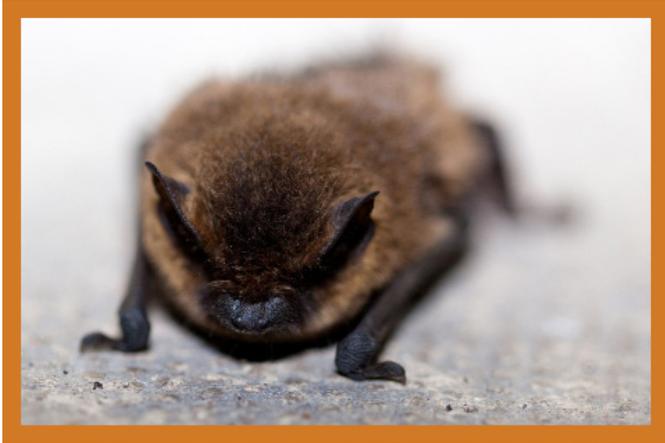


# Bats and Rabies



## About Bats

Bats are small, flying mammals. They feed on insects at night and spend the day at rest, hanging upside-down. During winter, bats may hibernate in large groups.

Bats are a natural part of our ecosystem. In the Bay Area, we have 16 species of native bats, most of which are rarely seen and do not cause nuisance or harm to humans. However, bats and other mammals have the potential to transmit disease or cause property damage when they enter structures.

## Preventing Rabies Infections

Rabies is a virus that infects mammals, including bats and other wildlife. Not all bats are infected with rabies, but bats pose a serious risk because they are so small that it is possible to be bitten by a bat without realizing it. You should avoid contact with bats, and NEVER handle a live or dead bat with your bare hands.

Human rabies infections are almost always fatal if not treated promptly. Once symptoms begin, it is already too late. Any person who has been bitten or scratched by a bat or other wild animal should consult a healthcare provider as soon as possible.

If you have been exposed to rabies, your medical provider may recommend you get vaccinated for rabies. The human rabies vaccine is a series of four injections given in the arm, similar to getting a flu shot.

## Bats Inside Homes

Sometimes bats accidentally find their way inside homes or other buildings. They will often leave on their own if provided an open window or door. Close doors to other areas of the home and give the bat a chance to leave.

If the bat can't or won't fly out on its own, wait until it lands before trying to contain it. NEVER handle a live or dead bat with your bare hands. Wear sturdy leather work gloves to place a container over the bat, then carefully slide a piece of cardboard underneath to trap the bat. Release the bat outside away from children and pets.

**If you have had any contact with a bat - even if you do not believe you were bitten or scratched - or if you wake up in a room with a bat, it is important to seek medical attention promptly.**



### **Bats and Mosquitoes**

You might have heard that bats can help control mosquito populations. Unfortunately, this isn't true. While bats do eat mosquitoes, they also eat many other kinds of insects, like moths, beetles, and wasps. In fact, mosquitoes only make up a small fraction of a bat's diet. This isn't enough to control mosquito populations in an area.

### **Removing Bats from Attics**

Bats leave their roost every night to feed. The best way to remove bats from a structure is to wait until they exit on their own, then prevent them from getting back in. This is called 'exclusion', and should never be done during the summer months when bats are raising their young.

Locate where bats are entering and exiting the structure, and install a piece of window screen over the hole. Leave it open at the bottom so bats can find their way out, but secure the other three sides to prevent them getting in. If there are other entrances to your structure, you **MUST** close them first to prevent bats from re-entering.

Leave the screen up for about a week, or until you are sure all bats are gone. Trapping bats inside may result in them entering other areas of the home as they look for an exit. Once all bats are gone, you can remove the screen and permanently close the entrance.



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### **Legal Status of Bats**

Bats and other wildlife are a natural part of our environment. They are protected by both state and federal laws.

In California, property owners may legally remove bats from structures. It is illegal to capture or kill bats for any other reason without a permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. If you choose to hire a professional to remove bats from your home or other structure, ensure that they are licensed and comply with applicable laws.

### **How We Can Help**

If you believe you have bats inside a structure, a San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District technician can inspect your property and provide recommendations for wildlife exclusion and control.

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District technicians are not able to provide trapping or wildlife exclusion on private property. If you need these services, please contact a qualified pest control operator.

## **San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District**

**(650) 344 - 8592**  
**1351 Rollins Road**  
**Burlingame, CA 94010**

**Monday-Friday**  
**8a.m. to 4:30p.m.**

**[www.smcmvcd.org](http://www.smcmvcd.org)**