

Guidance for Child Care Facilities: Bats in Buildings

Understanding Bats

Bats play an important role in Saskatchewan's ecosystem, and as many are endangered species, they are protected under *The Wildlife Act*. Although bats generally do not pose a risk to people, some may be infected with rabies, a serious disease that requires immediate medical attention following a potential exposure. Human rabies cases in Saskatchewan are rare due to surveillance programs, public awareness, and access to preventive treatment after exposure. Taking simple precautions can help keep children, staff, and bats safe.

During the summer, groups of female bats using buildings as maternity roosts may enter human-occupied areas of buildings. Encounters may increase in late summer and early fall as young bats begin flying and when bats move between summer roosts and winter hibernation sites. During winter, bats are generally hidden in hibernation sites and are less likely to be encountered in human-occupied spaces.

This guidance is intended for situations when a bat colony is found living in a building and the area cannot be effectively sealed from human-occupied spaces. For guidance related to individual bat encounters, refer to the Bat Encounters webpage on saskatchewan.ca or to the Environment Resource Library article "[What to do when you find a bat in a building](#)."

Keeping Children Safe

- If possible, keep children in areas of the building that are less likely to be accessed by bats (e.g., well-lit, frequently used, ground floor spaces). Bat colonies are commonly found in secluded areas such as attics, wall cavities, and roof voids.
- For rooms with a history of bat activity, have a trained staff member perform a thorough inspection 20 minutes before children arrive each morning.
- Restrict access to areas of the building where bats have been observed until they have been safely removed.
- Teach children **never to touch bats or other wildlife** and to tell an adult immediately if they find one.
- Young or sleeping children may not reliably recognize or report contact with a bat. If there is any possibility that a child has had direct contact with a bat, call the local [public health office](#) during business hours or the Saskatchewan HealthLine (811) for after-hours consultation.
- Post-exposure vaccines must be administered as soon as possible after a bat bite or scratch, because once symptoms appear, infection with the virus is almost always fatal.

If You Find a Bat

- For guidance on how to safely contain a single bat, visit saskatchewan.ca.
- If there has been human contact with a bat or there is uncertainty around human exposure, contact a pest control company to safely capture the bat. If that is not an option, wear a thick pair of gloves, and safely capture the bat (ideally after it has landed) using a small container or box with air holes, then cover the container with a lid. Contact the local [public health office](#) during business hours or Saskatchewan Healthline (811) (after hours) for a rabies exposure assessment.
- If it is determined that there was no human contact after a public health assessment, the bat can be released outside in the spring, summer, and fall. Do not release bats outside in the winter; in these cases, contact the Ministry of Environment Inquiry Centre at 1-800-567-4224 or by email at centre.inquiry@gov.sk.ca.
- Document the details of the incident, including location and time the bat was found, individuals who may have been present, and any actions taken.

When to Bat-Proof Your Building

- Bat-proofing of buildings should be conducted in accordance with the Ministry of Environment's [Bat Eviction Policy](#). Working with an experienced wildlife control operator permitted to evict bats is strongly recommended.
- Bat-proofing buildings, particularly older structures, can be challenging, as bats can enter through openings as small as 6-10 mm wide. If bats are accessing occupied living spaces, consider consulting a qualified wildlife control operator.
- Avoid sealing exterior access points in summer when females give birth, nurse, and wean their young.
- Avoid sealing exterior openings during the winter hibernation period, as bats will need these to exit in the spring. Trapped bats may seek entry to occupied spaces, increasing the risk of direct contact with humans.
- Sealing interior access points between the potential bat roost and human-occupied areas can be done at any time of year. Be cautious not to seal chutes or ducts at the bottom, as this can trap bats.

May	June-July-August	September	October – November- December – January- February-March-April
Bats are pregnant and have the ability to find a new home, if required.	Sensitive period: Bats are birthing and nursing, baby bats cannot fly.	Pups are flying. Bats are mating and returning to their winter homes.	Sensitive period: Bats are mating, pups are flying and moving to winter homes and are hibernating.
Optimal one-way exit installation period May 1 st to 31 st .	*Eviction and removal may be acceptable in accordance with the Bat Eviction Policy	Optimal one-way exit installation period September 1 st to 30 th .	Avoid installing new one-way exits. *Eviction and removal may be acceptable in accordance with the Bat Eviction Policy

*When there is an immediate human health and safety concern or major impediment to building use.

Resources

- Bats in Saskatchewan - <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/environment-public-health-and-safety/wildlife-issues/living-with-wildlife/bats-in-saskatchewan>
- Environment Resource Library articles about bats: https://environmentinquiries.saskatchewan.ca/env?id=env_resource_library&spa=1&kb_category=55074cc41b73a51003f4c802604bcbcb
- Public Health Offices - <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/public-health/public-health-offices>
- Rabies Response Program - <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/livestock/animal-health-and-welfare/rabies>