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Taking your pet dog, cat or ferret abroad

1. Overview

When travelling with your pet dog, cat or ferret abroad, what you need to do will depend on what country you're going to.

There are different rules for [travelling with your pet to an EU country or Northern Ireland \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-an-eu-country-or-northern-ireland\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-an-eu-country-or-northern-ireland) and for [taking your pet to a non-EU country \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-a-noneu-country\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-a-noneu-country).

There's different guidance if you're [bringing your pet dog, cat or ferret to the UK \(https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-uk).

2. Travelling to an EU country or Northern Ireland

When travelling to an EU country or Northern Ireland, your pet needs:

- a [microchip \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/microchip\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/microchip)

- a valid [rabies vaccination \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters)
- an [animal health certificate \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate), or a valid pet passport that's accepted in the country you're travelling to
- [tapeworm treatment \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/tapeworm-treatment-for-dogs\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/tapeworm-treatment-for-dogs) for dogs if you're travelling directly to Finland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway or Malta

These requirements also apply to assistance dogs.

Check the rules of the country you're travelling to for any additional restrictions or requirements before you travel.

If you have a pet passport

You cannot use a pet passport issued in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland).

You can only use a pet passport if the country you're travelling to accepts passports for pets coming from Great Britain. The passport must have been issued in one of the following places:

- an [EU country \(https://www.gov.uk/eu-eea\)](https://www.gov.uk/eu-eea)
- Andorra
- Faroe Islands
- Gibraltar
- Greenland
- Iceland
- Liechtenstein
- Monaco
- Northern Ireland
- Norway
- San Marino
- Switzerland
- Vatican City State

You should check if it's accepted before you travel and [find out if you need any other supporting documents](#).

If it is not accepted, you'll need an [animal health certificate \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate) instead.

Travelling from Great Britain to Northern Ireland

If you have a pet passport issued in Northern Ireland, contact your vet for advice before travelling.

Read the rules about taking pets to Northern Ireland on [the NIDirect website](#) before you travel.

Arriving in an EU country or Northern Ireland

You'll need to go through a [travellers' point of entry](#) when you arrive in an [EU](#) country or Northern Ireland.

You may need to show your pet's animal health certificate or a valid pet passport, along with proof of their:

- microchip
- rabies vaccination
- tapeworm treatment (if required)

Repeat trips to an [EU](#) country or Northern Ireland

Your pet will need a new [animal health certificate](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate) (<https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate>) for each trip to an [EU](#) country or Northern Ireland.

Your pet will not need a repeat [rabies vaccination](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters) (<https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters>) so long as its rabies vaccinations are up to date.

Your dog will need [tapeworm treatment](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/tapeworm-treatment-for-dogs) (<https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/tapeworm-treatment-for-dogs>) for each trip if you're travelling directly to Finland, Ireland, Malta, Northern Ireland or Norway.

Travelling with more than 5 pets

You cannot take more than 5 pets to an [EU](#) country or Northern Ireland unless you're attending or training for a:

- competition
- show
- sporting event

You'll need written evidence of registration for the event when you travel.

All your pets must:

- be attending the event or training
- be over 6 months old
- meet all the other requirements for pet travel to that country

Exporting pets for commercial purposes

Read the [Border Operating Model](#) if you want to export pets to an [EU](#) country or Northern Ireland for commercial reasons (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-border-operating-model>) such as change of ownership.

3. Travelling to a non-EU country

If you're travelling to a non-[EU](#) country, you'll need to [get an export health certificate](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-an-export-health-certificate) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-an-export-health-certificate>) ([EHC](#)). You'll also need to complete an export application form ([EXA](#)) if you're in England, Scotland or Wales.

The [export health certificate \(https://www.gov.uk/export-health-certificates?commodity_type%5B%5D=pets\)](https://www.gov.uk/export-health-certificates?commodity_type%5B%5D=pets) and the export application form for each country and pet will tell you how to apply.

An [EHC](#) checks that your pet meets the health requirements of the country you're travelling to.

You must nominate an official vet who will be sent the [EHC](#). They'll check your pet has met the correct health and identification requirements before you travel.

Check the rules of the country you're travelling to for any additional restrictions or requirements before you travel.

4. Getting an animal health certificate

You need an animal health certificate for your dog, cat or ferret if you're travelling from Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) to an [EU](#) country or Northern Ireland.

You can add up to 5 pets to an animal health certificate.

How to get an animal health certificate

You must take your pet to your vet to get an animal health certificate. You need to do this no more than 10 days before you travel.

The certificate needs to be signed by an 'official veterinarian' ([OV](#)). Check your vet can issue animal health certificates. If they cannot, ask them to help you find an [OV](#).

When you visit your vet, you'll need to take proof of your pet's:

- [microchipping \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/microchip\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/microchip) date
- [vaccination \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters) history

Your pet's animal health certificate will be valid after the date of issue for:

- 10 days for entry into the [EU](#) or Northern Ireland
- 4 months for onward travel within the [EU](#)
- 4 months for re-entry to Great Britain

Your pet will need a new animal health certificate for each trip to an [EU](#) country or Northern Ireland from Great Britain.

5. Microchip

You must get your pet microchipped before, or at the same time as, their rabies vaccination. If you do not, they'll need to be vaccinated again.

Microchipping for pet travel can only be done by:

- a vet
- a vet nurse, student vet or student vet nurse (directed by a vet)
- someone trained in microchipping before 29 December 2014, and with practical experience

- someone who has been assessed on an [approved training course](#) - [contact the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(DAERA\)](#) if the course was in Northern Ireland

Make sure your vet puts the microchip number in your [animal health certificate](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate>). The date must be before your pet's vaccinations.

Reading the microchip

Airlines, train and ferry companies in the [EU](#) can read microchips that meet International Organization for Standardization ([ISO](#)) standards [ISO 11784](#) and [ISO 11785](#).

You may have to bring your own microchip reader when you travel if your pet's microchip does not meet [ISO](#) standards. You should check with your travel company before you leave.

If the microchip cannot be read

You'll have to do all the preparation again if your vet cannot read the microchip. This means you'll have to ask your vet to:

- rechip your pet
- revaccinate your pet
- issue a new animal health certificate if you're travelling to the [EU](#) or Northern Ireland
- record new microchips in the 'Marking of animals' section of the new animal health certificate

You'll have to [wait the required time before you can travel](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters>) if your pet is revaccinated or has new blood tests.

If the microchip can only sometimes be read

Your vet should try to read the microchip. If they get a reading, they can rechip your pet (the original chip is not removed).

This must be recorded in the animal health certificate in the 'Marking of animals' section with:

- the number of the old and new chips
- the date they were read
- the date the new chip was inserted

The vet must sign and stamp the page in the animal health certificate.

Your vet should record in the 'Others' section of the animal health certificate that your pet has been rechipped.

Tattoo

You do not need to have your pet microchipped if it's been tattooed with an identification number and all of the following are true:

- you're travelling to the [EU](#) or Northern Ireland
- your pet was tattooed on or before 3 July 2011

- the tattoo is clearly legible
- your pet was vaccinated against rabies after it was tattooed

Your vet must record the date of tattooing, the tattoo number and the date of the rabies vaccination in the animal health certificate.

6. Rabies vaccinations and boosters

You must get your dog, cat or ferret vaccinated against rabies before it can travel. Your vet needs proof that your pet's at least 12 weeks old before vaccinating them.

If you're taking your pet to the [EU](#) or Northern Ireland, you must wait 21 days after the primary vaccination before you travel.

You must [get your pet microchipped](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/microchip) before, or at the same time as, their rabies vaccination. If you do not, they'll need to be vaccinated again.

The vaccine must be an inactivated vaccine or recombinant vaccine that's approved in the country of use.

Vaccination record

Your pet's vaccination record must be in either:

- an animal health certificate
- a [valid pet passport](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-an-eu-country-or-northern-ireland)

Your pet can be stopped from travelling if the details in their animal health certificate or pet passport are in the wrong place.

Your pet's vaccination record must show:

- your pet's date of birth
- microchip number, date it was put in or read, and where it is on your pet's body
- vaccination date
- vaccine manufacturer and product name
- vaccine batch number
- date the vaccination is valid until
- the vet's signature and contact details

If you have a pet passport

Your pet's vaccination record must have been added by a vet in either:

- a country that can issue a [valid pet passport](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-an-eu-country-or-northern-ireland)
- Great Britain before 1 January 2021

If your pet passport does not have an up to date vaccination record, you'll need an [animal health certificate \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate) instead.

Your pet can be stopped from travelling if the vaccination details were added to their passport by a vet in Great Britain after 31 December 2020.

Booster vaccinations

If you're travelling with your pet, you must get regular rabies booster vaccinations for your pet. Check your animal health certificate or pet passport to find out when the booster vaccination is due.

You will not need to get repeat vaccinations for repeat trips to the [EU](#) or Northern Ireland if your pet's rabies vaccination is up to date.

7. Tapeworm treatment for dogs

A vet must treat your dog for tapeworm and record it in either an [animal health certificate \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate) or a [valid pet passport \(https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-an-eu-country-or-northern-ireland\)](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-an-eu-country-or-northern-ireland) if you're travelling directly to:

- Finland
- Ireland
- Malta
- Northern Ireland
- Norway

The treatment must have been given no less than 24 hours and no more than 120 hours (5 days) before you arrive.

The treatment must:

- be approved for use in the country it's being given in
- contain praziquantel or an equivalent proven to be effective against the *Echinococcus multilocularis* tapeworm

Short trips

If you're leaving Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) for a short trip to visit countries other than Finland, Ireland, Malta, Northern Ireland or Norway, you could have your dog treated by a vet before you go.

You must wait for 24 hours before re-entering Great Britain and return within 120 hours or you'll need to get another treatment abroad.

Information your vet needs to record

Check the vet has put the following details in the 'Echinococcus treatment' section of your dog's animal health certificate or valid pet passport:

- the name and manufacturer of the product
- the date and time they treated your dog
- their stamp and signature

8. Help and support

You can contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) if you've got questions or need more information.

If you're travelling to the EU or Northern Ireland

Contact the Pet Travel Scheme helpline if you need more information about pet travel.

Pet Travel Scheme helpline

pettravel@apha.gov.uk

Telephone: 0370 241 1710

Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm (closed on bank holidays)

[Find out about call charges \(https://www.gov.uk/call-charges\)](https://www.gov.uk/call-charges)

If you're travelling to a non-EU country

Contact APHA if you need more information about pet travel to a non-EU country.

Animal and Plant Health Agency

exports@apha.gov.uk

Telephone: 03000 200 301

Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm

[Find out about call charges \(https://www.gov.uk/call-charges\)](https://www.gov.uk/call-charges)

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