

PROTECT YOURSELF, PETS AND DOMESTICATED ANIMALS

1. Avoid contact.

- ◆ Do not approach skunks. All skunks can bite or spray when frightened.
- ◆ Keep pets in at night if possible. Keep outdoor pets in a fenced yard.
- ◆ Keep domesticated animals in pens, coops and other secured buildings or enclosures at night.

2. Vaccinate pets and domesticated animals.

- ◆ Consult your veterinarian and keep your pets and domesticated animals up to date on all necessary vaccinations, including rabies vaccinations.
- ◆ In California, all dogs must have a current rabies vaccination.

SKUNK BITES

Clean bites with warm soap and water and report as soon as possible

- ◆ For people: Immediately consult a physician or Solano County Public Health at (707) 784-8005.
- ◆ For pets and domesticated animals:
 - ◇ Immediately consult your veterinarian.
 - ◇ Wash your hands if you handle your animal.
 - ◇ Keep the bitten animal away from other people and animals.
- ◆ Immediately contact Solano County Animal Care Services by calling Sheriff Dispatch at (707) 421-7090 regarding bites or suspected rabid animals.
- ◆ If you are able to safely capture or obtain the skunk, do so. Immediately notify Solano County Animal Care Services of the skunk's location. A rabies test may be performed using the skunk if its head is intact.

SKUNK FACTS

- Skunks are present throughout California and co-exist with people in many urban, suburban and rural communities. They are attracted to residential areas by availability of food and shelter. Eliminating these attractants can encourage skunks to leave.
- The Striped Skunk is the most common skunk in California. It is typically house cat sized (4 to 10 pounds) and has long black fur with two broad white stripes down the back.
- Skunks are mostly active at night (from dusk to dawn).
- Skunks look for food along established routes up to 2 miles long. They eat a variety of foods, including fruit and plants, insects, larvae, worms, eggs, reptiles, small mammals such as rodents, fish, pet food and food scraps.
- Skunks are slow moving, mild mannered and not aggressive. If threatened, a skunk may drum its forefeet on the ground, snarl, arch its back, raise its tail, and spray a musky smelling oily liquid produced by glands under its large tail. Skunks can emit this spray several times and up to 15 feet away.
- Skunks have poor eyesight and will often approach people who are standing still. Stay calm and don't panic if you encounter a skunk. Just walk away slowly.
- Skunks den in burrows below ground, in brush and wood piles, hollow logs, culverts, and under porches, decks, or beneath buildings.
- Striped skunk babies are typically born in May through June, and mothers take the young out 60 days after birth.

SOLANO COUNTY



DEPARTMENT OF
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES DIVISION

SKUNKS



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STEPS TO REDUCE SKUNK ENCOUNTERS ON YOUR PROPERTY

1. Eliminate outdoor food and water available for skunks

- ◆ **Never intentionally feed skunks!**
- ◆ Put away all unused pet food and water bowls. Feed pets indoors if possible.
- ◆ Repair leaking outdoor faucets.
- ◆ Place all food waste and wrappings in tightly closed garbage containers.
- ◆ Harvest gardens frequently and pick up fallen fruit.
- ◆ Keep all feed in tightly closed bins.
- ◆ Control lawn insects and grub worms.

2. Limit skunk access to your property

- ◆ Construct or modify gates and fences to prevent animals from crawling or burrowing beneath them to gain access to rear yards.

3. Eliminate potential shelter

- ◆ Remove or thin heavy vegetation that can give skunks a place to burrow or hide.
- ◆ Trim bush branches at the base level so that there are not places hidden to view and available for nesting or hiding.
- ◆ Keep openings to spaces below houses, porches, decks and out buildings closed off with hardware cloth, boards, metal flashing, or other sturdy barriers.
- ◆ Keep out buildings closed.
- ◆ Elevate wood piles off the ground.
- ◆ Keep your premises clean and maintained.

SKUNK PROBLEMS

1. Live skunks on your property

You are responsible for eliminating skunks from your own property. A private pest control company may be able to assist you.

It is best to eliminate food and water first, and then remove harborage or seal openings to den sites after skunks have left the den. There is a variety of information on the Internet on how to do this.

Contact your local Animal Control Agency for questions regarding capturing or euthanizing live skunks.

2. Disposal of dead skunks on your property

- ◆ You may contact a private pest control company or Solano County Animal Care to remove the dead skunk for a fee.
- ◆ You may use gloves and/or shovel to avoid contact with skunk body and:
 - ◇ Seal skunk in double plastic garbage bags and dispose into secure garbage container; or
 - ◇ In unincorporated areas, you may bury the skunk. It is suggested to bury 2- to 3-feet deep and a 100 feet away from wells and surface water.
 - ◇ Wash hands thoroughly afterwards.

SKUNK AND RABIES

Skunks can carry diseases, including rabies, that may be transmitted to humans, pets and other domesticated animals. Rabies is a virus that attacks the nervous system (brain) and can kill people and animals if they contract the disease. The vast majority of skunks do not have rabies.

People and animals can get rabies from bites from infected animals or, far less likely, from infected saliva getting into the eyes, nose, mouth or an open wound during contact or handling with an infected animal.

A skunk out during daytime and exhibiting unusual or sick behavior, such as one or more of the following, may have rabies:

- ◆ staggering,
- ◆ unprovoked aggression,
- ◆ moving in circles or aimless wandering,
- ◆ appearance of choking,
- ◆ limp legs

However, there may be no visible signs, so avoid contact with any skunk.

Additional Information

Links for more information on skunk biology, behavior and control can be found at www.solanocounty.com/VectorControl — and then scroll down for “skunks.”

You may also contact the Environmental Health Services Division at (707) 784-6765 for general information.