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How To Bring Dogs into the United States for Commercial Sale or Adoption

Last Modified:

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated rabies vaccination requirements for all dogs entering or returning to the United States. Certain requirements must be met ***before*** **departing the United States**. Learn More

Rabies Alert

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the primary Government authority for all dogs imported into the United States, including returning U.S.-origin dogs. The following requirements related to rabies are established by CDC, **not** APHIS.

- **Certification Required**
  - Dogs traveling to or returning from a high-risk country for dog rabies must have the "Certification of U.S.-Issued Rabies Vaccination" form completed by a USDA-accredited veterinarian and submitted ***before*** **departing the United States.**

    - This form **cannot be issued retroactively** after your dog leaves the United States.
    - Veterinarians: Instructions for completing the form
- **Additional CDC Requirements**
    - Learn More: Entry Requirements for U.S.-Vaccinated Dogs From High-Risk Countries | CDC
    - Questions? Contact **CDC** at **800-232-4636** or visit CDC-INFO.

Related Information

- APHIS may have separate requirements for dogs entering the United States. These differ from the CDC import requirements.
- Learn More: Bringing a Pet Dog into the United States | APHIS
- VEHCS Access and Help (for veterinarians): Using the Veterinary Export Health Certification System (VEHCS)

The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulates dogs imported into the United States for resale, whether through retail or wholesale channels or fee-based adoption. Congress added this section to the AWA in 2008, and APHIS published specific regulations in 2014. It is the responsibility of the dog's importer to meet all requirements before bringing the dog into the United States.

The AWA does not apply to privately owned dogs not intended for resale. Information on bringing your pet dog into the United States is available at Pet Travel.

Learn More About the AWA

Requirements

Dogs must be:

- At least 6 months (180 days) of age at the time of entry into the United States.
- Examined by a licensed veterinarian in the country of export and found to be in good health and free of infectious disease, internal parasites, and external

parasites.
- Vaccinated for rabies by a licensed veterinarian at least 30 days before the date of entry into the United States.
    - Dogs must be at least 84 days of age at the time of vaccination.
    - The vaccination must be current at the time of arrival.
        - 2- and 3-year vaccinations are acceptable. However, if the expiration date of the vaccination is not available, a 1-year validity is applied.
    - The 30-day wait does not apply to dogs who were previously vaccinated for rabies after at least 84 days of age without a lapse in rabies vaccination status.
- Vaccinated for distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, parainfluenza, and leptospirosis (DHLPP) within 12 months of entry into the United States.
- Accompanied by a health and rabies vaccination certificate issued in English by a veterinarian with a valid license to practice veterinary medicine in the country of export.
    - We recommend using the APHIS Form 7041: Live Dog Import Health and Rabies Certificate (133.05 KB).
    - The certificate must include:
        - The breed, sex, age, color, and other identifying information for the dog (for example, name, microchip, or tattoo, if applicable).
        - The name, manufacturer, lot number, expiration date, and validity period of the vaccinations.
        - The veterinarian's license number.
    - The veterinarian must sign all certificates.
- Accompanied by a valid import permit issued by APHIS Animal Care.

Exceptions

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; and,
- Dogs imported for veterinary treatment and subsequent resale.

In such cases, contact Animal Care's Live Dog Import Team for guidance: ac.dogimport.mailbox@usda.gov.

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

Additional Requirements

Dogs exported from countries with African swine fever (ASF), foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), or screwworm must meet additional requirements.

Check to see if the country you are importing dogs from is affected by ASF, FMD, or screwworm

Additional information about dogs entering the United States from Mexico

For dogs traveling to the United States from Mexico, the required screwworm freedom certification may be issued by a clinical veterinarian trained and authorized to sign on behalf of the official government veterinarian.

A list of authorized veterinarians in Mexico that can issue screwworm freedom certification can be found on Directorio de MVRA en Clínicas y Hospitales Veterinarios (MVRA Directory of Veterinary Clinics and Hospitals)

Expand All

African Swine Fever

Effective **August 16, 2021,** dogs imported for commercial sale or adoption must meet requirements from APHIS Animal Care (listed above) and APHIS Veterinary Services (described below) per the Federal Order for Importation of Live Dogs for Resale From Regions Where African Swine Fever (ASF) Exists or Is Reasonably Believed To Exist (117.88 KB).

Find out whether the country you are importing dogs from is affected by ASF

Commercial Dog Import: ASF Federal Order Frequently Asked Questions

To comply with APHIS Veterinary Services' ASF requirements, the shipment of dog(s) must meet the following conditions:

- The dog(s) and their shipping crate or container must be free of dirt, wood shavings, hay, straw, or any other organic or natural bedding material.
- All bedding that accompanies the dog(s) during transit must be properly disposed of at the U.S. post-entry point(s)* of concentration.
- Each dog must have an ISO-compliant microchip implanted, and the individual microchip number must be verified immediately before each animal is bathed.
- Each dog must be bathed at the U.S. post-entry point(s) of concentration within 2 calendar days of arrival in the United States. Bathing must be documented in Part 2 of the Veterinary Services Dog Import Record.**

* *U.S. post-entry point(s) of concentration are the first location where shipments of imported dog(s) are directly moved to following arrival at the U.S. port of entry.*

** *Required forms for documentation purposes will be provided by APHIS Animal Care when the import permit is issued.*

Foot-and-Mouth Disease

Dogs coming from a country that is not declared free of **foot-and-mouth disease** must meet the following requirements:

- Their fur and bedding must be free of excessive dirt, hay, or straw.
- The dog(s) should be bathed as soon as it reaches its destination and kept separate from all livestock for 5 days after entering the United States.

Note: There is no documentation required to meet FMD requirements.

Screwworm

Dogs traveling from **countries or regions where screwworm is known to exist** may enter the United States if they are accompanied by a certificate signed by a full-time salaried veterinary official of the region of origin stating:

- The dog has been inspected for screwworm within 5 days prior to shipment to the United States, and
- The dog is either free from screwworm **OR**
- The dog was infested with screwworm, held in quarantine, and treated until free from screwworm prior to leaving the region.

Note: APHIS Veterinary Services does not have a required template or form for screwworm freedom certification. The certification can be a standalone document or incorporated into an export health certificate issued in the exporting country. Documentation will be reviewed and the dog inspected at the port of entry.

*Additional information about dogs entering the United States from Mexico

Livestock Handling Dogs

Dogs used in livestock handling that are imported from any part of the world **except** Canada, Mexico, and certain regions of Central America and the West Indies should have no evidence of tapeworm infection.

How To Obtain a Permit

Use APHIS eFile to apply for a permit online. For help with using APHIS eFile:

- Guidance for Requesting a Permit To Import Live Dogs (1.77 MB)
- Contact us if you instead require a paper copy of the permit application form:

Live Dog Import Permit Team

Email: ac.dogimport.mailbox@usda.gov

Phone: 816-737-4223

Fax: 970-494-7461

Mailing Address:

2150 Centre Ave.

Bldg. B, Mailstop 3W11

Fort Collins, CO 80526

For both options, allow a minimum of 5 business days for processing of your permit application. Applications are processed Monday–Friday, excluding Federal holidays. The day you submit the application and the date the dog arrives in the United States does not count toward the 5 business days.

Incomplete applications or applications with incorrect information will cause delays in processing. To ensure your application is accurate and complete, use the Customer Checklist for Live Dog Import Permit Applications (111.39 KB).

Other Federal and State Agency Requirements

It is the responsibility of the dog's importer to meet all Federal and State requirements for entry. You may need to meet the requirements of the following government agencies:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Bringing a Dog into the United States
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection: Bringing Pets and Wildlife into the United States
- The State veterinarian's office in your destination State

More Information

Read the Animal Care Tech Note: Live Dog Import Permit Requirements Under the Animal Welfare Act. (471.38 KB)

Contact Us

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