Skunks can carry **rabies**, a disease that is **fatal** to humans.

- It is always best to **observe wildlife at a distance**.
- If you encounter a skunk, **follow the tips below** to ensure your safety:

### If You Encounter an Adult or Juvenile Skunk:

- Always keep your pets up to date on their rabies vaccination to protect them against skunks and other wildlife that may carry rabies.
- If you or your pets have contact with a skunk (i.e. bite), talk to your vet about testing the skunk for rabies.
- Rabies testing is available through the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) Public Health Lab.
- If you have questions about rabies, you can call the OSDH epi-on-call at (405) 271-4060. Available 24/7/365.

### If You Encounter a Newborn or Young Skunk:

- Skunk babies often explore their environment and are away from their mother at times.
- If the mother is not nearby, observe the baby skunks for a day to see if the mother skunk returns, or the baby finds its way back to the den.
- If the babies were orphaned (mother was killed OR trapped and relocated), consider rescuing the babies using the steps below.
- Do not touch skunks with your bare hands. Avoid contact with the skunk’s saliva as it could be infectious with rabies.

### How to Safely Rescue a Skunk

1. **Prepare your supplies.**
   - Thick leather gloves or oven mitts
   - Towel
   - Shoe box or pet carrier

2. **Put on your gloves.**

3. **Gently pick the skunk up using the towel.**

4. **Be sure to cover the skunk’s head with the towel to avoid bites.**

5. **Place the skunk in the shoe box or pet carrier and secure it by closing lid/door.**

6. **Arrange drop off at your local animal shelter or wildlife rescue.**

Guidance was developed in collaboration with WildCare Foundation in Noble, OK.