

Rabies Assessment, Saskatoon Health Region

Highlights

- In Saskatchewan, animal bites must be reported under the Public Health Act. Animal bites represent significant cost to individuals and to the health care system. Rabies assessment involves checking rabies vaccination status, observing the animal for 10 days to ensure rabies does not develop, and, in some cases, submitting the deceased animal for testing. Depending on the risk, rabies vaccine and/or rabies immune globulin is offered to the person bitten or exposed.
- Reports of animal bites have steadily increased in the Region in the last five years, especially for dogs and cats, who account for 90% of all bites (bites also denote scratches or exposures to broken skin).
- Each bite is assessed for rabies risk. In 2015, Disease Control, Population and Public Health, assessed a total of 359 dog and 174 cat bites, a 60% increase from 2011 (Table 1).
- Of the 533 dog and cat bites reported in 2015, half of them occurred in the animal's yard or home, and 23% occurred in a public space or park (Figure 1).
- Approximately 80% of these dog and cat bites occurred to adults, 5% to children under five years and 15% to children between five and 17 years (not shown).
- Less than half of these bites involved a dog or cat that was up to date for rabies vaccination (Figure 2).

Table 1: Animal Bites, Saskatoon Health Region, 2011 to 2015

| Species | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Dog | 229 | 261 | 302 | 369 | 359 |
| Cat | 104 | 100 | 155 | 159 | 174 |
| Skunk | 8 | 9 | | 1 | 5 |
| Equine | 5 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Bat | 34 | 30 | 21 | 13 | 33 |
| Other species | 36 | 51 | 28 | 41 | 14 |
| Total animal exposures (all species) | 416 | 460 | 507 | 583 | 586 |

Figure 1: Location of Dog and Cat Bites, 2015

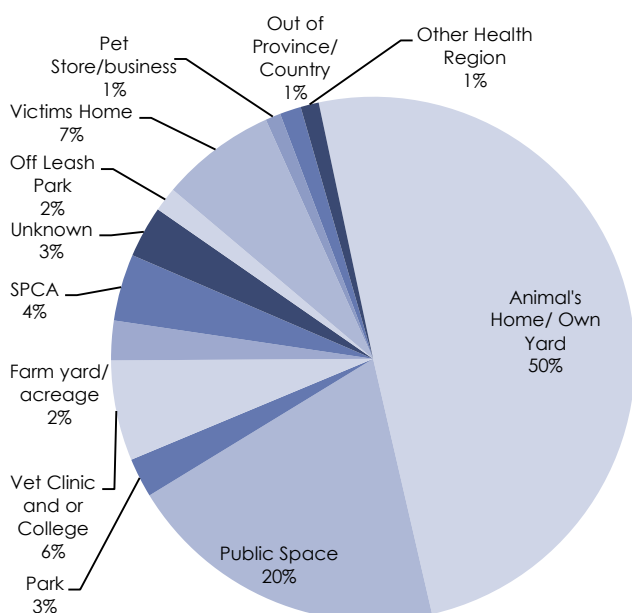
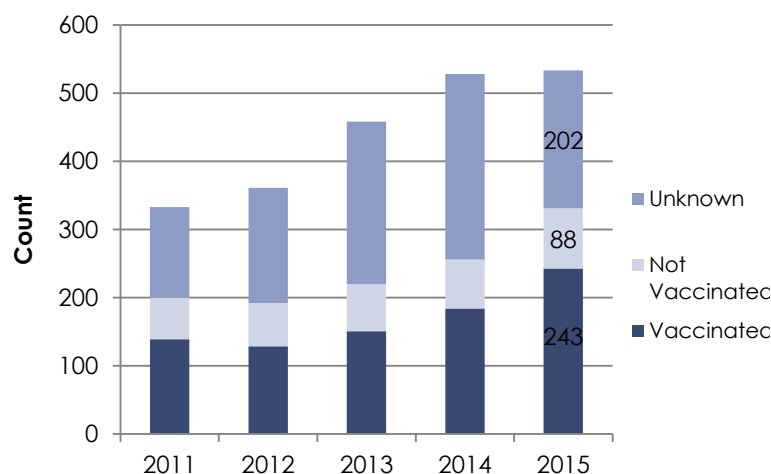


Figure 2: Dog and Cat Bites by Rabies Vaccination Status, 2011 to 2015



Source: Population and Public Health