



## BATS – and the BISD BAT PROTOCOL (IPM)

**BATS** – in particular, the migratory **Mexican Free-tailed Bat** are a tremendous asset to our local, Texas hill country environment as they benefit our agricultural industry and they consume huge quantities of insects.

Nevertheless, bats sometimes create a nuisance when they roost in buildings in large numbers. Why do bats roost in buildings? Are they dangerous? What's the best way to handle bat nuisance problems?

Some bats move into buildings because they have lost their natural habitats in caves and trees. They may cause no problems; but when large colonies roost in buildings, they can cause noise, odors, and piles of droppings. Like other wild animals, some bats contract rabies. **Although only very small percentages are infected, any bat found on the ground is more likely to be sick or injured.** Neither adults nor children should handle bats, or for that matter, any other wild animal. If there is any possibility that a student or school employee may have been bitten or had direct contact with a bat, the animal should be captured/collected and submitted to the local health department for rabies testing. The protocols explained further in this document describe handling procedures.

Bats that end up indoors by accident, often can't find their way out. These can be safely captured by trained, designated district personnel or our local animal control responders. Usually a bat will be captured by simply waiting until the bat lands on a wall or ceiling, then carefully placing a box or coffee can over it. Slide a piece of cardboard between the box (or can) and the wall (or ceiling) so the bat is contained. If the bat needs to be tested for rabies, animal control will be contacted. If no one had direct contact with the bat, it can be turned over to a wildlife-rescue organization in our area or simply released outside away from people and pets.

Bat colonies can roost in attics, under eaves, or in the walls of buildings. These bats can be safely evicted and **BISD will work collaboratively with local animal control, Bat Conservation organization, and professionals especially trained to utilize safe, exclusionary techniques to permanently evict bats.** It is not legal to use pesticides against bats, and poisons often result in sick bats that can end up on the ground where they are more likely to be found by children or pets. Bat "traps" are also inappropriate, since they usually result in overcrowding that kills or weakens bats and, again, increases the possibility of sick bats finding their way to places where they could have contact with people. Only proper bat exclusion techniques help to ensure the health and safety of people, while ridding buildings of nuisance bat colonies. Help protect both human and environmental health with proper bat-exclusion methods.

## BISD Bat Protocol IPM Plan:

Once a bat is reported, it should be assumed rabid. Trained maintenance department personnel and/or animal control should be the only persons allowed to remove a bat. The procedure for removing the bat is as follows:

1. Have the following items available before you approach the bat; a pair of heavy cloth gloves, a plastic face shield, a metal tong at least 9" long, a small cardboard box and masking or duct tape.
2. Make sure there are no students or staff around the bat.
3. After putting on the gloves and face shield, grab the bat with the metal tongs, place it in the cardboard box, close the box and tape it shut.
4. Notify the animal control immediately that the bat is secured.

### Procedures for Principals:

1. No one in your building is to try to capture a bat. Your role as the Principal or Building Representative is to protect the students and/or staff in your building by isolating the bat if possible. If the bat is on a flat surface like a floor or sidewalk, attempt to place a can, box, bucket, etc. over the bat to keep it from escaping. If it is on a wall or ceiling, do not attempt to contain it.
2. If a bat is spotted in a room or a large area like a gym or band hall, get all the occupants out of the room and secure the door/doors.
3. If a bat is spotted in a hallway, isolate the hallway and tell the students or staff in adjacent rooms to close their doors and stay in the rooms.
4. If a bat is spotted on the outside wall of a building, keep students away.
5. BISD Maintenance should be contacted immediately. The district's IPM coordinator and/or designee will be dispatched. If circumstances are such that Maintenance cannot be contacted (i.e. after hours and or on weekends), the contact animal control thru the Boerne Police Department and or Kendall County Sheriff's Dept. Maintenance Department and report the incident. District personnel trained in bat protocol procedures and/or animal control will remove the bat. The bat will then be turned over to the City and/or County Health Department (this depends on your area) for testing.
6. If a rabid bat is found in or around any district facility, the Principal and/or IPM Coordinator must be notified. Each facility or campus should then notify all staff and students that a rabid bat has been found on site.
7. If a student or staff member is bitten by a bat and/or handle's a bat, Principals should document and report this information to the IPM Coordinator and animal control for further instructions.