

Taking your pet abroad

Pet Travel rules effective from 1st January 2012





Taking your pet abroad

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) has been a notable success, allowing many thousands of British dogs and cats to travel abroad since the scheme began. However, although the scheme requires vaccination against rabies, it does mean that pets may now face other new diseases against which they have little defence.

This booklet covers the new regulations that come into effect from January 1st 2012. These changes are designed to bring the UK into line with European procedures. This booklet describes how the PETS scheme rules are changing and importantly how to protect your animals from some of the health problems they could face when travelling. The summary table on page 16 demonstrates the key changes between the new and old rules.

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)

What is PETS?

Since 2000, the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) has allowed cats, dogs and ferrets to enter the UK from certain countries without having to be placed in quarantine. This means that you can now take pets on holiday with you, subject to the conditions of the scheme. With the introduction of the PETS Passport the scheme allowed easier movement of pets between EU and certain approved EU countries.

Which animals can travel?

Currently only dogs, cats and ferrets are covered by PETS. This leaflet describes the regulations relating to dogs and cats only.

Which countries currently participate in PETS?

Animals resident in the UK can now travel to most European countries as well as many more distant destinations, and return to the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme. For a complete and up-to-date list of participating countries please call the DEFRA helpline (0870 241 1710) or visit their website:

www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/countries

Which travel routes and companies can I use?

Your pet must enter the UK from a listed country travelling with an approved transport company on an authorised route. Routes and travel companies are regularly updated and you are advised to check all proposed travel arrangements with the travel company before booking your return trip to the UK, as they may have their own additional conditions of travel. For approved transport companies and authorised routes, visit the DEFRA website,

www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/routes

PLEASE NOTE: You may NOT bring a pet into the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme from a private boat or plane.



The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)

What conditions need to be met in order for my pet to travel between qualifying PETS scheme countries and the UK?

From **1st January 2012**, dogs and cats can move freely between PETS-scheme approved countries **without a qualifying blood test** provided the following conditions are satisfied:

For cats and dogs travelling between qualifying PETS countries and/or re-entering the UK after 1st January 2012 there is no longer any requirement for a qualifying blood test following rabies vaccination.

1. The pet must have a **permanent microchip implanted**. The chip must meet ISO specifications so that it can be read by any standard microchip reader. Your vet will be able to advise you about this.
2. The pet must be **vaccinated against rabies** after microchipping (but not before it is three months old), using an approved vaccine. Boosters must then be given at the manufacturer's recommended intervals.
3. The pet must have a **PETS passport** signed by an official veterinary surgeon, confirming that the above conditions have been met.
4. Some destinations **need additional export certification** or other requirements before admitting your pet - so it is important to check with the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) for details of export certification requirements for the destination country. Email contact is:
CatandDogExports.Carlisle@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
5. Following the initial issue of a PETS passport there is a **21-day wait** before entry or re-entry into the UK is allowed.

6. Please note that the statutory need for administration of a **veterinary-certified tapeworm treatment** prior to embarkation back to the UK appears likely to be left in place, but continues to be under discussion at the time of writing. If this legal requirement disappears in 2012, it will still be recommended to administer a wormer containing the active ingredient praziquantel 1-5 days before the return crossing to the UK. This practice is designed to ensure the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis*, a parasite dangerous to human health remains outside the UK. Until further clarification is issued it is important to check with the DEFRA website and your veterinary surgeon for the latest information on this issue prior to travel.
7. On re-entry to the UK you are also likely to need to **sign a declaration** stating that your pet has not been outside any of the qualifying countries before re-entering the UK.

For cats and dogs returning to the UK, the statutory requirement for a veterinary-certified tick treatment administered 24-48 hours prior to embarkation on return to the UK disappears from 1st January 2012. However preventative measures against ticks are still recommended while your pet is abroad to prevent tick-borne diseases prevalent in many areas (see page 12)

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)

What conditions need to be met in order for my pet to travel from countries not listed as qualifying under the PETS scheme into the UK?

From **1st January 2012**, dogs and cats can enter the UK from countries not approved under PETS without quarantine provided that:

1. The pet must have a **permanent microchip implanted** before vaccination. The chip must meet ISO specifications so that it can be read by any standard microchip reader.
2. The pet must be **vaccinated against rabies** (but not before it is three months old), using an approved vaccine. Boosters must then be given at the manufacturer's recommended intervals.
3. A **blood sample** must be taken after a minimum of 30 days after the pet is vaccinated. This is tested at an approved laboratory to check immunity to rabies.
4. If the test is successful, a **3 month wait** must be observed following which an appropriate health certificate can be issued allowing entry into the UK.
5. As above it will be important to check the most recent DEFRA advice from the website on a statutory requirement for tapeworm treatment **prior to travel to the UK**. In any case both tapeworm and a tick control product are recommended prior to travel to reduce the chance of exotic parasites and diseases being imported.

What happens if my pet fails the blood test?

A very small proportion of pets do fail the blood test - it's a quirk of biology. Although this does not necessarily indicate the animal is not protected it is a requirement that the required antibody level is met. If this should occur, the pet will need to be revaccinated. The three month rule still applies (see point 4, page 8), from the date the successful blood sample is taken.

What checks are carried out when I bring my pet back into the UK?

Before entering or re-entering the UK, the transport company will check the pet's microchip and passport or health certificate documentation (e.g. where applicable for vaccination, blood test, parasite treatment and the owner declaration). DEFRA also spot-checks a number of animals.

What happens if the check reveals that my pet does not meet requirements for entry into the UK?

Any pet that does not meet the requirements of the scheme will be returned to the country of origin or placed in quarantine. It is therefore recommended that, if you are taking your pet on holiday, the microchip and all requirements are checked before you leave the UK.

For pets that travel to and from non-approved countries regularly do they need to be blood tested each time they re-enter the UK?

No. If the pet is given boosters according to the vaccine manufacturer's recommendations, then no re-testing is required. However, if the vaccine is overdue, even by a day, your pet will need to be revaccinated and sampled again with an additional 3 month wait before recertification and re-entry.



Preparing your pet for going abroad

The new travel rules significantly simplify and shorten the preparations needed for taking your pet abroad. If you wish to travel with your pet, it is wise to discuss your plans with your veterinary surgeon in advance- around 2 months before for PETS-qualifying countries and 6 months before for travel outside these countries. All travellers should contact the PETS helpline for advice and to obtain a factsheet. Remember that not all holiday destinations welcome pets and not all holidays are suitable for pets. So do your research well before you make any plans.

The Pet Travel Scheme still requires a number of conditions to be met before you actually travel. The following timetable and checklist should help you ensure that everything gets done in time!

Right now

Visit the DEFRA website for the very latest information on PETS, or call their hotline on 0870 241 1710.

Check the following:

- Are the countries you plan to visit included in the scheme?
- Are all transit countries included in the scheme?
- Do those countries have any additional requirements?
- Check the authorised travel routes and carriers

Planner for cats and dogs travelling abroad and returning to UK under new PETS Scheme rules (effective for pets returning to UK after 1st Jan 2012)

Approximately 2 months before you travel

- Have your pet microchipped by your vet
- Have your pet vaccinated against rabies
- For travel within the EU ask your vet to issue a PETS passport
- Your pet will be allowed to return to the UK 3 weeks from the date of rabies vaccination - and not before

Preparing your pet for going abroad

At this stage, request any additional certification that may be required by the countries you plan to visit. If they demand an Export Health certificate (typically listed non-EU PETS Scheme-approved countries and non-approved countries), you should now contact your local Animal Health Office in the UK (listed on the DEFRA website). They will send the certificate to your vet, 10 working days before the date you intend to leave the UK. You are responsible for checking whether your animal can meet the export health conditions that apply.

Continental ticks and other parasites prevalent abroad carry a range of potentially serious and fatal diseases unfamiliar to British dogs and cats. Discuss the most appropriate preventative measures for the country you are traveling to with your vet. The **Scalibor Protectorband™** collar provides dogs with up to 6 months protection versus disease-carrying ticks, sandflies and mosquitoes which are prevalent and in many parts of mainland Europe and beyond- especially so in the Mediterranean region.



The week before you travel

If you require an Export Health Certificate (see opposite), you must visit your vet for a satisfactory health inspection to permit its issue (generally 24 hours before you travel). If your pet is sufficiently healthy and your pet complies with the applicable conditions, the vet will sign the certificate and hand it to you. We also recommend that your vet checks the current position of the microchip. This can sometimes move around under the skin and may be difficult for the port authorities to locate.

Gather together all your important documentation, including PETS passport, Export Health Certificate (where appropriate) and vaccination certificates.

If you have purchased a Scalibor collar to protect your dog while abroad apply it now so that it is working at its best when you arrive at your destination.

Around this time, it's also wise to locate a vet at the port from which you'll be returning to the UK, to provide any necessary worming treatment should this continue to be a statutory requirement as expected.

Before you embark for your return to the UK

Having checked the latest requirements for worming before entry to the UK, this treatment should be carried out prior to embarkation (currently 1-5 days at the time of writing). An official veterinary certification that this has been carried out correctly may continue to be required after 1st January 2012, so you may have to visit a vet near the port of embarkation.

On entry* to the UK, you'll be required to show your PETS passport, a declaration of residency (available from DEFRA or provided at the point of entry check) and the certification of worming treatment (if this continues to prove necessary).

*Unless travelling by air, in which case these checks will be carried out before embarkation.



Travel Checklist

Travel Check List for dogs and cats to travel to other EU Member states and PETS approved non-EU countries and permit entry into the UK

To be eligible you must be able to answer yes to the following questions:

- Is your pet microchipped?
- Is your pet currently vaccinated against rabies?
- Was it vaccinated after being microchipped?
- Do you have an EU Pet Passport or Official Veterinary Health Certificate from your vet certifying the microchip and vaccination?
- Has 21 days passed since it was vaccinated?
- Are you travelling to the UK with your pet via an approved route?
- Check recommendations/requirements for worm treatment before re-entry into the UK

Travel Check List for dogs and cats travelling to the UK from non-approved countries

To be eligible you must be able to answer yes to the following questions:

- Is your pet microchipped?
- Is your pet currently vaccinated against rabies?
- Was it vaccinated after being microchipped?
- Was a blood sample for a blood test taken at least 30 days after vaccination?
- Has it passed the blood test? (the vet will tell you)
- Do you have an EU Pet Passport* or Official Veterinary Health Certificate from your vet certifying the microchip and vaccination and blood test result?
- Has 3 months passed since the date the blood test was taken?
- Are you travelling to the UK with your pet via an approved route?
- Check recommendations/requirements for worm treatment before re-entry into the UK

Always remember to check additional disease precautions you may need to take for your pet before travel.

* Note if your pet was successfully blood tested and issued with an EU pet passport before it left the UK or other EU country to go to a non-approved country, the 3 month waiting period will not apply (other rules will still apply).

** For certain assistance dogs, they must travel through an approved airport. See DEFRA website for further information.

Summary

The following tables show how the rules are changing on 1st Jan 2012 for pets in approved and non approved countries.

Summary of changed requirements for pet travel between PETS Scheme approved countries and the UK

	Return to UK before 1/1/2012	Return to UK after 1/1/2012
Microchip	Yes	Yes
Rabies Vaccine	Yes	Yes
Blood test	2-4 weeks post vaccination	Not required
Pet Passport	After positive blood test	Issued at rabies vaccine
Period after vaccination before re-entry into UK	6 months	21 days
Vet-certified tick treatment when returning to UK	Statutory requirement Veterinary certified 24-48 hours prior to embarkation	Not required - however tick protection whilst abroad is strongly advised
Vet-certified tapeworm treatment when returning to UK	Statutory requirement Veterinary certified 24-48 hours prior to embarkation	Likely to be needed 1-5 days prior to return (check with vet before travel). Treatment recommended

Summary of changed requirements for pet travel to the UK from non-approved countries

	Return to UK before 1/1/2012	Return to UK after 1/1/2012
Microchip	Quarantine ONLY	Yes
Rabies Vaccine	Quarantine ONLY	Yes
Blood test	Quarantine ONLY	Minimum 30 days post-vaccine
Certificate	Quarantine ONLY	After positive blood test
Period after vaccination before re-entry into UK	Quarantine ONLY	3 months after vaccination
Vet-certified tick treatment when entering UK	Quarantine ONLY	Not required - however tick protection whilst abroad is strongly advised
Vet-certified tapeworm treatment when entering UK	Quarantine ONLY	Likely to be needed 1-5 days prior to return (check with vet before travel). Treatment recommended



Disease risks to your pet while abroad

With British dogs and cats now travelling much more freely abroad, a large number have been exposed to diseases that they would never have encountered before. Owners should be aware of the following diseases and the means to prevent them. Your vet will be able to give additional advice and additional literature is available.

Leishmaniasis

Leishmaniasis is an infectious disease of dogs transmitted by sandflies, found particularly in countries bordering the Mediterranean, South America, the Middle East, and the tropics. Common symptoms include dermatitis, hair and weight loss, and diseased eyes, liver and kidneys. The disease can be fatal if untreated, and incurable even if treatment is given. Signs can take years to develop after infection.

Prevention: if you are taking your dog to one of the high risk regions, you can prevent 95% of sandfly bites throughout the whole season using treatments available from your vet, such as a Scalibor insecticidal collar. Sandflies only come out at night, so even with the collar it is advisable to keep dogs inside from sunset to dawn between May and October.

Babesiosis

Found throughout Europe and in adjacent countries, babesiosis is primarily a disease of dogs and is transmitted by ticks. Affected animals develop fever, weakness, anaemia and lethargy. Sudden death can occur.

Prevention: tick infestations can be prevented by using treatments such as a Scalibor insecticidal collar, which also prevents sandfly bites.

Ehrlichiosis

Ehrlichiosis is also transmitted by ticks and is widespread in large parts of North and South America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

Affected animals develop fever, inappetance, difficulty breathing, oedema (swelling), vomiting, nose bleeds and neurological signs. Most dogs will not survive. German Shepherd dogs are particularly sensitive to the infection.

Prevention: tick infestations can be prevented by using treatments as a Scalibor insecticidal collar, which also prevents sandfly bites.

Hepatozoonosis

Hepatozoonosis is transmitted by ticks and can be found Southern Europe, Africa, Asia and South America. Affected animals develop fever, lethargy, weight loss, anaemia and kidney and lung disease.

Prevention: tick infestations can be prevented by using treatments as a Scalibor insecticidal collar, which also prevents sandfly bites.

Heartworm

Heartworm disease is transmitted by mosquitoes and can be found in certain parts along the Mediterranean coast.

After infection, the larval worms grow to adults that live in the lungs and the heart. This process takes about six months.

It may take years before affected animals develop signs, which include breathing difficulties and heart failure.

Prevention: Heartworm disease can be prevented by either using products that have a repellent effect on the mosquitoes that transmit the disease, such as the Scalibor insecticidal collar, or by using products that are active against the heartworm larvae.



More information

For further information about travelling diseases please don't hesitate to contact your veterinary surgeon or visit our website.



This leaflet is produced by MSD Animal Health manufacturer of the Scalibor[®] collar and Nobivac[®] Rabies.

Use medicines responsibly
www.noah.co.uk/responsible
MSD Animal Health, Walton Manor,
Walton, Milton Keynes MK7 7AJ

