



Countywide Services Agency

Department of
Health and Human Services

Division of Public Health

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NEWS RELEASE

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**RESIDENTS URGED TO AVOID OUTDOOR FEEDING OF ANIMALS AFTER
RACCOON ATTACKS IN DOWNTOWN SACRAMENTO**

SACRAMENTO – Two residents of downtown Sacramento were attacked by a raccoon in the last week, a rare occurrence that has city and county officials asking residents to avoid leaving food outdoors and to not feed stray or wild animals. The attacks occurred on residents walking their dogs near 9th and P and 4th and P streets, respectively. The Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health has recommended rabies prevention treatment for both individuals.

Aggressive behavior by raccoons is not typical, and it's reasonable to assume the raccoon has rabies, said County Health Officer Glennah Trochet, MD.

"Raccoons, skunks and other wild animals are drawn to populated areas when food is available. These animals carry rabies and should not be in contact with humans," said Trochet.

"It is vital that residents not leave food outdoors, especially overnight. If it is absolutely necessary to feed pets outside, remove food as soon as the animal finishes eating."

The Sacramento Animal Care Services enforcement team has set traps in both of the areas in which the raccoon attacks occurred, said Gina Knepp, Public Information Officer for Sacramento Animal Care Services. Traps are being checked throughout the day.

The following are actions residents can take to assist:

- Pet owners are encouraged to vaccinate all pets against rabies.
- Refrain from feeding wildlife and stray animals anywhere.
- Be alert to all wildlife in the area and immediately report unusual behavior by dialing 311 or 264-5011.
- It is recommended that for the time being, people walking their pets downtown should do so earlier in the evening, when there is more human activity.
- Make sure to put lids on garbage cans and to remove table scraps to discourage foraging.

Animal Control officers believe one raccoon is responsible for both incidents. If the raccoon is carrying active rabies it is expected to die within days.

The raccoon attack follows an incident where a skunk chased individuals inside a parking garage near 4th and J streets. The skunk chased a passerby and an Animal Care Services officer attempting to capture it. The skunk later tested positive for rabies in the Sacramento County Public Health Laboratory.

Three other skunks have since been captured. These tested negative for rabies.

“It is important for the safety of the community that we take measures to discourage wild animals from inhabiting urban areas,” said Trochet. “Removing possible food sources is a very effective way to do this.”

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