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Pet travel from the United States to South Africa

Last Modified:

Welcome! This page will guide you through the rules and requirements for traveling internationally with your pet.

Before You Start the Process

Find a USDA-Accredited Veterinarian

With help from a [USDA-accredited veterinarian](#), you can learn more about your destination country's entry requirements for pets, including any needed vaccinations, tests, or treatments. We recommend creating a schedule to make sure you meet all requirements within the specified timeframe.

Gather This Information for Your USDA-Accredited Veterinarian

- The type of pet traveling
- The destination country
- If applicable, countries where your pet will stop (for customs clearance or upon leaving the airport or seaport) on the way to the destination country
- The date of departure from the United States

- Whether the pet will be traveling alone, as cargo, or with a person in the cabin of the plane
- *Note: If you're traveling with a pet bird or exotic animal, you may need to work with additional agencies, such as the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) (1.41 MB) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).*

Read These Resources

- [Pet Travel Guidance for Pets Traveling to Another Country From the United States](#)
 - In Spanish (En Español): [Guía de viaje para mascotas que viajan a otro país desde Estados Unidos](#)
 - In Chinese (繁體中文): [\[Link\]](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions About Traveling With Your Pet](#)

Travel Requirements Based on Pet Type

Alert

All pet veterinary health certificates to South Africa MUST BE endorsed by USDA-APHIS, including Service and Emotional Support Animals.

All disease testing, including test type, must comply with the requirements outlined on the veterinary health certificate. Failure to comply with the requirements in the veterinary health certificate may result in the pet being returned to the U.S. or euthanized.

Cats

A veterinary import permit is required for all cats traveling to S. Africa. Veterinary import permit applications and further information can be found on the Republic of South Africa's website at <https://www.gov.za/services/import/import-animals-and-animal-products>. The completed veterinary permit applications can be sent to the Permit Office at VetPermits@daff.gov.za.

The requirements for traveling with your pet are described in the health certificate.

[Veterinary Health Certificate for Cats](#) (99.26 KB)

Dogs

A veterinary import permit is **required** for all dogs and cats traveling to South Africa. Veterinary import permit applications and further information can be found on the Republic of South Africa's website at

<https://www.gov.za/services/import/import-animals-and-animal-products>. The completed veterinary permit applications can be sent to the Permit Office at VetPermits@daff.gov.za.

If South Africa approves the import application, they will issue an import permit and provide the required veterinary health certificate which will detail the entry requirements. Please share the import permit and veterinary health certificate with your USDA-accredited veterinarian as soon as you have received it.

U.S. origin **dogs** entering South Africa are required to be test negative for *Trypanosoma evansi* (surra) on **both** the CATT and Giemsa blood smear tests. All surra testing must occur at one of the two internationally recognized OIE Reference Laboratories for surra testing (see below for further instructions on sample submission procedures).

All other required tests must be completed at an officially approved laboratory located in the United States.

The animal's microchip number must be recorded on all laboratory reports.

APHIS endorsement of the health certificate is required after it has been issued by a USDA Accredited Veterinarian. Health certificate issuance and endorsement must occur within 10 days of the pet's travel.

[Guidance document for Dogs traveling to South Africa](#) (311.15 KB)

Sample Submission to the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Belgium

Note: The Institute of Tropical Medicine highly recommends that U.S. sample submitters either create their own account DHL International Shipping or use a commercial laboratory (Ex: ANTECH) when sending samples to Belgium to avoid samples being returned.

***You must forward the shipment tracking number to the Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp dispatching service **in advance of the shipment:**
shipments@itg.be and surra@itg.be

Per the ITM Import Permit, the text “**Diagnostic samples - Do not open during transport**” must be printed on the parcel, along with a copy of the ITM Import Permit attached to the exterior.

Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp
Applied Technology and Production Unit
Nationalestraat 155
B-2000 Antwerpen
BELGIUM
Tel: +32 (0)3 247 63 74
surra@itg.be

[Sample Submission to the Institute of Tropical Medicine](#) (646.28 KB)

Sample Submission to the National Research Center for Protozoan Diseases, JAPAN

National Research Center for Protozoan Diseases

Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine
Inada-cho Nishi 2-13
Obihiro, Hokkaido 080-8555
JAPAN
Tel: +81-155 49.56.47 Fax: +81-155 49.56.43
ircpmi@obihiro.ac.jp

[Sample Submission to the Nat'l Research Ctr for Protozoan Diseases](#) (211.47 KB)

Birds

Birds for export using the below health certificate must:

- Have a South African import permit
- Have been born and remained in captivity

- Have remained in the United States for at least 3 months prior to export to South Africa
- Be identified by means of closed leg rings or microchips
- Undergo a 28-day pre-export isolation in a facility (which could be a private residence) that was approved by an APHIS inspector before the start of isolation. To schedule an APHIS inspection, please contact your [APHIS Endorsement Office](#).
- Tested for avian influenza and Newcastle disease by means of both tracheal/oropharyngeal **and** cloacal swabs, twice at least 14 days apart, the second test being within 7 days of departure
- Be transported to South Africa in a sealed transport that is covered in mosquito proof netting

Other requirements are explained in the model health certificate below.

Veterinary Health Certificate for Birds

Lagomorphs (Rabbits, Hares and Pikas)

A veterinary import permit is required for all lagomorphs (including rabbits, hares and pikas) traveling to South Africa. Veterinary import permit applications and further information can be found on the Republic of South Africa's website at <https://www.gov.za/services/import/import-animals-and-animal-products>. The completed veterinary permit applications can be sent to the Permit Office at VetPermits@daff.gov.za.

The requirements for traveling with your pet are described in the health certificate.

[Veterinary Health Certificate for Lagomorphs](#) (161.14 KB)

Other Pets

For pet travel requirements not listed, APHIS has not been officially informed by the foreign country about the requirements for your pet's travel. We recommend that you contact a government official of the country you are traveling to for more information.

Country of Destination Contact Information

[World Organisation for Animal Health: Members](#)

[U.S. Department of State: Foreign Embassies and Consulates](#)

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Countries Participating in the European Union

Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia

Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Republic of Ireland
Italy
Latvia

Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Northern Ireland^{*}
Norway^{**}
Poland
Portugal

Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland**

* Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom (UK), but will continue to follow European Union (EU) requirements even though the UK is no longer part of the EU.

** Norway and Switzerland are **not** part of the EU but have adopted EU legislation for import of most species of live animals.

Important Travel Considerations

If you are transiting (passing through) the European Union:



If your pet is traveling through (transiting) a country in the European Union (EU) on the way to a third, non-EU country, you will also need a transit health certificate for your pet for the EU. The transit health certificate will be the same as if your pet's final destination was the EU country. Use the information and steps above under "Travel Requirements Based on Pet Type" to determine which health certificate should be used. [View a list of EU countries.](#)

Considerations for airline travel:



Airlines and shipping lines have their own policies and requirements for transporting pets. Check with your airline or shipping representative to determine what requirements they may have.

[View additional information for pet owners, airlines, and others about APHIS endorsement of international health certificates.](#)

Will you be returning to the United States with your pet?



[View the Requirements](#)

ALERT: Read the [CDC Notice of Temporary Suspension of Dogs Entering the United States From Countries Classified as High Risk for Dog Rabies.](#)

Information for Accredited Veterinarians

[Print](#)