The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) sets standards of care and treatment for animals bred for commercial sale, used in research, exhibited to the public, or transported in commerce. One of these standards is that dogs and cats must be a certain age before they are transported in commerce. If you own or operate an AWA-regulated business, you need to know about the age requirement and how it applies to your animals. Below is a summary of the requirement and related information to help you comply with the law.

What Is the Age Requirement?

Dogs and cats must be at least 8 weeks old and weaned before you, a commercial carrier, or an intermediate handler can transport them for commercial purposes.

**Exception:** This requirement does not apply if you are transporting dogs or cats to a registered research facility.

For More Information

To view the full text of the AWA and the Animal Welfare Regulations, refer to the *United States Code*, Title 7, Chapter 54, Sections 2131–2159 and the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 9, Chapter 1, Subchapter A, Parts 1–4.

If you have questions, contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Care staff at (970) 494-7478 or animalcare@usda.gov.

Age Chart

Use the chart on the back of this page to determine whether the dogs or cats you want to transport are old enough:

1. Find the month the animal was born on at the top of the chart.
2. Find the day of the month the animal was born on the left side of the chart.
3. Move down from the month and across from the day until the column and row intersect. This date is when the dog or cat is 8 weeks old, and you can transport them legally under the AWA.

**Example:** A cat or dog born on August 18 can be transported in commerce on or after October 13.

What if the animal was born in a leap year?

During a leap year, you can transport animals born from January 4 to February 28 one day earlier than indicated in the chart on the back of this page. Animals born on February 29 can be transported on April 25.