

Michigan 4-H State Dog Show Vaccination Policy

In order to participate in the Michigan 4-H State Dog Show, exhibitors *are required to provide proof of up to date immunization* for all dogs entered for **rabies, distemper virus, parvovirus and adenovirus** (hepatitis). Rabies vaccination is required by Federal Law and must be administered by a licensed veterinarian. The remaining three vaccinations are considered core vaccinations by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and are vital to maintaining the health of our canine population. By definition from AAHA, core vaccinations are those that "all dogs should receive in one form or another."

Prior to exposure to other dogs, exhibitors are *recommended* to have their dogs vaccinated for Leptospirosis and Bordetella (Kennel Cough).

Proof of up to date immunizations can be met by one of the following:

1. Copy of veterinarian records clearly showing both rabies and core vaccination with a due date for next vaccinations following the date of the State 4-H dog show. A titer test by a veterinarian showing acceptable level of immunity is also acceptable.
2. A combination of a rabies certificate from a veterinarian showing due date after the state show AND owners vaccination records of core vaccinations. The only acceptable proof of owner administered core vaccinations is a copy of the label from the vaccine vial, along with date administered. All home vaccinations will only be valid for one year from the time the vaccines are given.
3. Exceptions to the above are only accepted in the case of a veterinarian certifying they do not recommend vaccines for a specific dog for health reasons. Such cases will be verified by the State 4-H Companion Animal Committee and are subject to approval.

Canine Vaccinations

Just as in humans, vaccination of our canine companions is vital to maintaining a healthy, happy population of dogs. Many may say that the diseases that we vaccinate for are no longer seen in our dog population, however, this is due to the practice of immunizing our dogs against these diseases that they are no longer as prevalent. The vaccination requirements in order to participate in the State Dog Show are for the protection of all entered dogs as disease outbreaks are more common when animals are brought together from many different areas.

Rabies vaccination is required due to the deadly nature of the disease for animals and humans alike. **Canine distemper virus** is a highly contagious disease that can be spread through the air and in most cases is fatal if

contracted. **Canine parvovirus** can be spread by dog to dog contact and contamination of many different surfaces. This disease is very hardy and can continue to be a threat many months after an infected dog has shed the disease in an environment. Again a highly contagious disease, parvovirus can quickly affect a large population of dogs and is expensive to treat and potentially fatal. **Canine adenovirus** is also known as infectious canine hepatitis. Another highly contagious disease it affects the liver and may develop into serious illness. The contagious nature and severity of these diseases is what makes vaccination and protection of dogs important.

Leptospirosis and **Bordetella** vaccinations are recommended prior to exposure to other dogs. **Leptospirosis** is a disease that affects the kidneys and is transmitted through urine. Dogs many also acquire this disease by drinking water that has been urinated in by rodents carrying the disease. **Bordetella** is also referred to as Kennel Cough. This is an airborne disease that will cause upper respiratory signs such as coughing and nasal discharge.

Initial puppy vaccination series is important, as well as continued booster vaccinations to maintain protection. The first rabies vaccination a puppy receives is considered protective for 1 year. Each rabies vaccination after will be protective for 3 years. The distemper, parvovirus and adenovirus vaccines were once considered protective for one year, however, in recent years they have shown more extended protection. Leptospirosis and Bordetella are annual vaccinations. Your veterinarian will assist you in developing the most effective vaccination program for your dog.

References: For more information on canine vaccination protocols see the following websites American Veterinary Medical Association www.avma.org and the American Animal Health Association www.aahanet.org