

RABIES LAW FAQ

1. What is the new law in Colorado?

There was a recent change to the Colorado Veterinary Practice Act (CRS 12-315-105(q)) updating the requirements for the administration of rabies vaccinations in animal shelters. The new language, which is reflective of the national standards set in the National Compendium on Rabies, allows rabies vaccinations to be administered under the *indirect supervision* of a licensed veterinarian in shelters and rescues.

2. Why were these changes made?

Rabies vaccinations are vital for the health and well-being of our animals and community. Requiring a licensed veterinarian to administer rabies vaccinations makes it very challenging for animal shelters to vaccinate all of their animals in a timely manner and avoid the spread of this dangerous disease.

Changing the law to allow rabies vaccinations to be administered under the indirect supervision of a licensed veterinarian allows shelters to efficiently and effectively vaccinate the animals in their care, while also maintaining access to the medical expertise of a licensed veterinarian.

3. When did it go into effect?

The state-level rabies changes became official 90 days after the end of the 2022 legislative session, which is August 10th, 2022.

4. How does this relate to local rabies law?

It is unclear what would happen if the state and local laws conflict on rabies vaccine administration. That is why it may be a good idea to update your local laws to reflect these changes to state law.

5. What is the definition indirect supervision?

“Indirect supervision” means supervision in which the supervising licensed veterinarian directs or supervises the authorized delegated treatment or collection of diagnostic information of a patient at veterinary premises without being on the premises but being readily available for communication (CRS 12-315-104(10.5)).

6. How does this relate to the CDPHE law relating to rabies vaccinations in emergencies?

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment law states in CRS 25-4-607 (1)(a) “*When it is deemed advisable in the interest of public health and safety*, the board of health of an organized health department or a county board of health may order that all dogs, cats, other pet animals, or other mammals in the county or district be vaccinated against rabies, such vaccination to be performed by a licensed veterinarian.”

The application of this statute is typically reserved for emergency public health situations (such as a rabies outbreak) and is different from the statute applied by the Veterinary Practice Act to every day vaccination requirements.