

## National Wildlife Biosecurity Guidelines for Australia

**What is Biosecurity?** Biosecurity is the management of risks to the economy, the environment and the community of pests and diseases entering, emerging, establishing or spreading. It can be explained as the set of precautions taken to minimise the risk of spreading or introducing a pest or infectious disease. There are wildlife biosecurity obligations under Australian legislation.

**Everyone who works with, or interacts with, wildlife has a role to play in wildlife biosecurity.**

**Lapses in wildlife biosecurity can have serious or catastrophic consequences for individuals, populations, species and ecosystems.** Australian bat lyssavirus transmission to a human, via a bite from an infected bat, can result in death. Chytrid fungus infection has resulted in catastrophic declines (and in some cases extinctions) of numerous amphibian species throughout the world. Salmonella infections (acquired from pet reptiles) can cause significant disease and sometimes death in children.

**Good biosecurity helps to keep wildlife, people and domestic animals safe and healthy by minimising the impacts of disease on individual animals and wildlife populations.**

**Understanding and managing risk is the key to good biosecurity.** Although it may not always be possible to eliminate risk when working with wildlife, everyone should work to an agreed acceptable level of risk.

The general principles of disease risk management in humans and domestic animals can be applied to managing disease risk associated with wildlife. In the absence of information on disease risk, the precautionary principle should be applied.

**Everyone should implement basic biosecurity practices for all contact with wildlife, regardless of the animal's species, age, health or perceived disease risk.** Although it may not always be possible to eliminate risk when working with wildlife, everyone should work to an agreed acceptable level of risk. In some cases, where risks are greater, advanced biosecurity practices will be required.

**Good wildlife biosecurity includes:**

- risk assessment & management
- appropriate work practices
- hygiene
- isolation
- diagnosis & treatment of sick or diseased individuals
- surveillance & monitoring for disease in wildlife populations.

The National Wildlife Biosecurity Guidelines have been developed to assist all people who work with wildlife and they acknowledge the wide range of circumstances under which people work and interact with wildlife in Australia and can be tailored by wildlife workers to suit their individual circumstances.

**Anyone who suspects or knows that an emergency animal disease is occurring in wildlife should contact the National Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.**

The National Wildlife Biosecurity Guidelines are a cooperative initiative between Wildlife Health Australia (WHA), and the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources on behalf of all who work with Australian wildlife and are available on the WHA website as a PDF at [www.wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au/Portals/0/Documents/ProgramProjects/National\\_Wildlife\\_Biosecurity\\_Guidelines.PDF](http://www.wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au/Portals/0/Documents/ProgramProjects/National_Wildlife_Biosecurity_Guidelines.PDF)