

UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

USA “Pets Travel Scheme” requirements/regulations:

How to bring your pet dog or cat into or back into the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)

Pet dogs and cats (including guide and hearing dogs) that are resident in either the United Kingdom or the United States can enter or re-enter the UK without quarantine provided they meet the rules of the Scheme.

Animals which do not meet all the rules must be [licensed into quarantine](#). They might then be able to obtain early release if they can be shown to comply with the necessary PETS requirements.

To bring your dog or cat into the UK under PETS from the United States you must have it first microchipped, then vaccinated against rabies and then blood tested.

An EU Official Third Country Veterinarian Certificate must be obtained from the USDA (tel: 301-734-8364)

The procedures:

1: Have your pet [microchipped](#)

Type of microchip

Your pet must first be fitted with a microchip to identify it. DEFRA do not specify a particular type or brand of microchip to be used but, in Europe, ISO (International Standards Organisation) Standard microchips meeting specifications 11784 or Annex A of ISO Standard 11785 are generally used.

Fitting a microchip

You can get your pet fitted with a microchip at any time but remember it must be done before it is vaccinated against rabies and then blood tested.

Your vet should read the microchip number in your pet and record it on your pet's vaccination record at the time of vaccination. Make sure that the microchip number is also correctly recorded on the EU official third country veterinarian certificate at the time of issue.

The microchip should be inserted according to the manufacturer's instructions (and any national rules that may apply). To ensure that the microchip works, its number should be read before and after it has been fitted. Get your vet to read the microchip every time you visit.

You should now arrange to have your pet [vaccinated](#) against rabies.

2: Have your pet vaccinated against Rabies.

After the microchip has been fitted your pet must be vaccinated against rabies.

When to vaccinate

Your pet must be at least three months old before it is vaccinated. This can be done any time after it has been fitted with a microchip. Before vaccinating your pet, make sure your vet checks its microchip number and enters it on your pet's vaccination record.

If your pet has been vaccinated against rabies before it was identified by a microchip, it will have to be vaccinated again. This is to make sure that your pet is correctly identified when it is vaccinated.

Vaccination record

When your pet is vaccinated, make sure that your vet has recorded the following details on its vaccination record and passport or official third country veterinary certificate:

1. its date of birth/age
2. the microchip number, date of insertion and location of animal
3. the date of vaccination
4. the vaccine product name
5. the batch number
6. the date its booster vaccination is due (calculated by reference to the vaccine manufacturer's data sheet)

Re-vaccination (boosters)

After your pet has been vaccinated and successfully blood tested, it will need regular booster vaccinations. These must be given by the "Valid until" date in section IV of the official third country veterinary certificate. If this date is missed your animal will not meet the conditions of the scheme and will have to be vaccinated and blood tested again. The [6 month rule](#) will then apply from the date the new blood sample is taken assuming the blood test result is satisfactory. If your pet always has its booster on time, it will not need further blood tests.

3: Arrange a blood test and the 6 month rule

Arranging a blood test

After your pet has been vaccinated, it must have a blood test to make sure that the vaccine has given sufficient protection against rabies. The 6 month rule will apply. The vet will arrange to take a sample of your pet's blood and send it to an EU-approved laboratory for testing. The vet who vaccinated your pet can arrange this for you. You will need to take your pet's vaccination record with you when the blood sample is taken. Make sure that the vet records the microchip number **accurately** and **clearly** on the submission form, together with the date the blood sample was taken.

When to blood test

Each rabies vaccine manufacturer advises in its datasheet for the vaccine the best time for a blood sample to be taken after the vaccination. Make sure that your vet gives you a signed record of the date the blood sample was taken with the microchip number clearly stated.

Where the blood test is done

The blood test must be done at a [EU-approved laboratory](#). Other laboratories may be added to the list in due course.

The only currently EU-approved laboratory in the United States (2004):

FAVN Rabies Laboratory
1800 Denison Avenue
Mosier Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan
Kansas 66506-5601

The FAVN test must be used (not the RFFIT test)

Tel: (+1) 785 532 4483 Fax: (+1) 785 532 4474

E-mail: rabies@vet.ksu.edu Website: www.vet.ksu.edu/rabies

Contacting laboratories

Please **do not** contact laboratories direct to arrange your pet's blood test or to get the result. Your vet will do this for you.

Blood test result

A satisfactory blood test result must show that the rabies neutralising antibody titre was equal to or greater than 0.5 IU/ml. Make sure your vet gives you a certified copy of the blood test result with the microchip number correctly shown.

If your pet's blood test is satisfactory, you should ask a vet (in Great Britain a Local Veterinary Inspector) to issue you with an EU pet passport/ Official Third Country Veterinary Certificate. You will not be able to bring your pet into the UK under the Scheme until 6 calendar months have passed from the date that the blood sample was taken that gave a satisfactory result.

Failed blood test

You should seek advice from your vet if your pet fails its blood test (in other words, the result shows that it has not been satisfactorily protected against rabies). Your pet will need to be blood tested again. Your vet will advise whether re-vaccination is necessary.

To help avoid this situation, you may wish to consider getting your pet vaccinated twice before it is blood tested. This may be particularly helpful in the case of young animals. You should discuss this with your vet.

4: Get PETS documentation

To bring your dog or cat into or back into the UK from the United States you must get an Official Third Country Veterinary Certificate. This will need to show that your pet has been microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and successfully blood tested.

(Owners of dogs and cats who have a PETS entry/re-entry certificate which was issued before 1 October 2004 can use these certificates for their pets to enter or re-enter the UK up to the "valid until" date. PETS certificates issued on or after 1 October 2004 will not be accepted for entry to the UK).

You are responsible for ensuring that you have the necessary documentation for your pet to enter the UK. Make sure that it is correctly completed and your pet meets all the rules. If you do not, your pet may not be able to enter the country or may have to be licensed into quarantine on arrival. This will mean delay and cost you money.

Official third country veterinary certificate

For dogs and cats being prepared for PETS in the United States of America) you should get an official third country veterinary certificate. This can be issued by a vet in a non-EU listed country. It is headed "*Veterinary certificate for domestic dogs, cats and ferrets entering the European Community for non-commercial movements (Regulation (EC) No 998/2003)*". This certificate must be a single sheet in English. It must be completed in block letters in English.

This certificate replaces the PETS certificate which can still be used to enter the UK and other European Union countries until the "Valid until" date shown on the certificate. PETS certificates issued after 30 September 2004 will not be accepted for entry to the UK.

When you go to get the certificate take your pet, its vaccination record and blood test result. Also take evidence of the date your pet was microchipped. The documents must show your pet's microchip number. In addition to the certificate, you must be ready to show the vaccination record and blood test result when you enter the EU (including the UK) so keep them safe and bring them with you when you travel.

Make sure the vet completes sections I to V of the certificate correctly and all the details in the following box. If the vet is not a government-authorised veterinarian, the certificate must also be dated and stamped by a vet authorised by the competent authority.

This certificate also contains provision for recording the [tick and tapeworm treatment](#).

Validity of the certificate

You need to be aware of the following: The certificate will not become valid for entry to the UK for 6 calendar months from the blood sample date shown in section V. However, it is only valid for entry to the EU and subsequent travel within the EU for 4 months from the date it was signed or endorsed, or until the "valid until" date shown in Part IV, whichever is earlier. You should therefore delay getting the certificate until a month or two before you travel to ensure that it will still be valid when you enter the UK.

5: Before your pet enters the UK, it must be [treated against ticks and a tapeworm](#)

Treatment against ticks and tapeworms

Between 24 and 48 hours before you check-in with an approved transport company for the journey that brings your dog, cat or ferret into the UK, your pet must be treated against ticks and tapeworms and the treatment recorded in the official third country veterinary certificate. When you arrive at the check-in point, if less than 24 hours has passed since the treatment, you will have to wait until the full 24 hours have passed before you can check in with your pet. If the treatment was done more than 48 hours before you check in, you will have to have your pet treated again, have the treatment recorded in the relevant document or get another official certificate, and wait at least 24 hours before checking in. Make sure that the vet checks your pet's microchip number before giving the treatment.

Treatment

Your pet must be treated against the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis* using a veterinary medicine whose active ingredient is **praziquantel**. The tick treatment must be licensed for use against ticks and have a marketing authorisation in the country of use. A collar impregnated with acaricide is not an acceptable form of treatment against ticks.

Recording treatment on an official third country veterinary certificate

It is your responsibility to make sure your pet's treatment has been recorded correctly in the appropriate section of your pet's third country certificate. Animals will fail the PETS check if the tick and tapeworm sections of their documentation are not in order. Do make sure that these details are correctly recorded on the documentation before you leave the vets surgery:

For the EU Third country certificate: Sections VI & VII must show:

1. Manufacturer and name of product
2. Date & time of treatment
3. Name and address of veterinarian
4. Signature, date and stamp of veterinarian

Why pets have to be treated

The tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis* can cause a serious or fatal liver disease in humans. The tick *Rhipicephalus sanguineus* can carry diseases that are harmful to humans. Neither of these parasites is thought to be currently present in the UK. The treatment needs to be given 24-48 hours before the pet is checked in to travel to the UK to ensure that the tapeworm eggs are not shed in the UK.

6: Arrange for your animal to travel with an [approved transport company on an authorised route](#)

PETS routes and transport companies

You may use any of the routes and transport companies on the DEFRA listings to bring your dog, cat or ferret into the UK under the Scheme, subject to the transport company's agreement. All companies have been approved by DEFRA to carry dogs, cats and ferrets but not all may wish to carry ferrets. **Check with the company before booking your tickets that they are prepared to carry your pet.**

Your pet may travel to the UK via any qualifying country or countries. It must not have been to any non-qualifying country in the 6 months before entering the UK.

You may not bring a pet into the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme from a private boat or plane.

Approved routes and transport companies

Contact DEFRA for the current listings of approved shipping routes and transport companies.

Be aware that some transport companies have an embargo on certain breeds including many bullbreeds. Also strict ambient temperature restrictions apply for the shipping of animals.

Checklist for dogs and cats being prepared for PETS in the USA

Microchipping

- My pet has been microchipped
- I have a microchip reader (only if the microchip is not ISO Standard)
- The microchip can be read

Rabies vaccination

- My pet was at least 3 months old when vaccinated
- It was vaccinated against rabies after it was fitted with a microchip
- The microchip number has been entered correctly by the vet on the vaccination record and an official third country veterinary certificate

Blood test

- I have a record from the vet of the date the blood sample was taken, showing the correct microchip number. The blood sample was taken after the vaccination
- My pet has had a satisfactory blood test at an EU-approved laboratory
- I have a certified copy of the blood test result showing the correct microchip number and the date the blood sample was taken

Documentation

- A vet has correctly filled in all the details in sections I-V of the passport
- The passport will be valid for entry to the UK on the date of arrival (i.e. at least 6 calendar months from the date a blood sample was taken from my pet that gave a successful test result)
- When travelling, I will have with me my pet's vaccination record and blood test result both showing the microchip number

Tick and tapeworm treatment

- A vet has treated my pet for ticks and tapeworms 24 – 48 hours before it will be checked in with an approved transport company for its journey into the UK
- The vet has correctly filled in sections VI and VII of the official certificate

Travelling to the UK

- I have arranged for my pet to enter the UK using an approved transport company and route
- If my pet is entering quarantine, I have obtained an import licence before travelling.

Early release from quarantine

What does early release mean?

All dogs, cats and ferrets imported into the UK which do not meet the requirements of the Pet Travel Scheme must enter [quarantine](#). Animals may be quarantined after failing a PETS check carried out by a Defra or SEERAD approved carrier, or a spot check carried out by the State Veterinary Service. These animals may become eligible for early release if the failure can subsequently be put right. An animal which is in quarantine will become eligible for early release from the date that it can be shown to comply with all the necessary rules of the Pet Travel Scheme.

Which animals might be eligible for early release?

A dog that enters the UK using an unapproved transport company or route may become eligible for early release from quarantine if it can be shown to meet all the other rules of the Scheme.

Dogs that enter the UK but which will not meet the PETS rules until six calendar months have elapsed since the date a blood sample was taken that gave a satisfactory test result. A pet owner can import a dog into quarantine while waiting for their animal to become eligible.

Dogs that enter the UK without an official PETS documentation.

Dogs that enter the UK without having had the tick and tapeworm treatment or that don't have an official record of treatment. Pets can have the treatment done when in quarantine. They must stay in quarantine for 24 hours after the treatment is given.

Bring your animal's documentation, including its vaccination record and, for dogs and cats, blood test result with you to support a request for early release.

If you want to bring your pet into the UK using an unapproved transport company or route, or your pet does not yet meet the PETS rules and you want to bring it to the UK now, you must obtain an [import licence](#) and arrange for your pet to go into quarantine. It is illegal to bring a cat or dog into the country without a licence unless it is brought in under the PETS rules by an approved transport company on an authorised route.

How to apply for early release from quarantine

Applicants must complete a form ID91 which must be countersigned by the Veterinary Superintendent of the quarantine premises where the animal is held. Copies of this form are available from Veterinary Superintendents and DEFRA. If the animal complies with the PETS rules it should take us no more than 2 or 3 working days to issue the authorisation for release.

Further information

If you want more information about applying for an import licence or the early release of an animal from quarantine in England please ring Defra on +44 (0)20 7904 6222, or if entering Scotland ring SEERAD on + 44 (0) 131 556 8400. For quarantine in Northern Ireland contact DARD on 02890 524622. If you want more information about the PETS rules please ring the PETS Helpline on 0870 241 1710. www.defra.gov.uk

Please Note:

This document was prepared by me on November 8th 2004 using all the information that was available to me from DEFRA at that time. I cannot guarantee its accuracy: Requirements/regulations are subject to change at any time, therefore you should always contact [DEFRA](http://www.defra.gov.uk) for their current rules before embarking on any import plans.

DEFRA'S website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk>