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

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.

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>.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) also has requirements for bringing dogs into the US 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 other persons, rescue organizations or pet stores are posted online: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_welfare/2014/faq_live_dog_imports.pdf. USDA Animal care can be reached by calling 301-851-3751.

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

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 signed 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 at the end of this document). Dogs exposed to, infected with, or displaying clinical signs of communicable diseases, shall not be imported into New Jersey until treated, fully recovered, re-examined and certified by a licensed veterinarian to be free of diseases. The CVI and other importation records should be maintained by the animal owner in New Jersey.

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 imported dogs that are licensed in another state and bearing a registration tag for the current year shall immediately apply for a dog license in the municipality where the dog is kept, if they are remaining in New Jersey for 90 days or more. 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.

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 which require current rabies vaccination.



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

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.