

Fact Sheet for Bat Habitat Inspection and Batproofing in Childrens' Camps

Camps are usually located in areas that are prime habitat for bats and other wildlife, and the type of construction in camp buildings is often conducive to roosting bats. Bats are frequently encountered in the camp setting. If people are sleeping in cabins with bats, or children are handling bats found on the ground, rabies exposures can occur. Bats that are infected with rabies are often mistaken for injured animals when they are found flopping around on the ground. Abnormal behavior seen in rabid bats includes being on the ground, landing on someone, and flying during the day. Occasionally, there is no obvious abnormal behavior, so all contact with bats and other wild animals should be reported to the camp nurse.

Inspections for making decisions about which cabins will be used for sleeping should take place every spring before the camp opens. Inspections should include:

- inspecting attic space, rafters, porches, and walls for signs of roosting bats, such as bat guano and crystallized urine, or a musty odor
- looking for openings through which bats could get into sleeping quarters, such as openings larger than 1/2 inch by 1/2 inch and long thin slots larger than 1/4 inch by 2 inches
- not allowing cabins with evidence of bat roosts to be used as sleeping quarters until they have been batproofed

Camp buildings and cabins, particularly those used as sleeping quarters, should be **batproofed**:

- do not batproof buildings during the period from late May to mid-August, to avoid trapping baby bats inside the building
- seal openings larger than 1/2 inch by 1/2 inch, or long thin slots larger than 1/4 inch by 2 inches
- use materials such as expanding spray-on foam, caulk, wire mesh, wood that fits tightly, steel wool (around pipes that enter buildings) etc., to seal gaps and holes.
- make sure windows have screens, chimneys are capped, and electrical and plumbing openings are plugged

For questions on inspections or batproofing, please contact your local health department for more information.