Things to remember when "bat-proofing"

Carefully inspect your home for holes. Any openings larger than a quarter inch by a half inch should be filled in with caulk. This includes electrical and plumbing holes.

Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics. Make sure that all doors to the outside close tightly.

Watch for where the bats exit at dusk and stop them by loosely hanging a piece of clear plastic or bird netting over these areas. Bats can crawl out and leave, but cannot re-enter. After all of the bats are out of the opening, then permanently close the holes.

• Most bats leave in the fall or winter to hibernate, so these are the best times to "bat-proof" your home.

• During summer, many young bats are unable to fly. If you get rid of the adult bats during this time, the young may be trapped inside and die or make their way into your home. For this reason, avoid exclusion from May through August.

Common Bat Entry Points

- Under loose shingles
- Under eaves
- Under siding
- Under or through open doors
- Down chimney
- Openings around chimney
- Through vents
- Through open unscreened windows

What you need to know about Bats and Rabies

If you or your pet come in contact with a bat after regular business hours, please call (716) 961-7898. ECDOH staff will determine if the bat will be picked up for testing, and if it will be picked up, then this will occur during regular business hours.

A public health guide from the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH)

Mark C. Poloncarz
County Executive

Gale R. Burstein, MD, MPH
Commissioner of Health

(01/2013)
If you are bitten by a bat, or if infectious material (such as saliva) from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or a cut, wash the area with soap and water and call your doctor or the Erie County Health Department. Whenever possible, the bat should be captured and sent to a laboratory for rabies testing. See: How can I safely capture a bat in my home?

**Bats have small teeth that may leave marks that are not easy to see.** Because of this, you should get medical advice even if you do not see bite marks when you wake up and find a bat in your room, or if you see a bat in the room of a child or near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person. Whenever possible, the bat should be caught and tested for rabies.

What should I do if I come in contact with a bat?

If you are bitten by a bat, or if infectious material (such as saliva) from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or a cut, wash the area with soap and water and call your doctor or the Erie County Health Department. Whenever possible, the bat should be captured and sent to a laboratory for rabies testing. See: How can I safely capture a bat in my home?

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How can I safely capture a bat in my home?

If professional help is not available, capture the bat safely as described below:

- You will need leather work gloves, a coffee can, or similar hard sided container, a piece of cardboard and tape.
- When the bat lands, move toward it slowly. While wearing the gloves, put the container or coffee can over the bat.
- Then, slide the cardboard under the container.

What should I do if my pet comes in contact with a bat?

If you think your pet or domestic animal has been bitten by a bat, contact your health department immediately to have the bat tested for rabies. Remember to keep your cats, dogs, and other animals up to date on Rabies vaccinations.

How can rabies be prevented?

- Teach children never to handle wild animals and animals that they do not know. "Love your own, leave other animals alone" is a good rule for children to follow.
- Wash any cut or bite from an animal with soap and water and seek medical help right away.
- Stop bats from entering your homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people and pets.
- Be a responsible pet owner:
  - Keep vaccinations current for all dogs, cats, and ferrets.
  - Keep your cats and ferrets inside and always watch your dogs when outside.
  - Call animal control to remove stray animals from your neighborhood.
  - Have your pets spayed or neutered.