



Dickinson County

818 Pyle Drive, Kingsford, MI 49802
Ph: (906) 774-1868 Fax: (906) 774-9910
BRANCH OFFICE

www.didhd.org

Iron County

601 Washington Avenue, Iron River, MI 49935
Ph: (906) 265-9913 Fax: (906) 265-2950
MAIN OFFICE

News Release

Contact: Daren Deyaert, Environmental Health Director
Phone: 906-779-7231
Email: ddeyaert@hline.org

Immediate Release

Reduce Risk of Exposure to Bats

Kingsford, Michigan – May 1, 2014. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department wants to remind the community that, while bats are associated with Halloween and scary movies, they provide a useful service in controlling the insect population. Bats can also be carriers of rabies and other diseases that can put our families and pets at risk. It's important to know what to do to reduce the risk of coming into contact with a bat and what to do if there is one in your living quarters.

Reducing Exposure to Bats Outdoors

Some bats roost in tree cavities or foliage, and might be spotted in areas where outdoor activities take place, such as hiking or camping. While there have been instances of humans exposed to rabid bats, most bats in a natural setting are not rabid and, in many outdoor situations, the presence or sighting of bats is common and normal. When possible, prevent bats from entering outdoor living quarters and other occupied spaces.

- Screens or mosquito netting can provide a useful barrier against direct bat contact.
- Teach children never to handle live or dead bats, as well as any unfamiliar wild or domestic animals (even if they appear friendly).
- In some settings, materials contaminated with bat droppings may have to be disposed of or decontaminated. Clean-up of areas contaminated with bat droppings should not be attempted by non-trained personnel, and proper personal protective equipment (PPE), including respirator, mask, gown, and gloves, should be worn by anyone handling the potentially infectious material.

-More-

Reducing Exposure to Bats Indoors

Some bats live in buildings, and may continue to do so with little risk to inhabitants if they are unable to access living areas and the chance of contact with people is low. However, bats should always be prevented from entering rooms of your home. Bat proofing your home or living quarters can prevent them from entering.

If you choose to "bat-proof" your home, here are some suggestions:

- Carefully examine your home for holes that might allow bats entry into your living quarters.
- Any openings larger than a quarter-inch by a half-inch should be caulked.
- Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics.
- Fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking.
- Ensure that all doors to the outside close tightly.

If a bat is present in your home, here are some considerations:

- It may be important to capture the bat for rabies testing, especially if a potential bite or exposure has occurred.
- Put on leather work gloves
- Gather the following supplies: small box or coffee can, piece of cardboard, and tape
- When the bat lands, approach it slowly, while wearing the gloves, and place the box or coffee can over it.
- Slide the cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside.
- Tape the cardboard to the container securely, and punch small holes in the cardboard, allowing the bat to breathe.

If a bat is found in a room with a sleeping child, an intoxicated person, or a sound sleeper, the bat should be tested. Also a bat that has been killed by a pet or found in a room with a pet should also be tested. If a bite or exposure to saliva (e.g., into a person's mouth, eyes, or a fresh wound) has occurred, you will need to contact the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at the numbers below to arrange for rabies testing of the bat. If no potential exposure has occurred, the bat can be safely released outside.

For more information about bats, please call the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at (960)779-7239 or (906)265-4172 or visit the CDC website at **[CDC.gov/features/bats](https://www.cdc.gov/features/bats)**.

###