

# GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPORTATION OF DOGS AND CATS INTO JAMAICA FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

**A)** All dogs and cats entering Jamaica MUST be permanently identified with a microchip (ISO Standard 11784 or Annex A to standard 11785) in addition to being vaccinated against rabies.

**B)** Every person wishing to import any dog or cat into Jamaica MUST first apply for and obtain a Veterinary Import Permit from the Veterinary Services Division, Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries. Dogs arriving at any port in Jamaica without a valid Veterinary Import Permit will be denied entry into the island.

**C)** As far as is practicable, dogs and cats intended to be landed in Jamaica must arrive during normal working hours, i.e. between **8.30 a.m.** and **5.00 p.m.** Mondays to Thursdays and **8.30 a.m.** and **4.00 p.m.** on Fridays. This is to facilitate requisite Customs and Veterinary clearance followed by quarantine where applicable.

**D)** The importer of any dog or cat into Jamaica should begin the importation procedures far in advance of the planned importation date and is responsible for ensuring that all laws and obligations are complied with. The procedures include, but are not limited to the following:

- Advance notification to be made to the Veterinary Services Division;
- Inspections, vaccinations, tests and treatments in the exporting country;
- Obtaining all necessary documents and health certificates;
- Application for Veterinary Inspection upon arrival in Jamaica;
- Arrangements for veterinary quarantine, where necessary;
- Re-export or euthanasia if import guidelines are breached and animal refused entry;
- Compliance with all instructions given by the quarantine veterinarian.

## STEP 1 – REVIEW THE MODEL HEALTH CERTIFICATE WITH AN ACCREDITED VETERINARIAN TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PET CAN MEET THE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS BY YOUR DESIRED DEPARTURE DATE, AND IF SO, APPLY FOR AN IMPORT PERMIT

- The model health certificate is found on the APHIS Pet Travel Website
- Complete the Preliminary Application Form and submit to the VSD Permit Unit.

## STEP 2 - ELIGIBILITY

- Dogs and Cats
  - must not be under quarantine restrictions at the time of export to Jamaica;
  - must not be pregnant nor be suckling young at the time of export.
- A person shall not import any of the following dog breed into Jamaica –
  - (a) Dogo Argentino;
  - (b) Fila Brasileiro;
  - (c) Japanese Tosa; or
  - (d) Pit Bull Terrier.
- A person shall not import a hybrid dog or cat, that is to say, offsprings of domestic dogs or cats crossed with other species into Jamaica.

## STEP 3 - MICROCHIP REQUIREMENTS

- Dogs and cats must be identified by an ISO standard microchip that can be read by an Avid or other ISO compatible reader.
- The scanned microchip number must be correctly recorded on all documentation.
- If the microchip cannot be read or is recorded incorrectly across the dog's or cat's documentation, it will not be eligible for import to Jamaica.
- **If the dog or cat was vaccinated for rabies prior to being fitted with a microchip, the dog or cat must be re-vaccinated after the microchip is implanted.**

## STEP 4 - RABIES VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

- The dog or cat must be vaccinated against the rabies virus with an approved inactivated vaccine. Only vaccines produced in compliance with the recommendations of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Manual should be used.
- The dog must be vaccinated with an inactivated rabies virus vaccine that:

- was given when the dog was at least 90 days old;
- is valid, in accordance with the manufacturer's directions, at the time of export.
- The dog or cat has achieved a post-vaccination rabies virus neutralizing antibody titre of at least 0.5 IU/mL between three months and twelve months before importation;
- A result of less than 0.5 IU/ml is not acceptable and in this circumstance the dog or cat must re-vaccinate and the testing process repeated.
- The Rabies Neutralizing Antibody Test must be a fluorescent antibody virus neutralization (FAVN) test and MUST be done by an OIE/WHO approved rabies reference laboratory (for example Rabies Diagnostic Laboratory, Kansas State University, USA; Animal Health & Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Weybridge, United Kingdom).
- The laboratory reports must:
  - be in English;
  - be completed on the testing laboratory's letterhead;
  - include:
    - the dog's microchip number;
    - the date the blood was drawn and the date of arrival of the blood sample the laboratory;
    - the signature of the authorized person issuing the laboratory report;
    - the country where the blood sample was collected;
    - the test type and test result.
- The dog or cat may only be eligible for entry into the Jamaica **not less than** three (3) months and **not more than** twelve (12) months after the date the blood sample that gave a successful fluorescent antibody virus neutralization (FAVN) test result was drawn.

## STEP 5 - TEST AND VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

**Helminths:** Fecal examinations conducted and the dog/cat was treated **twice** by an approved veterinarian, at least fourteen (14) days apart with the final treatment seven (7) days prior to export. Treatment should be with broad spectrum anthelmintic(s) that is/are registered for use in the

country of origin and effective against the nematodes, cestodes and trematodes. (*State the active ingredients, product name, dose rate and dates of treatment*).

**External parasites:** examination and treatment by an approved veterinarian TWICE using products registered in the exporting country for the control of **flies, ticks, lice and mites** at the manufacturer's recommended dose. Dog/cat to be certified as free from external parasites at each treatment. The first treatment to be given 30 days prior to the date of shipment, at least two weeks before the second treatment, and the second within seven (7) days of export. (*State the active ingredients, product name, dose rate and date of treatment*.)

**Leptospirosis:** the dog was treated against *Leptospira interrogans serovar canicola* with an approved course of treatment within 30 days prior to the date of shipment; (*State the active ingredient, product name, dose rate and date of treatment*), **OR**

The dog has been vaccinated against *Leptospira interrogans serovar canicola* and is up to date with booster vaccines.

**Rabies:** The dog/cat was vaccinated for rabies with a killed virus vaccine or recombinant vaccine expressing the rabies virus glycoprotein;

Primary vaccination: the rabies vaccine was administered not less than six months and not more than one year prior to the date of shipment, when the animal was at least three months old. A copy of the vaccine certificate is required; **OR**

Booster vaccination (older animal): the vaccine was given not more than one year prior to the date of shipment. A copy of the most recent vaccination certificate is required; **AND**

A neutralizing antibody titration test for rabies was conducted at an official laboratory (**World Animal Health Organization Authorized Laboratories for Rabies Antibody Test**) in accordance with one of the methods described in the OIE Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines, and found to have at least 0.5 IU/ml of antibody in its serum.

**Other Primary vaccinations -**

Each dog was vaccinated according to the vaccine manufacturer's recommendations against diseases due to the canine distemper virus, canine parvovirus, canine infectious hepatitis virus or; canine adenovirus type 2 (canine respiratory disease complex) and canine parainfluenza virus not less than two (2) weeks prior to export.

Each cat shall be vaccinated according to the vaccine manufacturer's recommendations against feline herpesvirus 1 (FHV1), feline calicivirus (FCV), feline panleukopenia virus (FPV), feline leukemia virus (FeLV - kittens) not less than two (2) weeks prior to export.

**Heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*)** - If six months of age or older on the date of shipment, the dog has been subjected to a heartworm antigen ELISA test with a negative result in the 30 days prior to the date of shipment. ALL DOGS (regardless of age) have either been treated with a product registered for heartworm prevention at the manufacturer's recommended dose in the seven days prior to the date of shipment or are up-to-date with a sustained-release injection registered for heartworm prevention.

**Coccidiosis** - Recognized tests. If positive, the dog must be treated with an effective product for the treatment of coccidial infections according to the manufacturer's recommendations within 21 - 30 days of travel.

**Leishmaniosis**- Dogs must be tested for *Leishmania infantum* infection by an indirect fluorescent antibody test (IFAT) or an enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA). The test must produce a negative result within 45 days of export. This test may not be required if the country is free of Leishmaniosis. This should be stated in the certificate.

**Babesiosis, Lyme disease and Ehrlichiosis** - each dog has been tested using an approved test inclusive of ELISA for *Babesia canis*, *Babesia gibsoni*, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and *Ehrlichia chaffeensis* with negative results within 16 days of export.

***Brucella canis*\***: - The dog has been subjected to a rapid slide agglutination test (RSAT), **or** a cytoplasmic agar gel immunodiffusion test (CPAg-AGID), **or** a tube agglutination test (TAT) with negative results within 45 days prior to the date of export; **AND**

The dog was not mated to a dog of lesser *Brucella canis* health status in the 45 days prior to the date of shipment. This test may not be required if the country is free of *Brucella canis* infection. However, this should be stated in the veterinary health certificate.

**\*NOTE: this test is not required for dogs which have been spayed/neutered.**

***Canine transmissible venereal tumor*** – the external genitalia of each dog was examined no less than seven days prior to the date of shipment and no lesions suggestive of canine transmissible venereal tumor was observed.

***Canine Influenza*** - The dog is free of infection with or signs and symptoms of canine influenza.

Each **dog** was examined **within seven (7) days of export** and found to be in good health, physically sound, free of any evidence of infectious disease and was fit for travel.

## STEP 6 - APPLYING FOR A VETERINARY IMPORT PERMIT FOR DOGS AND CATS

A completed Preliminary Application Form (available on the Ministry's website: [www.moa.gov.im](http://www.moa.gov.im)), along with all supporting documentation must be submitted by email to [vsdpermits@gmail.com](mailto:vsdpermits@gmail.com) or in hard copy, to the Permit Unit.

- Supporting documentation include:
  - FAVN Report. (Copy to be submitted to Permit Unit, VSD at least 72 hours prior to export).
  - Veterinary Health Certificate.
  - In the case of service dogs, registration/documentation from one or more of the following organizations -
    - (a) Assistance Dogs International or its associates;
    - (b) the European Disability Forum;
    - (c) the European Guide Dog Federation;

- (d) the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners;
- (e) the International Guide Dog Federation;
- (f) the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations.

Every applicant for a veterinary import permit to import a dog or cat into Jamaica **must** provide evidence that the dog or cat complies with **all** import requirements as outlined, before a permit can be issued. The VSD will not issue an import permit until a copy of the model veterinary health certificate for the importation of dogs and cats into Jamaica from approved countries in accordance with **Regulation 10**, completed by an official veterinarian of the country of export is presented.

- After the review of supporting documentation, the successful applicant will then complete the application online using the MOAT trade system at [www.moatrade.gov.jm](http://www.moatrade.gov.jm) for a veterinary import permit to enter the island.
- Applicants are required to pay a cost of J\$5000.00 or its foreign currency equivalent, for a veterinary import permit payable online (via debit or credit card), or at the cashier at the Veterinary Services Division (cash, credit or debit card).
- **Import permits for dogs and cats are valid for up to three (3) months from the date of issue.**
- If you are likely to return to Jamaica with your dog or cat it is recommend that you notify and discuss this with the Veterinary Officer, Quarantine, **prior to** leaving Jamaica.
- Please be aware that when your dog or cat **leaves Jamaica**, it **immediately** loses its Jamaican health status. As such, you **may not** be able to return with this dog or cat to Jamaica without a review by the veterinary officer, Permit Unit with the subsequent issuance of a veterinary import permit for the dog or cat. A health certificate from the exporting country will also be required.

## STEP 7 - NOTIFICATION OF ARRIVAL

- At least three weeks' notice of arrival of the dog or cat, with a further seventy-two (72) hours confirmation shall be given to the Director of Veterinary Services via the Permit

Unit at [vsdpermits@gmail.com](mailto:vsdpermits@gmail.com). The Animal Landing Notification Form should be included as an attachment.

- The Animal Landing Notification Form must be completed at least three (3) days prior to arrival and submitted to the Permit Unit with the following information:
  - Name, address (in Jamaica) and contact information of the owner/agent;
  - Name and contact information of the Customs broker;
  - Date and time of arrival;
  - Airline and Flight number or vessel name.

#### STEP 8 - VETERINARY EXPORT HEALTH CERTIFICATE

- The original Official Veterinary Health Certificate for the importation of dogs and cats into Jamaica from approved countries, in accordance with Regulation 10, along with a valid veterinary import permit issued by the Veterinary Services Division, Jamaica, must accompany the dog or cat upon arrival in Jamaica. The veterinary health certificate must be completed by an official veterinarian of the country of export; **OR** prepared by an accredited veterinarian and endorsed by an official veterinarian of the country of export.
- The official veterinarian must complete, sign and stamp all pages of the veterinary health certificate.
- Any corrections made to the veterinary health certificate must be struck through, remain legible and be signed and stamped by the official veterinarian. Correction fluid **must not** be used.
- The official veterinarian must also sign and stamp each page of the following:
  - Ehrlichia canis laboratory report,
  - Leishmania infantum laboratory report,
  - Brucella canis laboratory report (where applicable),
  - Leptospira interrogans serovar canicola laboratory report (if not vaccinated),
  - Rabies vaccination certificate,
  - FAVN Laboratory Report.
- It is recommended that you retain a copy of each document.

## STEP 9 - TRAVEL TO JAMAICA

- **The dog or cat must arrive directly into Kingston, unless otherwise authorized under law by the Chief Veterinary Officer.**
- Dogs and cats should travel as manifested cargo in compliance with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) approved standards. (There may be exceptions for service dogs).
- The dog or cat must travel in an International Air Transport Association (IATA) approved crate.
- With the exception of service dogs, all dogs and cats will be checked at the freight terminal, not the passenger terminal.
- The dog or cat must arrive in Jamaica prior to the expiration date of the import permit.

## STEP 10 - LANDING OF ANIMALS

The Importer must notify the Jamaica Customs Agency of the pending arrival of the dog or cat and must verify with the Jamaica Customs Agency the requisite Custom's fees where applicable. This may also be accomplished by employing the services of a custom's broker.

In accordance with local law, upon arrival in Jamaica, dogs and cats must be examined by an official veterinarian. The veterinarian will:

- examine the dog or cat, verify that the animal is in good health and free from any signs or symptoms of infectious or contagious diseases, including the infectious or contagious diseases listed in the Sixth Schedule and
- Conduct a documentary check in relation to the dog or cat.
- Determine further action for quarantine or release.

## STEP 11 - POST ENTRY AND QUARANTINE

In accordance with local law, upon entry into Jamaica, all animals must undergo at least (fourteen) 14 days quarantine at the National Quarantine Facility, Plumb Point.

- Upon arrival, an official veterinarian will:

- examine the dog or cat, verify that the animal is in good health and free from any signs or symptoms of infectious or contagious diseases, including the infectious or contagious diseases listed in the Sixth Schedule and
- Conduct a documentary check in relation to the dog or cat.
- Where the inspector determines that the dog or cat is of good health and free from symptoms of infectious or contagious diseases, including the infectious or contagious diseases set out in the Sixth Schedule, the inspector may:
  - (a) permit the dog or cat to enter the Island;
  - (b) require the dog or cat to undergo post-entry quarantine for a period of not less than fourteen days; and
  - (c) in the case of a special service dog or a dog or cat travelling under an approved pet travel scheme, permit the dog or cat to be transported to a place approved by the inspector, at the owner's expense, subject to such terms and conditions as the inspector considers necessary.

**Terms and Conditions of place approved by the Inspector for Service Dogs.**

- Place is inspected by veterinary inspector approximately fourteen (14) days prior to importation, to determine the suitability of the location.
- No other dogs or cats should be present at location.

**STEP 12 – In-Transit/Transshipment of dogs/cats**

- Permission may be given for transit/transshipment of a dog or cat via Jamaica. However, prior authorization must be sought from the VSD.
- Dogs being transshipped must not leave the international/air side of the airport.

**INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR TRANSIT OF DOGS AND CATS.**

- country of origin
- date of arrival
- arrival vessel/craft name and number
- port of entry
- time of arrival
- period of transit

- date of departure
- departure vessel/craft name and number
- time of departure
- country of destination

### **STEP 13 - JAMAICA CUSTOMS AND ASSOCIATED FEES**

- The costs associated with the identification document, transportation, storage and obtaining biosecurity clearance shall be borne by the importer.
- All fees relating to Jamaica Customs clearance are required to be paid prior to release of the dog or cat.
- Landing of animals outside of the prescribed hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8:30 a.m. to 4:00p.m. Fridays and on a week-ends and Public Holidays), will attract extra fees.

For further information, please contact the Permit Unit of Veterinary Services Division at [vsdpermits@gmail.com](mailto:vsdpermits@gmail.com) or (876) 927-0594; (876) 977-2489/92.