



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services

4700 River Rd

Unit 39

Riverdale, MD 20737

January 28, 2021

Attention U.S. pet owners and others involved in the international movement of pets:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) is the competent government authority responsible for international export of live animals, including pets such as dogs and cats, leaving the United States and traveling to a foreign country. It is APHIS VS' role to provide endorsement (review and countersignature) of international health certificates after issuance by a USDA Accredited Veterinarian when required by an importing foreign country.

Please be advised that some importing foreign countries will now accept digital (electronic) signatures for the issuance and/or endorsement of international health certificates for live animals, including pets. The APHIS Pet Travel Website (www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pettravel) should be consulted to determine the importing foreign country's requirements, including whether digital signatures are accepted, and to obtain the appropriate international health certificate.

For importing foreign countries that accept digital endorsement, the health certificate will have digital signatures instead of traditional pen-and-ink signatures, and the USDA seal will be printed on the certificate instead of a raised embossed seal. For importing foreign countries that do not accept digital endorsement, the health certificate will still have pen-and-ink signatures and an embossed USDA seal. At time of endorsement, APHIS VS is responsible for verifying if the importing foreign country accepts digital signatures. As a result, all APHIS VS-endorsed health certificates will be in the signature format accepted by the importing foreign country.

In addition to the international health certificate required by the importing foreign country, some airlines require pets to travel with an additional health certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian stating the pet is fit to travel. Since APHIS VS only reviews and endorses documentation required by the importing foreign country, APHIS VS will not endorse any health certificates required solely by an airline. This information was communicated to the airlines in June 2016.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your local APHIS VS Office. Contact information can be found on the APHIS Pet Travel Website (www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pettravel). Thank you in advance for your attention to and assistance with this matter.

Respectfully,

Amber Headen, DVM
Director of Live Animal Exports
USDA APHIS Veterinary Services