

How to bat-proof your home

- Carefully examine your house for holes that might allow bats entry into your living quarters. Caulk any openings larger than this $\frac{1}{4}$ by $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (0.5 by 1.0 cm).
- Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics.
- Fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking.
- Make sure that all doors to the outside close tightly.



How to get rid of bats roosting in attics and buildings

Cover outside entry points to prevent bats from returning, but wait until the young can fly (September or later).

- Watch where the bats exit at dusk.
- Cover these areas with loosely hanging clear plastic sheeting or bird netting. Bats will be able to crawl out and leave, but cannot re-enter.
- Once you are sure that all bats have left the building, permanently seal the openings.

About seasons and bat-proofing

During summer, young bats can't fly. If you prevent adult bats from returning to their roost from May through August, the young may be trapped inside. They may die or make their way into living quarters. Wait until September, after the young are flying, to exclude bats. Most bats leave in the fall or winter to hibernate, so late fall through early spring are the best times to bat-proof your home or cottage.

How to safely free a bat from your home

If you find a bat in your home or cottage and no one has been in contact with it, safely encourage it to leave.

- Remove everyone from the room.
- Open windows and doors that lead outside.
- Turn the lights off.
- Leave the room and close the door .

The bat should leave on its own at dusk. If not, capture the bat as described above. Release it outdoors, away from people and pets, if it appears healthy.

If it doesn't leave the room, has difficulty flying, or appears sick, call your local Public Health Services office.

Learn more about bats

- To learn more about bats, bat-proofing, and the risks and benefits of bats, visit these websites:
- www.batcon.org/ click on link "Bats & People"
 - www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/nuisance/bats.asp
 - www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats/index.html

Learn more about rabies

Contact your local Public Health Services office or the provincial Department of Natural Resources, or visit the Nova Scotia Health and Wellness website at www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/cdpc/rabies.asp.

Public Health Services offices:

Amherst.....	667-3319 or 1-800-767-3319
Antigonish.....	867-4500 Ext 4800
Bridgewater.....	543-0850
Dartmouth.....	481-5800
New Glasgow.....	752-5151
Sydney.....	563-2400
Truro.....	893-5820
Wolfville.....	542-6310
Yarmouth.....	742-7141

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Bats & Rabies



What is rabies?

Rabies is a serious disease of mammals that can be passed to humans. Rabies in humans is rare in Canada, but left untreated it is almost always fatal. Three people have died of rabies in Canada from 1998 to 2010.

What causes rabies?

A virus causes rabies. It can affect any mammal — humans, pets, farm animals, and wild animals. The virus is most commonly passed on through the bite of an infected animal. The virus lives in saliva and brain tissue. It is also possible to get the virus if saliva or brain tissue from an infected animal enters through the eyes, nose, mouth, or broken skin.

You cannot catch rabies through contact with blood, feces (poop), urine (pee), or by being sprayed by a skunk. You cannot catch rabies by touching the fur of an infected animal or seeing a bat in your home or a cave. It must be close contact with saliva or brain tissue.

How to prevent rabies

- Teach children never to handle animals they don't know, even if the animal appears friendly. This includes pets, farm animals, and wild animals. "Love your own, leave other animals alone" is a good safety rule.
- Capture and save bats for rabies testing, if someone was in direct contact with it — a bat has landed on or touched someone.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, cottages, churches, schools, and other areas where they might have contact with people or pets.

- Keep vaccinations current for dogs, cats, and ferrets. Keep cats and ferrets inside and dogs under direct supervision. Call animal control to remove stray animals from your neighbourhood.

Bats and rabies

Across Canada, about 255 animals are found to have rabies each year. Most cases are found in wild animals, especially bats, skunks, raccoons, and foxes. Some cases are found in farm animals, most commonly cows and horses. Some cases are found in pets, especially dogs and cats. The source of all rabies in Nova Scotia is believed to be bats. This means that any animal with rabies was likely bitten by an infected bat. Small rodents and rabbits can get rabies, but we have no evidence that they ever pass it to humans.

Bats are beneficial

Bats are an important part of our natural environment, so never kill one needlessly. They can eat their weight in insects each night. Worldwide, they are a major predator of night flying insects, including pests that cost farmers billions of dollars each year. In the tropics, they play a vital role in rain forest survival, dispersing seeds and pollinating plants. Studies of bats have contributed to medical advances, including navigational aids for the blind. Many local populations of bats have been destroyed around the world and many species are endangered, mainly due to human activity.

How can I tell if a bat has rabies?

Rabies in bats can be confirmed only in a laboratory. However, any bat that is active by day, is found in a place where bats are not usually seen (such as on the lawn) or is unable to fly, is far more likely than others to have rabies. Such bats are often the most easily approached. Therefore, it is best never to touch a bat. Bats found in rooms of your home are usually present by accident.

What should I do if I come into contact with a bat?

Did the bat land on you or touch you? You can only be bitten by a bat if it has landed on or touched you. A bite may leave small marks that are hard to see.

If you are bitten by a bat or if saliva or brain tissue from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound

- Wash the affected area thoroughly.
- Contact your local Public Health Services office promptly.
- Capture the bat and keep it until Public Health Services can determine if the bat needs to be tested for rabies.

There are instructions on how to safely capture a bat on the next panel.

What should I do if my pet is exposed to a bat?

If you think a pet has been bitten by a bat, contact a veterinarian. Keep vaccinations current for cats, dogs, and other animals.

How to safely capture a bat for testing

- Close doors and windows to trap the bat in one room.
- Find the following things:
 - leather work gloves
 - small box or an empty coffee can
 - piece of cardboard
 - tape
- Put on leather work gloves.
- Approach the bat slowly and place the box or can over it.
- Slide the cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside.
- Tape the cardboard to the container securely and punch small air holes in the cardboard.
- Contact Public Health Services to determine if testing is necessary.
- Call a private pest control company if you prefer to hire someone to capture the bat for you.

If the bat is dead, use gloves to pick it up. Keep the bat in a clean can or box, in a cool area or freezer, until Public Health Services can arrange for it to be picked up.

How can I keep bats out of my home or cottage?

Some bats live in buildings and there may be no reason to evict them if there is little chance for contact with people. However, bats should always be prevented from entering rooms of your home.

See "How to bat-proof your home" for information on how to do this yourself. You can also hire a private pest control service to bat-proof for you.