Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV) investigation checklist

## Human- Bat Exposure

* Refer all human-bat exposures to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) on **1300 651 160** and/or refer to a local medical practitioner. Provide the exposed person/s with a copy of the [“*Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV)”* fact sheet](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/Australian-bat-lyssavirus).

## Animal-Bat Exposure

* Notify all animal-bat exposures to Agriculture Victoria on the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline**  **1800 675 888**, or your local AgVic Animal Health and Welfare (AHW) staff.
* Collect a thorough history describing details of the bat exposure, including adding contact details for all exposed people, bat species/description/photographs (if known), pet and owner details for all exposed pets/animals, clinical signs, description of degree of exposure (e.g. chewed, sniffed, etc.) or category (as per descriptions in AgVic ABLV Information for Veterinarians fact sheet) and treating veterinarian/clinic details.

A [Record of Disease Event (RODE](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/animal-diseases/disease-surveillance-programs/significant-disease-investigation-sdi-program)) form is available.

## Submission of bat for testing

* (If the bat is alive) Assess the health of the bat and euthanase on welfare grounds or if circumstances require exclusion testing to be completed (e.g. advice from the Health Department relating to a human-bat exposure).

Please note that lie bats should only be handled by staff who have a current rabies vaccination.

* (If the bat is dead or has been euthanased) Submit the bat for ABLV-exclusion testing via Agribio, Bundoora.
* Contact Agriculture Victoria or the **EAD Watch Hotline Ph 1800 675 888** for sample submission requirements and notification.
* Samples for ABLV-exclusion testing are submitted to;

Agribio Veterinary Diagnostic Services

Specimen Reception Main Loading Dock

5 Ring Road, La Trobe University Campus

Bundoora, VIC 3083

Ph 03 9032 7515 Email: [vet.diagnostics@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:vet.diagnostics@agriculture.vic.gov.au)

**Note:** in some circumstances samples can be sent direct to Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (former Australian Animal Health Laboratories, AAHL); however, AgVic and Agribio must be notified first.

## Options for exposed domestic animals:

1. **Isolate and treat** any symptoms in the domestic animal until laboratory results confirm or exclude ABLV in the bat (This option applies if exposed domestic animal is sick or injured),
2. **Vaccinate** exposed animal with a registered rabies vaccine; minimise contact for 28 days post vaccination and monitor for development of any clinical signs suggestive of ABLV disease (for minimum 60 days post vaccination). All vaccinated animals must be microchipped.
3. If exposed animal is showing **clinical signs suggestive of ABLV infection** or other issues affecting welfare or at owner’s choice, **euthanase**. (with care noting zoonotic potential)
4. Observation only for low-risk exposures1 (least preferred option) – ensure that the owner is aware that taking no action does not lower the potential risk of ABLV infection and any signs of illness must be presented to a veterinarian for assessment and reported to Agriculture Victoria. The incubation period of ABLV disease could be prolonged and close observation of the animal for at least 2 years is recommended. Low-risk exposure would relate to circumstances where there has been minimal contact between the bat & domestic animal, no injuries, and no suggestion of clinical illness in either the bat or exposed domestic animal

## Accessing rabies vaccine.

* Complete and submit a copy of the “*Application to Victorian Chief Veterinary Officer for authorisation to use Nobivac*® *rabies inactivated rabies vaccine”*. Available from Agriculture Victoria.
* Following authorisation from the CVO, order vaccine from MSD Animal Health/Intervet Australia Pty Ltd, Bendigo, or through your usual veterinary drugs wholesaler. The rabies vaccine will be sent directly to the veterinary practice that has placed the order.
* Collect and submit serum samples at first vaccination and 28-35 days post vaccination. Serum samples can be tested at Agribio at no charge. Results must be reported to Agriculture Victoria.
* All vaccinated animals must be microchipped (such as, if the exposed animal is not already microchipped, ensure this is done at the time of vaccination)

## ABLV Investigation Summary

**Human – bat exposure:**

* Refer the person to the Department of Health. Phone: 1300 651 160 or a medical practitioner.
* Veterinarian may be asked to assist with euthanasing the bat and/or submission of the bat to AgriBio based on Department of Health advice.

**Animal-bat exposure:**

* Notify Agriculture Victoria local staff or phone the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline 1300 675 888
* Conduct a risk assessment to determine the level of animal exposure to the bat and/or clinical signs in the bat or exposed pet.
* Euthanase the bat (if necessary) based on ill health or welfare and submit the euthanased or dead bat to AgriBio, Bundoora for testing (if available).

**Exposed animal options**

* Option 1: **Isolate and treat** any symptoms in the domestic animal until laboratory results confirm or exclude ABLV in the bat. If the text result is positive in the contact bat then treat exposed animals with a rabies vaccine and monitor OR euthanase exposed animal OR monitor long term for a minimum of two years and report any clinical changes. If there is a negative result in the contact bat then maintain treatment and further testing for an alternate diagnosis.
* Option 2: **Vaccinate the animal** with a rabies vaccine. Apply to the CVO Victoria, Agriculture Victoria for authorization to use rabies vaccine. Following CVO approval, order and administer rabies vaccine.Ongoing health monitoring of the exposed animal.
* Option 3: **Euthanase the exposed animal** and submit for laboratory testing at AgriBio or ACDP. Recommended if the animal is showing clinical signs suggestive of ABLV infection or if there are other issues affecting animal welfare or at owner’s discretion.

## Flow chart

