Frequently Asked Questions About Traveling With Your Pet

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What do I need to do to travel with my pet?

The destination country sets requirements for pet travel. Most countries require pets to arrive with a health certificate (also called an international health certificate, a veterinary health certificate, a veterinary certificate, or an export certificate). Health certificates are issued (completed, signed, and dated) by veterinarians who examine your pet and perform (or verify) all required testing, vaccinations, or treatments. If your destination country needs USDA APHIS to endorse the health certificate, your pet's veterinarian must be accredited by USDA.

Find a USDA-Accredited Veterinarian

When endorsement of your pet's health certificate is required, USDA APHIS reviews and endorses (counter-signed and embossed/ stamped) the health certificate *after* your USDA-accredited veterinarian issues it.

Learn More about Obtaining USDA APHIS Endorsement of Your Pet's Health Certificate

Does one health certificate work in all countries?

No. Each country establishes its requirements based on the type of animal traveling. There is not one standard health certificate or set of requirements.

Do I need a pet passport?

Because pet entry requirements vary by country, the United States does not issue pet passports for international travel. Instead, we issue health certificates that confirm your pet meets the unique requirements of your destination country and any country your pet may transit on the way to that destination.

How do I obtain a pet health certificate?

Local veterinarians issue pet health certificates. If your destination country requires USDA APHIS to endorse the health certificate, the veterinarian issuing your pet's health certificate must be accredited by USDA.

Find a USDA-Accredited Veterinarian

How long does it take before a pet can travel to another country?

Get started as soon as possible! The process could take a few weeks to many months, depending on the destination country's requirements. Please work with your veterinarian as soon you know your pet will travel to another country.

Who should I contact to get an update on the status of my health certificate?

Please contact your accredited veterinarian. They can provide you an update on the status of your health certificate.

Will the USDA Endorsement Office examine my pet when they endorse (stamp) the health certificate?

You do not need to bring your pet to your USDA Endorsement Office unless instructed. Very few countries require USDA APHIS to examine your pet before travel. In most cases, you will only need to provide your pet's completed health certificate (signed and dated by your USDA-accredited veterinarian), vaccination certificates, laboratory test reports (when required by the destination country), and payment for the endorsement fee.

Read Guidance for Pets Traveling to Another Country from the United States

My pet will be traveling either to multiple countries or through multiple countries on the way to the destination country. What does my pet need for each of those countries?

Your pet will need a health certificate for the first country they travel to and clear customs after leaving the United States. The requirements your pet will have to meet to travel to additional countries will depend on the mode of transportation (e.g., car, ship) as well as how long your pet will spend in each country. It is your responsibility to ensure the countries you visit will accept your pet at each border you cross.

Travelers: Please contact your accredited veterinarian for assistance with pet travel to multiple foreign counties.

Accredited Veterinarians: If you require assistance, please email questions to your USDA Endorsement Office.

I cannot find my destination country OR my type (species) of pet in the destination country's page on the Pet Travel Website. What do I do?

If your destination country or the requirements for your pet are not listed, USDA APHIS has not been officially informed by the foreign country about the requirements for your pet's travel. Although there are countries with unknown requirements or countries with requirements not provided for that type of pet, it does not mean the destination country does not have requirements your pet must meet.

You will need to contact a government official of the destination country for more information, such as an official at the destination country's embassy or consulate in the United States, or where your pet will cross customs to enter the destination country (e.g., airport), or their Ministry of Agriculture. Please be sure to obtain any information from the foreign official in writing (in English) and share it with those involved in your pet's travel. If you have difficulty reaching a government official of the destination country, the U.S. Department of State may be able to help.

In some cases, countries require the issuance of an import permit *before* your pet's travel. It is essential that you thoroughly read and understand the import permit as it may provide specific instructions or requirements for your pet.

What if my pet doesn't meet one or more of the destination country's requirements?

Your pet must meet the import requirements prior to travel. Your USDA-accredited veterinarian cannot issue the health certificate until the pet meets the requirements. If, for considerable reasons, your pet cannot meet the entry requirements, you can attempt to seek a waiver to the requirement(s) by reaching out to the ministry of agriculture in the destination country. If the official allows your pet to still enter the country without meeting all requirements, you must obtain written permission (in English) and share it with those involved in your pet's travel.

Neither your accredited veterinarian nor USDA APHIS can waive the requirements of another country.

If you have difficulty reaching a government official of the destination country, the U.S. Department of State may be able to help.

What do I need to take a pet from one U.S. State or Territory to another U.S. State or Territory (travel within the United States)?

USDA APHIS does not endorse health certificates for the movement of pets across State or Territorial lines. You should contact the State Veterinarian's office in your destination State for their requirements.

Interstate movement requirements are set by the destination State or Territory, including Hawaii, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

I'm active duty military relocating to another country, and I want to take my pets. Who can examine my pet, issue the health certificate, and then endorse (stamp) my health certificate?

In very limited circumstances, active duty military veterinarians and General Schedule (GS-0701) Federal veterinarians working for the military (this does not include civilian veterinarians working on a military base) can examine your pet and issue and endorse (stamp) pet health certificates. This only applies for dogs, cats, and ferrets traveling to the European Union, and dogs and cats traveling to Japan and South Korea. For all other countries and types of pets, if official endorsement of a certificate is required, the military veterinarian must be accredited by USDA and APHIS must endorse the certificate.

I have more questions. Where can I get additional information or help with this process?

You should work with your pet’s veterinarian first. USDA-accredited veterinarians have undergone special training to prepare pets to enter another country and can answer your questions about pet travel. If any additional help or information is needed, your accredited veterinarian should email questions to a USDA Endorsement Office.

Read Guidance for Pets Traveling to Another Country from the United States

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