

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Scottish Government
Welsh Government

EU pet travel scheme: changes from 29 December 2014

Information for pet owners

Changes to the pet travel scheme will come into effect on 29 December 2014. This guidance explains what's changing and why.

The changes are mainly designed to strengthen enforcement across the EU, increase levels of compliance and improve the security and traceability of the pet passport.

The changes give effect to a new EU pet travel Regulation (576/2013).



If you already have a passport for your pets, you do not need to get a new one.

The pet travel scheme

The main requirements of the scheme will stay the same. All dogs, cats and ferrets travelling with their owner will still require:

- microchipping
- vaccination against rabies
- a blood test 30 days after vaccination (if returning or travelling from an unlisted third country)
- a pet passport issued by an authorised vet (or third country certificate issued by an official vet)
- a waiting period after primary vaccination and prior to travel:
 - 21 days if travelling from another EU country or a [listed third country](#)
- a waiting period following blood sampling
 - 3 months if travelling from for unlisted third countries
- treatment against the EM tapeworm (dogs only)

There are exceptions to some of these preparations in certain circumstances. If you are planning to travel with your pet you must read the detailed guidance at: www.gov.uk/pet-travel-information-for-pet-owners

What's changing and what you have to do

The key changes affecting pet owners are outlined below:

1. A new pet passport

A new style pet passport will be introduced from 29 December 2014.

However **if you already have a passport for your pet you do not need to get a new one. Existing passports will remain valid for the lifetime of the pet** (or until all the treatment spaces are filled).

The new style passport will include laminated strips designed to cover those pages with the pet's details, microchip information and each rabies vaccination entry. This will help prevent anyone tampering with this information once it has been completed by a vet.

The vet issuing the pet passport will also need to fill in their details on a new 'Issuing of the passport' page and must make sure that all their contact details are included when they certify vaccinations and treatments.

The UK pet passport will also now include a unique passport number printed on every page .

These changes will improve the traceability and security of the pet passport and enable us to contact the vet who issued the passport if anything goes wrong.

2. The introduction of checks across the EU

If you travel with your pet in the EU you may be asked for your pet's passport when entering other countries. This is because all EU countries are required to carry out some checks on pet movements within the EU.

You must make sure that your pet is fully compliant with the rules of the EU pet travel scheme before you leave the UK. In particular, you must wait 21 days from the date of your pet's primary rabies vaccination before you travel (the day of vaccination counts as day 0 not day 1). Your vet can advise you on this point. If you have a new style pet passport they will put a 'valid from' date in the primary vaccination entry; this will be the earliest date you can travel.

All pets entering Britain on approved routes will continue to be checked by the carriers either prior to boarding (for rail or sea) or upon entry (air).

3. A new minimum age for rabies vaccination

From 29 December 2014 your pet must be at least 12 weeks old before you can get it vaccinated against rabies for the purposes of pet travel.

These rules will be the same across the EU and help pet checkers carry out compliance checks. It will also prevent very young pets being moved across the EU.

4. New rules for those travelling with more than five pets

If you have more than five pets and wish to travel with them within the EU and/or return to the UK (unless you are going to a show or competition) you will need to comply with additional rules. These include:

- travelling from a registered premises
- using an authorised transporter and
- registering the movement on the TRACES system

If you are travelling from outside the EU you will also need to enter through a Border Inspection Post.

Shows and competitions

If you are travelling with more than five pets (aged over six months) and can present written evidence that they are registered to attend a show, competition or sporting event (or training for such an event) you do not need to comply with these extra rules and can continue to travel under the EU pet travel scheme.

The evidence you provide will need to **show at least the name of the event, together with the address and date(s) it is taking place**. You may also be asked to sign a **declaration confirming that you are eligible to make use of this exemption**. This requirement may change – we're consulting on some of these details – so you should check the website for up to date information before you travel.

5. Requirements for pets entering the UK/EU

If you are entering the UK (or another EU country) and your journey began outside the EU you must sign a declaration confirming that you do not intend to sell or transfer ownership of your pet. The format of this declaration is outlined in Part 3 of Annex IV to Regulation 577/2013..

If you are not able to accompany your pet then you (or a person you have authorised in writing) must travel **within 5 days of your pet's movement**. This rule applies both to travel within the EU and for movements from outside the EU.

6. Clearer definition of cat, dog and ferret

The new EU Regulation specifically states that the only species of pet animal that can travel under the EU pet travel rules are:

- *Canis lupis familiaris* – domestic dog
- *Felis silvestris catus* – domestic cat
- *Mustela putorius furo* – ferret

The reason for this change is to make sure that wild animals can't be moved under rules designed for pet travel.

This change will not affect the majority of pet owners. However, if your pet is a hybrid (such as a Bengal or Savannah cat, or a Wolfdog) then you must seek advice from the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency before you travel. They will advise you on the import requirements for your pet. See 'Contact us' below.

Don't forget...

- Your pet must receive the correct treatments in the correct order. In particular, **your pet must have been microchipped before it receives its rabies vaccination**. If your pet was vaccinated before being microchipped then it will need to be re-vaccinated after the microchip is inserted.
- If you take your pet abroad it may be exposed to diseases which we do not have in the UK. We recommend you consult your vet about your pet's health and fitness to travel before you take it abroad. Ask your vet for advice on the appropriate treatments for the part of the world you are travelling to.
- The pet travel rules apply to all dogs, cats and ferrets travelling with their owners (including assistance and guide dogs). You are responsible for ensuring your pet meets all the rules for entering the UK under the pet travel scheme. **Make sure you have had the procedures carried out in the correct order and that your pet's documentation is correctly completed. If you do not, your pet may not be able to enter the country or may have to be quarantined on arrival. This will mean delay and cost you money.**
- If you are bringing a dog, cat or ferret into the UK in order to **sell** it or pass it to a new owner (e.g. for **rehoming**), you cannot travel under the pet travel scheme. Instead you must comply with the rules of the Balai Directive. Further information is available: www.defra.gov.uk/animal-trade/imports-non-eu/iins/live-animals/iins-other-animals-balai/iin-bllv-5/
- Stringent penalties are in place for those that break the pet travel rules in order to bring animals into the UK illegally. Pets that are non-compliant pose a potentially serious risk to both animal and human health. Anyone with information relating to illegal activity should contact their local Trading Standards office.

Contact us

For further information on any of the changes outlined above or for enquiries relating to pet travel, please contact the Pet Travel Scheme helpline:

- Telephone: 0370 241 1710
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm (closed on bank holidays)
- Email: pettravel@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk

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