

# Guidance for Pets Traveling to Another Country

## How do I know what a pet needs to travel to another country?

Please visit the USDA APHIS Pet Travel Website to obtain detailed information for taking a pet to another country, including requirements for returning to the U.S.: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel>

## How do I obtain USDA APHIS endorsement of a health certificate?

If the pet's destination country requires endorsement of the health certificate by USDA APHIS, submit the health certificate to the Endorsement Office serving your state (see office locations on pages 2-3). You may either:

- **NEW ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATION!** USDA APHIS accepts health certificates that were electronically signed and submitted by a USDA Accredited Veterinarian through the **Veterinary Export Health Certification System (VEHCS)** for all countries. For more information on how VEHCS can **save you time and money**, see the VEHCS Help Page: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/vehcs-info>
- Ship the health certificate to your Endorsement Office
  - We recommend overnight express courier to and from your Endorsement Office for speedy delivery and return.
- Schedule an appointment with your Endorsement Office for in person endorsement.
  - **In person endorsement services are not currently available.**

## How quickly will my health certificate be endorsed?

Health certificates submitted in VEHCS or as a hardcopy document will typically be endorsed in 2 business days after receipt. Incomplete submissions or submissions with errors or problems will result in a delay in endorsement until the problems are corrected by the USDA Accredited Veterinarian or the owner of the pet.

We recommend you plan ahead as much as possible to ensure adequate time for endorsement of your health certificate. See pages 4 – 7 of this document for help with avoiding common mistakes that cause a delay in endorsement so you can help us get your health certificate endorsed in time for travel.

## What do I need to give you to endorse my health certificate?

- Export health certificate (original)
- Rabies vaccination certificate for all rabies vaccinations documented on the health certificate.
- Test results for laboratory tests, when required (e.g. rabies titer test).
- Import permit (if required by the destination country).
- Payment (see below for more information).
- **PRE-PAID** return shipping label (see below for more information).
- Pet Export Checklist (see page 4 of this document).

## How much does it cost to endorse my health certificate? How do I pay for the health certificate?

- If no laboratory test results are required to review: \$38.00 per certificate.
- If 1 - 2 required laboratory tests results to review: \$121.00 for the first animal and \$7.00 for each additional animal **on the SAME certificate.**
- If 3 - 6 required laboratory tests results to review: \$150.00 for the first animal and \$12.00 for each additional animal **on the SAME certificate.**



## Payment – continued:

For VEHCS health certificates: the USDA Accredited must either deposit funds in VEHCS -or- provide a USDA APHIS User Fee Credit Account number. For more information on payment in VEHCS, see the VEHCS Help Page:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/vehcs-info>

For paper health certificates: you may pay with either a USDA APHIS User Fee Credit Account, check or money order made payable to the USDA, or credit card. *Checks must contain the payer's name and mailing address. **We do not accept cash.***

An endorsement fee is waived for service animals **as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act** (<https://www.ada.gov/>).

## I want to send my hardcopy health certificate to your office. How do I do that?

- We recommend using overnight express service to minimize delays in sending your health certificate to and from your Endorsement Office.
- In order for the health certificate to be returned by overnight delivery, **you must provide a PRE-PAID return label with your submission. The label must be purchased and paid for (meaning the label is not paid for at the time of pickup of your package). We do not accept shipping labels with credit cards on them; if you need to pay by credit card, you must have the service provider charge your card before generating the label.**
  - **IF YOU USE FEDEX: the USDA office's address should not appear anywhere on your return label. Your name and address should appear in both the sender and recipient's block of the return label.**
- If your health certificate was endorsed that day, FedEx, UPS, or USPS will pick up the package from your Endorsement Office in the evening.
  - **UPS Ground, FedEx Ground, and FedEx Home service do not pick up at our offices.** If you choose to use this type of service shipping label, there may be a one business day delay in your package's return to you.
- We recommend using a service provider that uses a tracking number to allow the package's progress to be tracked to and from the endorsing office, and to decrease the chance of the package being lost in transit. **It is your responsibility to keep a record of the tracking number.**
- If a return label is not included and we are unable to reach you to arrange for another method of return delivery, then we will return your package using USPS First Class Mail.

## Where is my Endorsement Office located?

We have 4 offices serving the following states:

### Albany, NY

Serving: AZ (mail-in), CT, DC (mail-in), DE (mail-in), ME, MA, MD (mail-in), NC, NH, NJ (mail-in), NM (mail-in), NY, RI, VA (mail-in), VT, WV

### USDA APHIS VS

#### Attention: Export

500 New Karner Road, 2nd Floor

Albany, NY 12205

Telephone (518) 218-7540

Fax (518) 218-7545

Email [VSPSNY@usda.gov](mailto:VSPSNY@usda.gov)



**Harrisburg, PA**  
**Serving: PA**

**USDA APHIS VS**  
**Attention: Export**  
2300 Vartan Way Suite 250  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
Telephone (717) 540-2770  
Fax (717) 782-3809  
Email [VSPSPA@usda.gov](mailto:VSPSPA@usda.gov)

**Richmond, VA**  
**Serving: DC, DE, MD, VA In-person Appointments & VEHCS Certificates (Hardcopy certificates should be sent to Albany, NY)**

**USDA APHIS VS**  
**Attention: Export**  
Federal Building  
400 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste. 726  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Telephone (804) 343-2567  
Fax (804) 343-2599  
Email [VSPSVA@usda.gov](mailto:VSPSVA@usda.gov)



# Pet Export Checklist

## USDA-APHIS-Veterinary Services, Service Center, Albany

*This checklist should be included with your other documents when you submit your health certificate(s) to us for endorsement.*

OWNER/EXPORTER'S INFORMATION	
Name:	
Telephone number(s):	
Email address:	
<b>Date of departure:</b>	
<b>Destination country:</b>	
USDA ACCREDITED VETERINARIAN'S INFORMATION	
Name:	
Clinic Name:	
Telephone number(s):	
Email address:	

### CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/>	Export Health Certificate(s). <b><i>Make sure it is signed and dated by your veterinarian and includes the country of destination in the Consignee section. If a microchip number is recorded in the health certificate, make sure it's the correct number.</i></b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rabies Vaccination Certificate. <b><i>If rabies vaccination information (e.g., date of vaccination, date of expiration of vaccination, rabies vaccine brand name and/or manufacturer, or serial number) is recorded on the health certificate, make sure it matches the rabies vaccination certificate's information.</i></b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rabies Titer Laboratory Report <b><i>(if applicable)</i></b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Required Test Results <b><i>(if applicable)</i></b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Import permit <b><i>(if applicable)</i></b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Payment Enclosed. <b><i>Either USDA APHIS User Fee Credit Account, check/money order payable to "USDA", or credit card information. Checks must contain the payer's name and mailing address. We do NOT accept cash.</i></b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepaid Express Return Label <b><i>(FedEx, UPS, or USPS)* Make sure to keep a record of the return tracking number. USDA cannot provide this information on an individual basis.</i></b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date of departure from the U.S. is provided above.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email addresses of <b><i>both</i></b> the Owner/Exporter and Veterinarian are provided above. <b><i>By providing this information, you ensure we can immediately notify all involved parties if problems are found with the health certificate(s).</i></b>

**FAILURE TO PROVIDE ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION MAY RESULT IN A DELAY IN ENDORSEMENT**

***\*IMPORTANT: YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS SHOULD APPEAR IN BOTH THE SENDER AND RECIPIENT'S BLOCKS OF THE RETURN LABEL. The USDA address cannot appear anywhere on your return label. The label must be purchased and paid for. We cannot accept a FedEx, UPS or USPS label with a credit card number listed as the payment method. If you want the return shipping charged to a credit card you have to visit their store location or website and pre-enter the information in the preprinted label.***



Animal and Plant Health  
Inspection Service

Veterinary Services

Field Operations

Veterinary Export Trade  
Services

Service Center, Albany

500 New Karner Rd  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Albany, NY 12205

Voice (518) 218-7540  
Fax (518) 218-7545

VSPSNY@usda.gov

February 3, 2020

**Dear Accredited Veterinarian,**

The following is a generic checklist addressing problems we find with export health certificates issued by your peers of USDA accredited veterinarians (AVs). These problems result in delays or refusal to endorse a health certificate for your patient(s) because the health certificate is not compliant with the destination country's import regulations. Please read the following list and follow the explanatory advice to ensure you don't issue a noncompliant health certificate. **Please note this checklist is not all-inclusive, but addresses common errors made while completing these health certificates.**

In the end, it is ***your*** responsibility as an AV to issue a compliant health certificate. As per the Code of Federal Regulations' Standards for AVs, it is the responsibility of the AV to "not issue, or allow to be used, any certificate, form, record or report, until, and unless, it has been accurately and fully completed" and to "keep himself or herself currently informed on Federal and State regulations...governing the movement of animals." We understand some countries provide USDA APHIS with confusing import regulations and that not every patient fits the mold the destination country requires; in these cases, we encourage you to contact the USDA APHIS endorsing office serving your state:

Inquiries from AZ, New England, NJ, NM, NY, NC, WV, please contact:

[VSPSNY@usda.gov](mailto:VSPSNY@usda.gov) or (518) 218-7540

Inquiries from MD, VA, DE, DC, please contact:

[VSPSVA@usda.gov](mailto:VSPSVA@usda.gov) or (804) 343 - 2567

Inquiries from PA, please contact:

[VSPSPA@usda.gov](mailto:VSPSPA@usda.gov) or (717) 540 - 2770

Sincerely,

The Staff of Service Center, Albany

### Helpful Links:

USDA APHIS Pet Travel Website:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel>

USDA APHIS International Regulations:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/animal-exports>

National Veterinary Accreditation Program:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/nvap>

USDA Endorsement Offices:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/endorsement-offices>

<b>CHECKLIST OF COMMON MISTAKES WITH PET EXPORT HEALTH CERTIFICATES FOR THE USDA ACCREDITED VETERINARIAN</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Did you use the correct health certificate? Prior to issuance consult the following every time:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ USDA APHIS Pet Travel Website: <a href="https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel">https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel</a></li> <li>○ USDA APHIS International Regulations: <a href="https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/animal-exports">https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/animal-exports</a></li> <li>○ If country not listed, exporter should contact country of destination’s port of entry or embassy.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Is the health certificate filled out TO COMPLETION?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No sections are left blank (e.g. vaccine name AND manufacturer AND lot #, etc.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If there are **** or lines through the box, no entry should be made.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ No information beyond what is requested by the destination country is provided.</li> <li>○ You have signed, printed your name, and <b>dated</b> the health certificate with the date of issuance.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Is the pet meeting ALL requirements of the destination country? If not, DO NOT issue the health certificate without consulting your USDA APHIS endorsing office.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ALL required testing, treatments and vaccinations MUST be done.</li> <li>○ You MUST use the correct test, vaccination or treatment as specified by the destination country.</li> <li>○ <b><i>It is a violation of the Standards for Accredited Veterinarians to issue a certificate for a non-compliant animal.</i></b></li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Did you double check for erroneous information? If an error is made, draw a single lineout and initial or replace the page – WHITEOUT is NOT allowed on legal documents.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No typos in the pet’s identification.</li> <li>○ The information recorded on the health certificate matches what’s on the vaccination and test records (e.g. lot numbers, name/manufacturer of vaccine, blood draw dates, etc.).</li> <li>○ Correct test type used as required by destination country.</li> <li>○ Recorded the test sampling date, not the date the test was run or the result reported.</li> <li>○ Provided copies of all required vaccination certificates and test results to the exporter to include with submission for endorsement.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Is the health certificate accurately dated with the date of exam/issuance?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It has NOT been pre- or post-dated.</li> <li>○ The date format requested on the health certificate has been followed (e.g. DD/MM/YY instead of MM/DD/YY).</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Is your USDA accreditation current, AND for the state in which you are practicing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AVs can check their accreditation status, states accredited in, and Category online at the <a href="#">National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP) website</a>.</li> <li>○ AVs with additional questions about their accreditation may contact the NVAP Coordinator for their state (found at the same website).</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Pet travel to the EU:</b> The microchip “date of implantation/reading” MUST be a date that is on or prior to the date of rabies vaccination. If you/your clinic did not implant the chip, documentation of its presence in a previous medical records entry can be used. If this is your first time seeing the patient it is your responsibility to obtain such documentation</p>

	from other sources (e.g. dated medical records, implant certificate, etc.).
	<p><b>VEHCS (Veterinary Export Health Certification System):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Was the correct health certificate generated and submitted for the correct commodity, end use, and destination country?</li> <li>○ Did you record all of the required information in the health certificate?</li> <li>○ Were copies of the rabies vaccine certificate and laboratory reports (if applicable) uploaded and attached to the submission?</li> <li>○ Was a copy of the import permit (if required) uploaded and attached to the submission?</li> <li>○ Was payment provided, either by depositing funds into your VEHCS account, or providing a USDA APHIS User Fee Credit Account number? The cost for endorsement can be found on this page: <a href="https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/pet-travel-info-and-guidance-document/pet-travel-endorsement">https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/pet-travel-info-and-guidance-document/pet-travel-endorsement</a>.</li> <li>○ Was a prepaid return label uploaded and attached to the submission (if applicable)? Not applicable for digitally endorsed health certificates (green, and some yellow and purple banner countries).</li> </ul>



Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service  
  
Veterinary Services  
  
4700 River Rd  
  
Unit 39  
  
Riverdale, MD 20737

November 29, 2018

**Attention U.S. pet owners and others involved in the international movement of pets:**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) is the competent government authority responsible for international export of live animals, including pets such as dogs and cats, leaving the United States and traveling to a foreign country. It is APHIS VS' role to provide endorsement (review and countersignature) of international health certificates after issuance by a USDA Accredited Veterinarian when required by an importing foreign country.

Please be advised that some importing foreign countries will now accept digital (electronic) signatures for the issuance and/or endorsement of international health certificates for live animals, including pets. The APHIS Pet Travel Website ([www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pettravel](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pettravel)) should be consulted to determine the importing foreign country's requirements, including whether digital signatures are accepted, and to obtain the appropriate international health certificate.

For importing foreign countries that accept digital endorsement, the health certificate will have digital signatures instead of traditional pen-and-ink signatures, and the USDA seal will be printed on the certificate instead of a raised embossed seal. For importing foreign countries that do not accept digital endorsement, the health certificate will still have pen-and-ink signatures and an embossed USDA seal. At time of endorsement, APHIS VS is responsible for verifying if the importing foreign country accepts digital signatures. As a result, all APHIS VS-endorsed health certificates will be in the signature format accepted by the importing foreign country.

In addition to the international health certificate required by the importing foreign country, some airlines require pets to travel with an additional health certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian stating the pet is fit to travel. Since APHIS VS only reviews and endorses documentation required by the importing foreign country, APHIS VS will not endorse any health certificates required solely by an airline. This information was communicated to the airlines in June 2016.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your local APHIS VS Office. Contact information can be found on the APHIS Pet Travel Website. Thank you in advance for your attention to and assistance with this matter.

Respectfully,

**SHANNA  
SIEGEL** Digitally signed by  
SHANNA SIEGEL  
Date: 2018.11.29  
08:39:39 -05'00'

Shanna Siegel, DVM, MPH  
Director of Live Animal Exports  
USDA APHIS Veterinary Services