



## Animal Care Tech Note

# Live Dog Import Permit Requirements Under the Animal Welfare Act

The Animal Care program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) administers Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations (Title 9, Sections 2.150-2.153 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*) which set requirements for permits to legally import live dogs into the United States for the purpose of resale. Animal Care works with its partners at U.S. ports of entry—the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—to ensure that live dogs imported for resale meet the AWA's health and vaccination requirements and are at least 6 months of age.

### AWA-Covered Dog Imports

The AWA and its regulations apply only to live dogs imported into the United States for the purpose of **resale**. Resale includes any transfer of ownership of a dog for compensation after it is imported. Examples include:

- Sales through retail or wholesale channels
- Adoption for a fee or donation

### Dog Imports Not Covered

The AWA and its regulations do not apply when there is no resale of a dog after it is imported. Examples include:

- Pet, service, or working dogs traveling with or being delivered to their owners
- Dogs participating in shows or events
- Dogs that will be used as breeding stock but will not be resold
- Dogs that will be used or trained as working dogs but will not be resold
- Dogs transiting the United States to be resold in another country
- Dogs purchased or adopted from a foreign source and delivered to the new owners who will not resell the dogs



### Importation Requirements under the AWA

Dogs imported into the United States for resale must be at least 6 months of age and in good health. They must be vaccinated for rabies, distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus, and parainfluenza virus. All covered dogs must be accompanied by health and rabies vaccination certificates that certify the age, health, and vaccination requirements. These certificates must be issued in English by a veterinarian with a valid license to practice veterinary medicine in the country of export. Finally, imported dogs must be accompanied by an import permit issued by Animal Care.

### Exceptions to the Requirements

Exceptions to the age and/or vaccination requirements may be granted for the following:

- Dogs imported into Hawaii from the British Isles, Australia, Guam, or New Zealand
- Dogs imported for resale for research purposes
- Dogs imported for veterinary treatment and subsequent resale

In such cases, contact Animal Care's Live Dog Import Team for guidance.

## Obtaining an Import Permit

You can apply for a live dog import permit online at **[efile.aphis.usda.gov](https://efile.aphis.usda.gov)**. Applications must be submitted at least 5 business days before import to allow enough time for processing. For step-by-step guidance on how to apply for permits, contact Animal Care's Live Dog Import Permit Team.

You will need to obtain a USDA eAuthentication ID and password to gain access to the system. To learn more about obtaining an eAuthentication ID, visit **[www.eauth.usda.gov/home](https://www.eauth.usda.gov/home)**. There is no fee to obtain a permit.

## Other Requirements for Importing Dogs

Multiple agencies within and outside APHIS have requirements for importing live dogs, regardless of whether they are covered by the AWA. As an importer, you are responsible for complying with **all** Federal, State, and local regulations and requirements. The links below and on our website to other agencies can help you understand all requirements.

- APHIS Veterinary Services requirements: **[www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel)**
- CDC requirements: **[www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs/](https://www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs/)**
- State of destination requirements: **[www.usaha.org/saho](https://www.usaha.org/saho)**

For U.S. customs requirements, contact the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) office at your port of entry.

You can find contact information online at **[www.cbp.gov/about/contact/ports](https://www.cbp.gov/about/contact/ports)**.

## For More Information

Contact Animal Care's Live Dog Import Permit Team at:

USDA APHIS Animal Care  
Live Dog Import Permit Team  
2150 Centre Avenue, Building B  
Mailstop 3W11  
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117

Phone: (816) 737-4223

Email: **[ac.dogimport.mailbox@usda.gov](mailto:ac.dogimport.mailbox@usda.gov)**

Website: **[www.aphis.usda.gov/live-animal-import/commercial-dog-import](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/live-animal-import/commercial-dog-import)**