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It's mating season for animals, and there is no shortage of construction activity, which explains why you may be seeing more skunks. Six skunks have tested positive for rabies, in Burleson, since January. The majority of the skunks were located in the southern and western parts of the city.

All locations, except two, where skunks were captured also had dogs that were exposed. All of the pets are being held in isolation. The length of isolation can be 45-90 days, depending on the dog's rabies vaccination history.

The City's neighborhood services staff handed out flyers in the affected neighborhoods warning residents that a skunk, that tested positive for rabies, had been captured in the area within the last seven days. Residents are encouraged to report all physical contact between family or pets and a skunk and any animal bites to Burleson Animal Services at 817-426-9283.

You can prevent exposing your pets to the rabies virus. The most important thing that people can do is to have their animals vaccinated against rabies and keep those vaccinations up to date. State law requires that you have your dogs and cats vaccinated against rabies by a veterinarian at 4 months of age.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) also offers this advice:

- Keep cats and ferrets indoors and keep dogs indoors or in a fenced yard.
- Spay or neuter pets to prevent unwanted animals that may not receive proper care from visiting your animals.
- Teach children not to play with any animal that they do not know, even if the animal seems friendly.
- Avoid animals, both domestic and wild, that appear disoriented, fearless or aggressive. Nighttime animals such as bats, raccoons and skunks that are active in the daytime may be sick.
- Do not touch any wild animal that appears ill or dead. If you live inside the city limits of Burleson, call Burleson Animal Services at 817-426-9283. If it is after-

hours, please call the Burleson Police Department at 817-426-9903 or 817-295-1118.

- Don't attract wild animals to your yard. Avoid leaving pet food outdoors, and keep garbage in closed containers.
- Stay away from wild animals, and never keep a wild animal as a pet.
- Have domestic ferrets, wolf-dog hybrids and livestock, especially those that are in frequent contact with humans, vaccinated against rabies.

Informative web-sites on Rabies:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/rabies/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>