

CONTENTS**GENERAL INFORMATION****TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS****HEALTH CERTIFICATION****RECOMMENDATIONS ON
SHIPPING AN ANIMAL****RESOURCES***Chapter 9***TRAVELING WITH PETS****GENERAL INFORMATION**

Before deciding to take your pet overseas, check to be certain that your new post welcomes animals. Current post-specific pet entry requirements can be found in TMTTHREEs or welcome cables, available from post or the Overseas Briefing Center. OBC offers various resource lists that pertain to traveling with pets, including the "Shipping of Pets Checklist" (a general resource that includes critical information such as the current airline pet shipping policies) and the "Pet Chart," with specific country quarantine and/or import restrictions.

Contact the post directly to confirm entry and quarantine requirements. Some countries' government websites provide forms printed in English and the host language for your veterinarian to complete. Posts often provide OBC with links to these forms. Some countries do not permit importation, or they have long, expensive quarantine requirements.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

If you decide to take your pet, make the necessary arrangements directly with the airlines well in advance. Government travel offices will not handle pet reservations. Checking each airline's current pet transport regulations is crucial. They vary considerably. Shipping a pet in summer months and the coldest winter months is often more difficult due to temperature restrictions. Occasionally, a commercial pet shipper may be used because of this.

Most airlines will permit one or two animals per flight in the coach and first-class sections. Make reservations early. The pet must be small enough to fit in a container that slides under your seat. Check for exact crate size requirements and availability of acceptable containers from the airline you are using.

There are three ways you can ship your pet via the airlines:

- 1) Your pet can travel on the plane with you (either in-cabin or in the cargo). *In either case, your pet will be considered excess/accompanied baggage and charged accordingly.* It is usually to your advantage to take your pet along as "excess



baggage.” The pet will be checked in along with your bags at the ticket counter. Unfortunately, some airlines no longer offer this option.

- 2) You can book your pet on a separate flight. In this case, you will be charged the cargo rate, which is considerably more than excess baggage. The pet will have to be brought to the cargo facility of the airport rather than the ticket counter. This will require an earlier arrival time at the airport. In some cases, an airline may require all pets to be shipped as cargo or the country of assignment may require all pets to enter as cargo. Some airlines no longer offer the cargo option.
- 3) You can have your pet shipped through a licensed commercial shipper. You will be charged the cargo rate *plus* the shipper’s fee. Several airlines require this method unless your pet is small enough to fit in the cabin.

Note: As a rule, animals 100 pounds or larger will be charged as cargo even if they travel on the same plane as you (for United Airline, the limit has been raised to 150 pounds; call for specifics.) It is important to check with the airline if your pet is close to that weight and to determine if its policy may vary from this general rule.

Shipping containers must be made of sturdy wood or reinforced plastic. Acceptable crates often are sold by airlines as a service to their passengers. Extremely large animals may require specially constructed shipping crates and/or may have to be shipped in a cargo plane since some cargo openings cannot accept unusually large crates. Carrying cases suitable for use as “under the seat” baggage are not acceptable as shipping containers. Your crate should have a solid leak proof bottom lined with absorbent material. At least 20 to 30 percent of the crate’s upper surfaces should be ventilated. A batten or other protrusion on the container will prevent it from being placed flat against another surface, which would limit its air flow. It should be large enough to permit the animal to stand and turn around. (Too much space should

be avoided as rough weather can create a battering effect on the animal).

A water dish should be fastened to the crate so it cannot spill and so that the animal can be watered without the crate being opened. It should be conveniently located so that an attendant can provide water at stopovers without being bitten. A clothesline leash and cloth bag of food can be attached to the crate along with care and feeding instructions. Attention given to pets at stopovers varies and is sometimes nonexistent. Some flight attendants will feed and water animals; others will only open the baggage compartment door for ventilation.

The crates are placed in the hold of the plane in a pressurized compartment where temperatures should be similar to that of the passenger compartments. The compartments are airtight, but the number of pets that can be shipped on a single flight is limited.

If possible, the crate is put near a door so that the animal can get some fresh air whenever a stopover is made. Space should be left around each crate and the container secured with a net to prevent bouncing. Try to check these details before boarding your flight.



HEALTH CERTIFICATION

Certification requirements vary from country to country.

- Some countries simply require the veterinarian who examines your pet to be licensed in the state of origin and no endorsement by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is required.
- Some countries will accept a standard letterhead health certificate and rabies certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian and endorsed by the USDA.
- Other countries may require that your pet be checked by a federally accredited veterinarian, and a *United States Interstate and International Certificate for Health Examination for Small*

Animals (APHIS Form 7001) to be issued by that veterinarian, which must also be endorsed by the USDA. (Since August of 1994 only a federally accredited veterinarian can sign this form).

Check carefully the country briefing box on your post at the OBC or contact the post to determine what the exact requirements are before making an appointment with a vet. It is also wise to check the airline carrier that you will be using for your pet. There have been cases where a country does not require a certification, but a particular airline does. There is an endorsement fee by the USDA of \$24 per certificate for cats and dogs (for the UK \$76). More than one dog or cat may be on the same certificate. For other animals, please call.

Be sure to *plan well in advance* so that your paperwork will be done in time for your shipping date. You may send your paperwork by mail or courier along with a rabies certificate, the appropriate fee for service, and a self-addressed stamped envelope or a pre-paid Federal Express envelope (if you are short of time) for return to you. Some veterinarians may take care of this for you. *Ask before mailing examination statements yourself.*

Be sure that the vet's name is legible, and include a contact person with a daytime telephone number. Pets examined by veterinarians in other U.S. areas should have the papers certified by the USDA APHIS Veterinary Office in that state. The offices closest to the Washington, DC, area are:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
(USDA-APHIS)
Veterinary Services
1598 Whitehall Rd., Suite #A
Annapolis, MD 21401
(410) 349-9708 or (301) 261-8072

If the veterinarian is accredited in Virginia, mail to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
(USDA-APHIS)
Veterinary Services
Federal Building
400 N. 8th St, 7th Floor
Richmond, Va 23240
Tel: (804) 343-2560 Fax: (804) 343-2599

USDA-APHIS websites are:
Veterinary Services
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs>

National Center for Import and Export
<http://aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie>

A few countries may also require an authentication of certificate. If your country of assignment requires one, go first to the following office:

Department of State
Office of Authentication
518 23rd Street, NW
SA-1, Columbia Plaza
Washington, DC 20520
Tel: (202) 647 5002 or (800) 333-4636 and
then press 5
Fax: (202) 663-3636
TDD: (202) 663-3468
E-mail: aoprgrsmauth@state.gov
Internet: <http://www.state.gov/m/a/auth/>

The timetable for obtaining examination statements and certifications can be very tight. Plan ahead carefully to be sure all paperwork is complete before travel. For more information, visit the Overseas Briefing Center to review suggestions made in the hand-out "Shipping of Pets Checklist."

Remember to save your shipment receipts as a "moving expense" for the IRS or for partial or possibly full reimbursement in conjunction with the Miscellaneous Portion of the Foreign Transfer Allowance. (See chapters 4 and 7, "Travel and Leave Benefits" and "Income Taxes.")

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SHIPPING AN ANIMAL

Let your pet become accustomed to the crate before shipment, by having practice sessions that increase in time of confinement.

Include a familiar toy or something with your scent on it.

Put identification tags that include an emergency phone number around your pet's neck, using a plastic, breakaway collar.

Feed your pet(s) a light meal about six hours before shipping. *No water* within two hours, unless the weather is very *hot*. Check with your veterinarian for requirements for your pet. Do *not* tranquilize the animal.

Special information placed on the crate should include: flight route, shipping destination, whether the animal has been sedated, when last fed and watered, and the pet's description with a photo of the pet, and a telephone contact number. You might want to list this information in other languages, depending on the countries transited.

Check with the agent who meets the flight about your pet's progress when you are changing planes. Have your airway bill number readily available when doing this.

Allow plenty of time between connecting flights to be sure your animal is transferred to your flight if traveling with you.

If there is a delay, the airline will kennel the pets, when kennels are available. State on your airway bill that your animal is to be taken to the animal port if there is a delay or stopover, if you desire this service. There are daily and half-day rates for the service. These rates usually vary depending on the type and size of the animal.

Arrange to have your pet picked up immediately on arrival. Airline facilities for pets may be limited or nonexistent.

Carry a photograph of your pet for emergency identification purposes.

RESOURCES

Foreign Service Institute Transition Center (M/FSI/TC)

George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center (SA-42)

Department of State

Washington, DC 20522-4202

Physical location: 4000 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA (do not send mail to this address)

Internet: <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/>

Intranet: <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/>

Directions, maps, parking and other information

<http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c16687.htm>

Overseas Briefing Center (M/FSI/TC/OBC)

Room E2126

Tel: (703) 302-7277

Fax: (703) 302-7452

E-mail: FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov

Intranet: <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/>, click on "Overseas Briefing Center," then "Traveling with Pets"

Intranet Post Info To Go:

<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/epb/epb.asp>

Related videos that can be checked out from OBC:

Traveling with Pets – 2 hours (2006)

Transition Center Training Division (M/FSI/TC/T)

Foreign Service Life Skills Training

Tel: (703) 302-7268

E-mail: FSITCTraining@state.gov

Related Transition Center Training

Traveling with Pets (MQ 855)

<http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c6950.htm>