

Rabies Threatens Tayside

Department of Health officials have announced a state of emergency has been declared in Tayside following confirmation that rabies is present in the district. The dreaded disease has already affected two farm workers in the Crombie Mill area, and two days ago a teenager was infected in a savage attack by a rabid dog at Crombie Country Park.

An animal curfew is now in effect in the area bounded by Dundee, Forfar and Arbroath ([see map](#)).

- All dogs must be kept on a leash when outdoors.
- Anyone living within 5 miles of Crombie Mill (on the B961) must muzzle their dogs.
- Anyone living within 5 miles of Crombie Mill must keep their cats indoors.
- Police and Health officials have the power to confiscate dogs and cats and to impose fines on any owners who violate the restrictions.
- Stray animals will be rounded up and put down.

Until the source of the infection is traced, police are warning people not to approach any cats or dogs, no matter how healthy or friendly they seem.

Rabies is a viral infection transmitted by saliva. Animal bites are the most common method of catching the disease. Symptoms include convulsions, partial paralysis and fear of water. It can be carried by any warm blooded animal. If infected, symptoms can take from 10 days to several months to develop - hence the lengthy quarantine when bringing cats and dogs into the UK. A vaccine and antiserum can sometimes prevent the disease developing if victims receive treatment early enough.

Scotland's Environmental & Rural Services department (SEARS) is operating closely with the Department of Health and the SSPCA in a programme of fox and badger eradication, in an attempt to prevent the disease being spread by wild animals. Farm and feral cats may also be targetted. Experts in rabies control from the University of Bristol and from France are expected to join the campaign soon. An [information line](#) is available.

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