

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older

#76 CAMPING AND BAT SAFETY AWARENESS



Drawings Courtesy of CDC

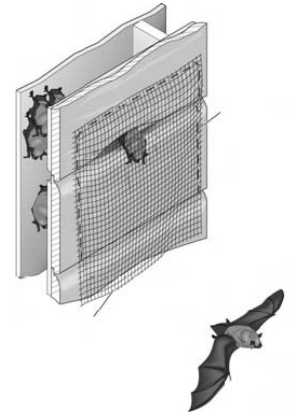
Information available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates more than 11 million people go camping each year in the United States. While camping there is a possibility people may become exposed to bats.

Some bats may be infected by and potentially transmit the rabies virus. However, few people are ever exposed to a rabies-suspect bat or need medical intervention due to an exposure while camping and no rabies deaths have occurred as a result of a bat exposure in a camp setting.

More than 20 species of bats live in California where they beneficially consume insects, such as night-flying beetles and moths, that may be harmful to gardens and commercial agriculture.

Reducing Bat Exposures in a Camping Environment

- Bat-Proofing Buildings
 - Bat-proof during the fall after the bats leave to hibernate (between September and November).
 - During the spring and summer, observe where bats exit buildings at dusk. Hang clear plastic sheeting or bird netting at exits allowing bats to continue to exit but not re-enter (see drawing at right).
 - After all the bats have exited, seal all exit openings with caulking compound, steel wool, or mesh hardware cloth.
 - Replace warped or damaged boards on buildings.
 - Use correct attic ventilation and screen all vents.
 - Keep window screens in good repair and don't leave unscreened doors and windows open.
- Capturing and Removing Bats (to be performed by adults)
 - Where possible, open windows and doors to allow the trapped bat to escape the building.
 - Assemble and store a bat-capture kit in a location where it can be quickly accessed if a bat is found inside a camp building.
 - The kit should contain: leather or suitable work gloves; box, coffee can, or plastic container with lid; and piece of flat cardboard.
 - To capture a bat:
 - Put on leather or other suitable work gloves.
 - Take the box, coffee can, or plastic container and the flat piece of cardboard.
 - Wait for the bat to roost on a wall or floor.
 - Slowly approach the bat and cover it with the container.
 - Keeping the container flat against the wall, slide the lid or cardboard between the wall and bat.
 - Once the cardboard is covering all sides of the container, lift the container and cardboard away from the wall.
 - Take the covered container outside, set it on a table or the ground, and turn it on its side.
 - Return inside and the bat will fly away on its own.



If you find a sick or dead bat, do not touch it. Tell your project leader or camp leader.

Tell your project leader, parent, or guardian if you suspect or you have been bitten by or possibly exposed to a bat, including from bat saliva that gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or wounds. Immediately wash the affected area with soap and water and seek medical attention.

Information given in this Clover Safe note is modified from the CDC brochure entitled "Bats, Safety and Risk Management at Camp" available online at https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/pdf/bats_final_508.pdf.