

Rabies Testing

Rabies testing consists of examining the brain samples of animals microscopically to determine if the rabies virus is present. There are two ADPH Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) in the state that perform testing, located in Montgomery and Mobile. Specimens for testing should be dropped off at the local county health department (CHD). The CHD is responsible for forwarding the specimen to the appropriate ADPH BCL testing laboratory. A list of size and weight restrictions and packaging requirements is included in the following section, Rabies Specimen Acceptance. Routinely, most county health departments ship the specimens late in the day, but it is best to check with the local CHD to determine cut-off times for same day shipment.

For larger veterinary species, including cows and horses, specimens will need to be sent to Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI), Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for specimen preparation before being sent to the ADPH BCL testing laboratory. The CHD should be contacted before sending a sample to the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to insure proper tracking and documentation is recorded.