

Taking your pet dog, cat or ferret abroad

1. Travelling to an EU country or Northern Ireland

Check what you need to do before you can travel with your pet dog, cat or ferret to an [EU Country \(/eu-eea\)](#) or Northern Ireland.

You'll also need to check for any additional rules or requirements for the country you're travelling to.

These rules also apply to assistance dogs.

There are different rules if you're [travelling to a non-EU country \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-a-noneu-country\)](#).

If you're exporting dogs, cats, or ferrets for commercial purposes, such as a change of ownership, [check the rules for the country you are exporting to. \(/guidance/export-live-animals-special-rules\)](#)

1. Microchip your pet

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

2. Get your pet vaccinated against rabies

Your pet must be [vaccinated against rabies \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters\)](#) before it can travel. Your vet needs proof that your pet is at least 12 weeks old before vaccinating them.

If your pet needs a rabies vaccination, you must wait 21 days after the vaccination before your pet can travel.

If your pet has already been vaccinated, check if they need a booster vaccination.

You do not need to wait to travel after a booster vaccination if there has been no break in the vaccine cover.

3. Get a pet travel document

Get an [animal health certificate \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate\)](#) from your vet if you're going to an EU country or Northern Ireland.

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 after you enter the EU
- 4 months for re-entry to Great Britain

You can also use a [valid pet passport \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/pet-passport\)](#) if it is accepted in the country you're travelling to. You can no longer use a pet passport issued in Great Britain to enter the EU.

4. Get a tapeworm treatment for your dog

A vet must [treat your dog for tapeworm \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/tapeworm-treatment-for-dogs\)](#) and record it in either an animal health certificate or a valid pet passport 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 5 days (120 hours) before you arrive.

5. Arrive in the country

You'll need to go through a [travellers' point of entry \(https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/pet-movement/eu-legislation/non-commercial-non-eu/tpe_en\)](#) 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, containing proof of their:

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

6. Check your return journey

The rules for returning with your pet into Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) depend on what country you're coming from.

Find out [what you need to do if you're bringing your pet to Great Britain \(/bring-pet-to-great-britain/listed-and-unlisted-countries\)](#).

7. If you're 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 an event
- [exporting for commercial purposes \(/guidance/export-live-animals-special-rules\)](#)

Attending or training for an event

You'll need written evidence of registration when you travel for an event, including:

- competitions
- shows
- sporting events

All of your pets must meet all the other requirements for pet travel to that country.

2. Travelling to a non-EU country

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

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

An EHC confirms 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.

Check your return journey

The rules for returning with your pet into Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) depend on what country you're coming from.

Find out [what you need to do if you're bringing your pet to Great Britain \(/bring-pet-to-great-britain/listed-and-unlisted-countries\)](#).

3. 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 \(DAERA\) \(https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/contact\)](#) if the course was in Northern Ireland

Make sure your vet puts the microchip number in the [animal health certificate \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate\)](#). 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

You'll have to [wait the required time before you can travel \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters\)](#) 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.

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.

4. Rabies vaccinations and boosters

You must get your dog, cat or ferret vaccinated against rabies before it can travel to the EU or Northern Ireland. Your vet needs proof that your pet is at least 12 weeks old before vaccinating them.

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

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

When you can travel

You must wait 21 days to travel after your pet is vaccinated. Day 1 is the day after the rabies vaccination.

You do not need to wait to travel after a booster vaccination if there has been no break in the vaccine cover.

Example

A vet vaccinates your pet against rabies on 1 September. This means you can travel on 22 September.

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.

Vaccination record

Your pet's vaccination must be recorded in either:

- an animal health certificate
- a [valid pet passport \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/pet-passport\)](#)

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 a country that can issue a [valid pet passport \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/pet-passport\)](#).

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

5. Tapeworm treatment for dogs

A vet must treat your dog for tapeworm and record it in either an [animal health certificate \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/getting-an-animal-health-certificate\)](#) or a [valid pet passport \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/pet-passport\)](#) 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

6. 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.

When to get an animal health certificate

You must get an animal health certificate in the 10 days before you enter the EU as long as your pet either:

- has an up-to-date rabies vaccination already
- only needs booster doses to keep the vaccination up to date

If your pet needs a rabies vaccination, you must wait 21 days after the vaccination date before you can get an animal health certificate. Day 1 is the day after vaccination.

Tell your vet you need an animal health certificate when you take your pet to get vaccinated. This gives your vet time to prepare it.

How to get an animal health certificate

You must take your pet to your vet to get an animal health certificate.

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 \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/microchip\)](#) date
- [vaccination \(/taking-your-pet-abroad/rabies-vaccinations-and-boosters\)](#) 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 after you enter 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.

7. Pet passport

You can no longer use a pet passport issued in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) to enter the EU.

The passport must have been issued in one of the following places:

- an [EU country \(/eu-eea\)](#)
- 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 \(/https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/movement-pets/eu-countries-specific-information_en\)](#).

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

Travelling from Great Britain to Northern Ireland

Read the rules about [travelling with your pet into Northern Ireland \(/https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/travelling-pets\)](#)

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

What your pet passport must say

Check that the vet has filled in the following sections in the pet passport:

- details of ownership - you must sign section I if your pet passport was issued on or after 29 December 2014
- description of animal
- marking or identification of animal
- vaccination against rabies
- details of the vet issuing the passport (for passports issued from 29 December 2014)
- your dog's tapeworm treatment (if needed)

Only vets in EU countries can enter rabies vaccination details into an EU pet passport.

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

Any vet in any country can put tapeworm treatment details into a pet passport.

8. Help and support

Contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) for more information about pet travel.

Pet Travel helpline
Telephone: 03000 200 301
Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm
Closed on bank holidays
[Find out about call charges \(/call-charges\)](#)

You can also contact APHA by email.

For travel to the EU or Northern Ireland
pettravel@apha.gov.uk

For travel to a non-EU country
exports@apha.gov.uk

Make a complaint

Contact [APHA to make a complaint](#) ([/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/complaints-procedure](#)).