Dogs, cats, ferrets, and horses will need to be revaccinated if they could have been exposed to rabies virus.

Bats are important to our ecosystem because they can help control insect populations. To learn more about bats, the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife has a webpage on Living with wildlife: Bats | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. Visit Rabies Activity in Washington | Washington State Department of Health if you would like to learn more about rabies activity in Washington. Chelan-Douglas Public Health has information about rabies here.

For more public health updates, visit www.cdhd.wa.gov and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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