

Bat Euthanasia Protocol

(Updated September 2026)

1. Precautions

- a. This protocol is for bat euthanasia only.
- b. Euthanize all bats presented for rabies testing, even if they appear to be dead.
- c. Minimize the number of people present during bat euthanasia.
- d. Pregnant women or immune compromised persons should **not** be present.
- e. Only people who have been vaccinated against rabies should euthanize bats. If a vaccinated person is not available, then a person with previous experience is preferred.
- f. Avoid or minimize direct handling of bats during euthanasia. Wear leather work gloves **AT ALL TIMES** while handling bats directly, whether they are alive or dead.
- g. Avoid excessive inhalation of isoflurane during euthanasia.
- h. Have eye wash solution and a first aid kit easily accessible during euthanasia.

2. Materials

- a. Airtight container (e.g., metal coffee can, plastic shoebox)
- b. Nitrile exam gloves (not latex)
- c. Cotton balls
- d. Anesthetic solution (isoflurane, sevoflurane)
- e. Leather work gloves
- f. Cooler and ice packs
- g. [Optional] Plastic vial (e.g., prescription vial or syringe container)

3. Procedure

- a. Euthanize bats outdoors or in a well-ventilated area.
- b. Wear impermeable gloves.
- c. If the bat is presented in an unsuitable container (excessively large or not airtight), then carefully transfer it into a suitable container. Wear leather work gloves over your impermeable gloves while handling the bat.
- d. Saturate a cotton ball with about 5 mL (1 teaspoon) of isoflurane. If desired, put a cotton ball in a small plastic vial and pour the isoflurane onto the cotton ball. (No free liquid should exist in the vial.)
- e. Place the cotton ball (or the open plastic vial) into the container and seal the lid.
- f. If possible, wait one hour before checking the bat. Be cautious when opening the container. Bats will usually be deceased after 15 minutes in the euthanasia container.
- g. Confirm that the bat has expired by looking for an absence of breath, movement, or reaction to stimuli.

4. Packaging

- a. The bat may be kept refrigerated for up to 72 hours prior to submission.
- b. Wearing leather work gloves over your impermeable gloves, place the bat in a plastic bag and seal it. Place the first bag inside a second bag.
- c. Complete the online submission for at www.in.gov/rabies
- d. Put the double-bagged bat inside a shipping cooler with frozen ice packs. Do not use wet or dry ice.

5. Cleanup

- a. Discard the used cotton ball and impermeable gloves in the trash outdoors or in a well-ventilated area. Wash your hands with soap and water when finished.



For more information about rabies, including laboratory submissions, post-exposure protocols, and vaccination guidance, go to:
www.in.gov/rabies/