



PRESS RELEASE
MINISTRY OF FOOD INDUSTRY, COMMODITY
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SARAWAK

21 January 2025



RABIES SITUATION IN SARAWAK

Today, I signed the anti-rabies vaccination order under Section 40(1) of the Veterinary Public Health Ordinance 1999 (VPHO 1999), which mandates that all dogs in the state must undergo anti-rabies vaccination and receive annual boosters. Dog owners are responsible for ensuring their pets are vaccinated. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in an offence punishable by a fine of up to RM 2,500. Additionally, dogs exposed to rabies that lack proper vaccination documentation will be euthanized.

Kuching, Samarahan, Serian, Sri Aman, Kapit, Mukah and Bintulu (7) Division has been declared as rabies infected Division due to new animal rabies positive detected including 21 areas declared previously. This declaration is necessary to ensure more effort is taken by the Division concerned. In 2024, 123 animal rabies tested positive from the 889 samples collected in Sarawak. The breakdown of the animal rabies positive are as follows:- Kuching (79), Samarahan (10), Serian (6), Sri Aman (4), Kapit (4), Mukah (4) and Bintulu (16). Additionally, three rabies-positive cases involving cat and dog were reported in Kuching and Samarahan Divisions between January 6 and 19 this year. The positive animals were identified as free-roaming pets.

The Department of Veterinary Services Sarawak (DVSS) together with Immune Belt Enforcement Team (IBET) from UKPS has intensified the anti-rabies vaccination programs throughout Sarawak. Public can get their free dog anti-rabies vaccination at any Government Veterinary Offices during office hours and mass vaccination which will be announce from time to time at their official DVS Sarawak FB account. Private Veterinary Clinics are also providing vaccine and health care for your pets.

According to State Health Department, the cumulative total human rabies cases now stood at 83, with 76 deaths, since July 2017 including 8 deaths in 2024.

I would like to remind the public to take extra precautions when dealing with stray animal and seek immediate medical attention at a nearby clinic if bitten by an animal. Dog owners are responsible for ensuring their pets are vaccinated against rabies, microchipped and neutered. Dog owners are also required to apply for a license and microchip from their respective local councils. Failure to obtained dog license is an offence and may be fine up to RM5,000 section 3 by the local councils. Pet owners are encouraged to neuter their pets to help prevent unwanted litters. Owner who dumped their pet may be fine up to RM2,000 under section 73, VPHO 1999.

Owners who let their dogs roam freely on the streets shall be liable to a fine not exceeding RM2,500 under Section 37, VPHO 1999. Dog owners must keep their dogs under effective control by confining it within an enclosed area from which it is impossible for the dog to escape. The Local Authority may seize, impound any dogs which is not on a leash in accordance with the Local Authorities (Dog Licensing and Control) by-laws, 2018 and fine owners for RM2,000 under 12. Dog with bite case will be euthanized for laboratory test.

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YB DATO SRI DR. STEPHEN RUNDI ANAK UTOM

Minister Of Food Industry, Commodity And Regional Development, Sarawak