



Bel-Rea Institute of Animal Technology

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Bel-Rea Rabies Vaccination Waiver/Exemption Policy

Vital information for students who elect to waive the rabies vaccine:

- AVMA (CVTEA) program accreditation requires that all veterinary technician students be vaccinated against rabies and the program must have a comprehensive rabies mitigation plan in place. This requirement became effective January 1, 2022. Details of this requirement can be found in *Appendix A – Rabies Supplement – in the AVMA CVTEA P&P manual*.
- There has been an increase in the number of terrestrial mammals with rabies in the state of Colorado since 2007. Rabies is often a fatal disease, and our students are at higher risk for encountering rabies-infected animals than the general public. This policy reflects a top priority at Bel-Rea, to provide our students an excellent and safe education.
- According to recently updated CDC guidelines veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and other staff members are at frequent risk and should receive the rabies pre-exposure series as well as serologic testing every 2 years to ensure antibody titers are maintained. CDC has categorized those in this group as a [Risk Category 3](#).
- By receiving the vaccine while in the program, students will be more ready for the workforce and to gain employment in the veterinary field.
- Unvaccinated students will not be able to handle any unvaccinated animals, either on campus or at off-campus locations, including internships. This may delay or inhibit the student from graduation.

Bel-Rea utilizes animals throughout the program for the AVMA CVTEA Veterinary Technology Student Essential and Recommended Skills List. The animals used are Bel-Rea resident animals, student/staff owned animals and animals from various off-campus sites (veterinary clinics/hospitals, boarding facilities, animal rescues and shelters, low cost spay/neuter clinics, low-cost vaccination/general health clinics). The rabies vaccination status of our resident and student/staff animals is known, however the off-campus animals may not be vaccinated for rabies, have an unknown vaccine history or be too young to be vaccinated for rabies.

If a student is granted an exemption, that student must strictly adhere to Bel-Rea's rabies mitigation protocol. The mitigation protocol states that unvaccinated students must not have contact with animals who have not been vaccinated for rabies, have not completed the required 28-day seroconversion hold period or have an unknown vaccination history. The seroconversion period is 28 days post first rabies vaccination. There is no seroconversion hold for subsequent rabies vaccines.

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The mitigation program for unvaccinated students will include:

On-campus instruction:

*Non-vaccinated students will be responsible for procuring documented rabies vaccinated animals (including completion of the 28-day seroconversion hold following initial rabies vaccination) for performance of AVMA Essential Skills

*Rabies vaccination status must be known and recorded for every animal with which an unvaccinated student is handling

*Students must perform the hands-on tasks in the presence of a veterinarian or a certified/registered veterinary technician

*Students will be responsible for submitting video/photographic evidence that each essential skill has been performed on a live animal

*Following submission, the required skills will be evaluated by program personnel

Internship:

*Non-vaccinated students may have difficulty finding Internship sites. Interns will not be able to handle patients that are too young to be vaccinated (less than 12-16 weeks), those that are being seen for first vaccination series, those animals who have not been vaccinated and those with an unknown vaccine history. Internship sites may not want to take on the responsibility to ensure all animals handled by an intern have been vaccinated for rabies and if first vaccine, have completed the 28-day seroconversion hold. This will severely limit the amount of contact unvaccinated interns have with animal patients during internship. Internship sites may not want the added burden of documenting and recording the vaccination status of every animal a non-vaccinated intern would be required to handle. As a result, unvaccinated students may have to limit internship selection to a lab or research facility where there is no contact with dogs, cats, horses, food and fiber species.

Students wishing to request exemption must include a student Action Plan, and either the Bel-Rea Student Rabies Vaccination Medical Exemption Form or the Bel-Rea Student Rabies Vaccination Religious Exemption Form.

Action Plan: The action plan needs to include the source of rabies vaccinated animals for completion of all live animal AVMA CVTEA Essential skills. Further documentation may be required to approve the Action Plan.

The Action Plan and Exemption Form must be submitted to the Program's Exemption Panel at studenthealthservices@belrea.edu, prior to the following deadlines:

Submission Deadlines:

- For all students enrolled during the Fall 2022 quarter: **Action Plan, and either the Bel-Rea Rabies Vaccination Medical Exemption Physician Form or the Bel-Rea Rabies Vaccination Religious Exemption Student Form are due 30-days prior to the January 10, 2023 deadline, with the exception of Fall 2022 Interns, who will graduate prior to the deadline.**
- For all new program applicants: **Due date is 30-days prior to enrollment deadline**