



# EL SEGUNDO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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MITCH TAVERA, CHIEF OF POLICE

## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Unvaccinated Pets at Risk of Distemper Virus

The El Segundo Police Department is advising the community that several raccoons recently captured in the city have been diagnosed with an illness known as distemper. There is no danger to humans as the virus is not transmitted to people. However, unvaccinated dogs and cats are at risk in catching the disease if they come into contact with the virus from an infected raccoon.

Distemper in raccoons initially appears as an upper respiratory infection leading to a runny nose, mucous around the eyes, and diarrhea. In the final stages of the disease, the raccoon may appear in public during the day and wander around aimlessly showing signs of disorientation before dying.

Symptoms of distemper in dogs or cats can include:

- Fever (103F to 106F)
- Loss of appetite
- Cough
- Nasal discharge
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Eye inflammation
- Seizures, muscle twitching
- Loss of motor skills

Pets can be infected through contact with bodily fluids of an infected raccoon or other animal including dogs/cats. Sneezing, coughing and sharing food and water bowls are also ways the virus can be transmitted. Therefore, food and

water bowls should not be left outside to reduce the chance of contact with an infected animal.

Dog and cat owners should ensure their pets have been vaccinated and contact a veterinarian if they suspect a pet has been infected. Pet owners without a designated veterinarian may consider calling the El Segundo Animal Hospital (310) 606-8811 for additional information or visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/2010DistemperRaccoons.htm>

If anyone observes a raccoon exhibiting symptoms of distemper, please contact the El Segundo Police Department at (310) 524-2760 so an Animal Control Officer can be dispatched to contain the animal.

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