

Effective Date: April 1, 2022

Replaces: New

INTENT:

To outline policy and procedures for handling, capture, exclusion and removal of bats from any building or other structures where they pose a physical or health risk to individuals or present a significant impediment to building use.

The Bat Exclusion Policy is intended to inform pest control companies, businesses, and the public as to who may interact with bats and associated procedures and requirements.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE:

- Several bat species are regarded as Species of Conservation Concern (SOCC), including those that are federally listed under the *Species At Risk Act (SARA)*.
- Bats are neither rodents nor considered pests under Saskatchewan law.
- Bats are ‘protected wildlife’ under the Saskatchewan *Wildlife Act*. As such, bats, and their place of habitation are protected from interference, harassment and killing.
- Bats provide significant economic benefits to society yet are becoming more at risk because of White-nose Syndrome and other threats. Extra care should be taken to maintain the populations and distributions of these species.
- The province has neither the capacity nor the desire to create the capacity to rehabilitate all the bats from a large hibernaculum. The risks and capacity to rehabilitate all the bats from a large hibernaculum is considered unacceptable.
- The mere presence of bats does not necessitate their removal. If there is little chance for contact with people and if they do not impede use of the building, there is no need to remove them.
- Wildlife control operators entering summer roosts can potentially pick up *Pseudogymnoascus destructans (P.d.)* - the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome in bats - spores from one roost and translocate these to another roost. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and decontamination are important for minimizing the spread of *P.d.*
- Susceptibility of Saskatchewan bats species to SARS-CoV-2 is not known at this time. Thus, PPE must be worn to prevent transmission of the virus to wild bat populations.

POLICY:

- A. Bat exclusion from maternity/summer colony site:
1. Permittees may exclude bats from a residence or other structure not on federal property provided they do not cause individual death. An exclusion cannot be installed where individuals are trapped causing their death. The area cannot be in active use by females and their pups.
 2. A mandatory Bat Exclusion Permit must be acquired from the [Ministry of Environment](#) prior to any control effort.
 - i. When a federal permit is required, one may be obtained at (<https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/SPLEP-SARAPS/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.main&lang=En>).

- ii. All permit conditions must be followed.
3. Bat exclusions may be installed/applied between May 1 and May 31 and/or between September 1 and September 30.
 - i. Neither bat exclusions nor live animal removal will be permitted from June 1 to August 30 inclusive, when dependent pups are present.
 - ii. Non-invasive preparatory work (i.e., reconnaissance) can occur outside this window of time.
 - iii. Bat exclusion is a two-step process:
 - (1) Initial bat exclusions must be made of material and/or construction such that bats may have egress from a site but cannot enter the site (one-way exit).
 - (2) Permanent bat exclusions may involve the permanent sealing of entrance points to the site after it is determined there are no longer any bats occupying the roost. These may occur at any time of the year.
 - iv. One-way exits should be left in place for a minimum of five to seven nights, including at least three consecutive nights of weather conducive to bat flight (i.e., temperature above 10°C, winds below 16 km/hr. and no sustained heavy rains) before they are removed and sealed. The devices should only be removed once it is verified that no bats remain inside the roost.
- B. Bat removal from winter hibernacula inside any building or other structures
1. Removal of live bats from winter hibernacula (October 1 through April 30 inclusive) is not authorized/permited.
 2. Bat exclusions may be installed/applied between May 1 and May 31 and/or between September 1 and September 30.
- C. Live bat removal from a residence:
1. Bats can sometimes come into the house through open doors, windows and through small openings which are not fully sealed (e.g., where a pipe enters the house).
 2. Live bats may be removed from the living area of a residence (rooms in which people generally reside) without a permit following Ministry Standard Operating Procedures.
- D. Dead bat removal:
1. If you find a dead bat, put it in a plastic bag without touching the bat.
 2. Add a piece of paper with your contact information as well as the date, time and location of collection.
 3. Freeze the specimen (standard freezer) or deliver immediately to either:
 - i. the nearest [Ministry of Environment Field Office that provides front counter service](#)
 - ii. the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC).

Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative
Western College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Saskatchewan
52 Campus Drive
SASKATOON SK S7N 5B4
 4. Wash your hands after handling the bat.

DEFINITIONS:

Species of Conservation Concern (SOCC) include: species identified in Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA); and/or are recognized as being at risk by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC); species listed in the provincial [Wild Species at Risk Regulations](#), species listed by the [SKCDC](#) as S1,S2, SH and SX and other species contained in the [Activity Restriction Guidelines \(ARGs\)](#).

PROCEDURES:

*If you are bitten or suspect you may have been bitten by a bat, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

*Rabies pre-exposure vaccination is recommended for pest-control operators involved in bat exclusion activities.

APPENDICES:

Standard Conditions

1. The Permittee must be prepared to show this permit to any law enforcement or wildlife officer.
2. This permit is valid providing the Permittee is acting in response to a complaint of bats in an occupied building.
3. All conditions of the *Wildlife Act* and regulations shall apply except those specifically stated in this permit.
4. The permit holder shall be wholly responsible for any liability and agree to absolve the Ministry of any liability in respect to the use of this permit.
5. This permit must be returned to the issuing office of Compliance and Field Services office within 10 days of expiring, stating the location of any enclosure events.
6. Any dead bats collected must be frozen and immediately submitted to either the nearest Ministry of Environment Field Office that provides front counter service or the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative. Copies of submission records shall be provided to Ministry employees upon request.
7. To minimize risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to wildlife, the following conditions must be met:
 - a. Persons entering roosts, handling bats or installing exclusion devices shall use the following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all times:
 - i. disposable nitrile gloves when handling animals or equipment that will be used on animals.
 - ii. long-sleeved disposable or washable coveralls.
 - iii. surgical or N95 masks designed to filter exhaled particles. Standard N95 respirators or other respirators with exhalation valves are designed to protect the wearer and are not appropriate.
 - iv. face shields and/or goggles, when there is a risk of splashing or spraying, or when working in close proximity (less than 2 meters) from wildlife.
 - b. Outer clothing and boots must be changed or decontaminated between field sites or roosts. If transported, any contaminated clothing or equipment must be contained during transport.
 - c. All reusable equipment that has been in direct contact with animals must be disinfected between uses with a solution containing at least 70% ethanol or disinfectant effective

- against SARS-CoV-2 (e.g., 10% bleach, 60% isopropanol, 3% hydrogen peroxide wipes, Clorox® wipes, Accel®, Lysol® quaternary disinfectant, Virkon®, Prevail™, Microban™).
- d. Apply proper hand and respiratory hygiene practices including washing and disinfecting hands frequently, including before and after handling animals.
 - e. All personnel using PPE must be properly trained and certified in its use.
 - f. Limit access by non-essential personnel.
 - g. Animals captured from a residence shall be released at or near the site of capture.
 - h. Excrement shall be bagged in disposable garbage bags and disposed of in household waste.

Permit Specific Conditions

1. Exclusion activities are only permitted from May 1 to 31 and September 1 to 30. Non-invasive preparatory work is permitted outside of these time periods.
2. Temporary exclusion devices shall be left in place for a minimum of five to seven nights, including at least three consecutive nights of weather conducive to bat flight (temperature above 10°C, winds below 16 km/hr., and no sustained heavy rains) before they are removed and sealed.
3. Licence holder must verify no bats remain in roost prior to permanently sealing entrances.
4. Permit does not authorize the removal of bats from winter hibernaculum.
5. Pest control operators must be familiar with and follow the [Canadian National White-nose Decontamination Protocol](#) including the following biosecurity practices:
 - Operators must change and contain the outer-most layer of clothing (for decontamination) between trapping/roost sites. Alternatively, disposable overalls can be used.
 - Any disposable items (e.g., gloves) may only be used on bats from a single roost site and properly disposed of after use.
 - Re-usable materials (e.g., headlamps, storage containers, coveralls, vacuums, boots, one-way tubes) must be cleaned and fully decontaminated before moving to another roost or trapping site, using the most appropriate applications listed in the CWHC Protocol.
 - If any animals show signs of white-nose syndrome infection or unusual wing damage during winter or spring, the CWHC must be contacted for additional information and instructions for potential submission of diagnostic samples for testing.
6. Pest Control Companies that specialize in bat exclusion and businesses that routinely exclude bats from their facilities must submit a [Loadform](#) and brief narrative summary describing results and any deviations from the SOP.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

1. Legislative Reference/Authority:
The Wildlife Act (1998) Section 83(1) gg and hh as well as The Wildlife Regulations (1981) Section 6(1) and 6(2) regulate capture or destruction of wildlife and the Director's authority to issue permits on this matter.

2. Permits/Forms:

- Nuisance Wildlife Permit
- Species at Risk Permit
 - (<https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/SPLEP-SARAPS/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.main&lang=En>)
- Optional: Permit Conditions

3. Related Policies:

List any related policy (hyperlink to document if accessible to policy users).

4. Prepared by/Contact: Jeff Keith

BRANCH: Fish, Wildlife and Lands

CONTACT: Senior Species at Risk Ecologist

PHONE: 306-787-7196

APPROVEDⁱ:



Executive Director
Fish, Wildlife and Lands

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