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What are the requirements to import a dog or cat into New Jersey?

Dogs imported into New Jersey are required to be accompanied by a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI or "health certificate") completed and issued by a veterinarian licensed in the country or state of origin within 30 days of travel, pursuant to New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.) 8:23-1.1 (full text of the regulation is posted below). It is recommended that persons importing dogs maintain records of the importation. Dogs with clinical signs of communicable diseases, or those exposed to communicable diseases, shall not be imported into New Jersey until treated, fully recovered, examined and then certified by a licensed veterinarian to be free of such disease(s).

Most airlines require a CVI to accompany any animal on a flight.

Although rabies vaccination is not specifically required for importation of dogs into the State, New Jersey law requires all dogs 7 months of age or older to be licensed by the municipality where they are housed. Current rabies vaccination is a prerequisite for dog licensure.

Owners of dogs that are unlicensed and staying the State for more than 10 days shall immediately apply for a dog license in the municipality where the dog will be kept. Owners of dogs brought into NJ that are licensed in another state for the current year shall apply for a dog license in the municipality where the dog is kept within 90 days.

There are no specific requirements for importing cats into New Jersey. Because cats are the highest risk domestic animal for rabies infection, vaccination against rabies is strongly recommended for all cats in New Jersey, including cats kept exclusively indoors. Most NJ municipalities have cat licensing requirements.

What are the requirements to import a dog or cat into the United States?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have regulations for bringing a dog into the United States that are posted online: <https://www.cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/dogs.html>.

Dogs and cats that are ill upon arrival at a port of entry will be referred to a local veterinarian, isolated and treated at the owner's expense.

There are no specific requirements for importation of cats into the U.S.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements for importing dogs in the US are posted online: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/bring-pet-into-the-united-states/pet-travel-dogs-into-us>

The USDA requirements for importing dogs into the US for resale or transfer to another person, rescue organization or pet stores are posted online: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_welfare/2014/faq_live_dog_imports.pdf. Please contact USDA Animal care at 301-851-3751 for questions.



New Jersey regulations for importation of dogs (N.J.A.C. 8:23-1.1)

Dogs shall not be brought into this state excepting when in transit or for breeding, laboratory, or exhibition purposes unless accompanied by a health certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian of the state or nation of the dog's origin indicating that the dog is free from rabies and other communicable disease and has not recently been exposed to any such disease. This certificate shall also state the breed, sex, age, point of origin, point of destination, the name and post office address of the consignee or owner and the consignor or seller and if the dog has been vaccinated, type and date of vaccination.

Contacts for information:

- For information on importing dogs into New Jersey, please call the New Jersey Department of Health at 609-826-4872 or 5964.
- For information on importing livestock and poultry into New Jersey, please contact the New Jersey Department of Agriculture by calling 609-671-6400.
- For information on importing wildlife and exotic animals into New Jersey, please contact the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection by calling 908-735-5689.