

PET TRAVEL OVERVIEW - INFORMATION FOR PET OWNERS

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) was the pre-Brexit system that allowed pet dogs, cats and ferrets from certain countries to enter and to travel out of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) without quarantine as long as they met certain rules including having an official Pet Passport. The rules have now changed, and from 1st January 2021, if you wish to take your pet to the **EU or NI (Northern Ireland)** and avoid the need for quarantine, you will need an Animal Health Certificate (AHC) issued by a veterinary surgeon who has obtained the Official Veterinarian (OV) qualification. For repeat trips to the EU or NI, a new AHC will be needed every time. The rules are to keep Great Britain free from rabies and certain other diseases, protecting both human and animal health.



Before travelling, owners of cats/dogs/ferrets must meet the following rules (in this order):

- Identify the pet with a microchip
- Vaccinate their pet against rabies (minimum age 12 weeks)
- Wait at least 22 days from the date of rabies vaccination before leaving Great Britain (for example, if a rabies vaccine is given on Tuesday 12 July, the AHC can be issued from Wednesday 3rd August)
- Arrange an appointment with an OV to obtain an AHC Certificate no more than 10days before travel (this will be valid for only 10days after the date of issue for entry into the EU or NI, and is valid for onward travel for 4months after the date of issue as well as for re-entry to Great Britain)

If you are travelling to Finland, Eire, Northern Ireland, Norway or Malta, your dog must **also** be treated by an OV against tapeworm 1-5days before your arrival in that country, and the OV must document this on the AHC.

You must enter the EU or Northern Ireland through a designated "travellers' point of entry" (TPE), where you will need to present your pet's original AHC along with proof of your pet's microchip, rabies vaccination and tapeworm treatment (if required). You must check the rules of the country you are travelling to for any additional requirements or restrictions before you travel.

On return to Great Britain:

- **Dogs** must be treated by a veterinary surgeon against tapeworms, not more than 120hrs (5days) but not less than 24hrs, before the time of scheduled (re-)entry into Great Britain, and this be documented by the veterinary surgeon (unless travelling from Finland, Eire, NI, Norway or Malta)
- You must travel via an approved route (unless travelling from Eire, Isle of Man or other UK countries)
- You must carry your original AHC for the authorities to check

Rabies vaccination boosters will normally be required every 3 years. It is your responsibility to ensure you keep your pet's rabies vaccinations up to date. Should they lapse, re-vaccination and a 22-day wait may be required before you can travel.

The above requirements are primarily designed to protect Great Britain from Rabies – they do not protect your pet from all the diseases they may be at risk of contracting abroad. We recommend that prior to travel, you treat your pet to prevent parasites such as **ticks, sandflies** and **heartworm**, which are not commonly found in Great Britain, but which are prevalent in many other countries and can cause serious disease in your pet and also potentially in people. Please book an appointment with one of our vets to discuss how you can best protect your pet and your family before you travel abroad.

The permanent export/import of pets, commercial movement, movement for breeding purposes, as well as movement outside of the European Union, all may entail meeting additional specific requirements. Pet owners should seek advice from the government department responsible for pet travel and animal export:

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/bring-your-pet-to-uk>

Pet travel helpline: **0370 241 1710** email: pettravel@apha.gov.uk

Export Office: **03000 200 301** email: petexports@apha.gov.uk