

EXECPETS

Pet Travel Border & Compliance Guide

Important reasons a pet journey can be delayed, stopped, refused or referred

For pet owners travelling between the UK, European Union and other international destinations

Before you travel

Check your pet's microchip, rabies vaccination, dog tapeworm treatment where required, travel certificate or passport, owner/authorised-person arrangements, carrier route and any breed or species restrictions. Small discrepancies are far easier to resolve before the day of travel.

This guide covers 63 common document, border, transporter, route, breed and legal compliance issues that can affect a pet journey.

Requirements vary by route and destination. Always check the current official rules for every country on your journey and ensure all documents are complete before departure.

Five checks that prevent many border problems

1 Microchip The chip must scan correctly and match the number recorded in the paperwork.	2 Rabies Check vaccination dates, validity, signatures and any required waiting period.	3 Dog tapeworm treatment For entry to Great Britain where required, treatment must be given inside the correct time window.	4 Documents Check names, dates, stamps, signatures, reference numbers and the correct current certificate model.	5 Route and status Confirm the approved carrier/route, owner or authorised person arrangements, and any breed/species restrictions.
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1. Pet travel documents and preparation

Administrative issues: items 1-11

Some administrative discrepancies may be recorded and travel may still be allowed on a single occasion, depending on the circumstances and the current instructions of the carrier or competent authority. They should still be corrected before future travel.

1	Section 3 'Marking of animal' is not laminated for passports issued after 29 December 2014.
2	Rabies vaccination and/or Echinococcus multilocularis (tapeworm) treatment stickers are not covered by a laminated strip for passports issued after 29 December 2014.
3	No date of birth is recorded on official documentation but where it is clear it is not a young animal and the date of birth is not relevant to administration of the current rabies vaccination.
4	Entries made in an EU passport by a Third Country Veterinarian (with the exception of the tapeworm section).
5	Correct details are recorded in the passport/Third Country certificate but in the wrong section.
6	Veterinarian details are incomplete in a section but correspond with the full complete details on the issuing page (Section IV of passports issued after 29 December 2014).
7	No health attestations or deletions have been made on the Third Country certificate.
8	Where the rabies vaccination is a primary vaccination, the 'valid from' date is not certified as at least 21 days after the primary vaccination was given (not required for booster vaccinations).
9	The valid until date for the current rabies vaccination has not been completed where the vaccine was administered less than a year ago but the appropriate waiting period has been observed.
10	There is not a unique reference number on each page of the Third Country certificate.

11	Dogs only: Time details of the Echinococcus multilocularis (tapeworm) treatment are incomplete but it is clear it was administered within the 24 to 120 hour window or the window expired during the journey but after check-in.
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Issues that may require veterinary clarification

Items 12-20

Missing or conflicting information may need to be confirmed by the veterinarian or competent authority. If compliance cannot be established, the journey may not be allowed to continue.

12	The date of microchipping is not entered correctly or the microchip number is recorded with a clerical error on documentation.
13	The valid until date for the current rabies vaccination has not been completed where the vaccine was administered more than a year ago.
14	Information on the manufacturer, product name or batch number is missing for the rabies vaccination.
15	The Veterinarian has not entered their full contact details when certifying the rabies vaccination and those details are not fully completed elsewhere on the document.
16	Dogs only: No date/time is recorded for the Echinococcus multilocularis (tapeworm) treatment where it is not clear that the treatment was administered within the 24 to 120 hour window.
17	Dogs only: Information on the manufacturer or product details is missing for the Echinococcus multilocularis (tapeworm) treatment.
18	Details of an entry have been altered but have not been correctly endorsed by the issuing Veterinarian/Competent Authority.
19	Supporting documents provided with the Third Country certificate have missing or conflicting information or are incomplete where the Third Country certificate is also insufficiently completed (clarification must be obtained from Veterinarian who undertook the procedures, not the Veterinarian who issued the Third Country certificate unless they are the same Veterinarian).

20	Nipah or Hendra declarations were not present but received following a request (no requirement to use the PETS09 but must be received from the Veterinarian/Competent Authority).
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Serious pet travel failures

Items 21-39

These are serious non-compliances. They can result in refusal to travel or enter, veterinary referral, quarantine, return or other official action.

21	Movement of animal cannot be considered as non-commercial as: there is an intention to sell or transfer ownership to another owner; the animal is not accompanied by the owner or an authorised person with suitable documentary evidence; the movement is not within five days of the owner; Section I 'Details of ownership' is not fully and correctly completed and signed by the owner for passports issued after 29 December 2014; or Section II 'Description of animal' date of birth details are not completed for passports issued after 29 December 2014.
22	There are more than five pets with an owner/authorised person and they do not meet the conditions of attendance at a show - either they are less than six months of age or the evidence of attendance at a show is missing.
23	A microchip/tattoo could not be read or the number read does not match the number in the documentation.
24	No date of microchipping/tattooing is recorded, the microchip was not implanted prior to the rabies vaccination or order of preparation is incorrect/cannot be verified.
25	The rabies vaccination was administered when the pet was less than 12 weeks of age.
26	The rabies vaccination is in any way invalid.
27	The waiting period of 21 days after the first rabies vaccination, or revaccination following a break in rabies vaccination, has not elapsed.
28	There is no blood test, the authorised Veterinarian has not stamped/signed the blood test page or the blood test has not been carried out by an approved laboratory.

29	The blood sample was taken less than 30 days after the rabies vaccination or three months have not passed since the blood sample was taken.
30	The blood test result was less than 0.5 IU/ml.
31	There has been a break in rabies vaccination since the blood sample.
32	Dogs only: A treatment against Echinococcus multilocularis (tapeworm) has not been administered 24 to 120 hours before expected arrival in the UK.
33	Dogs only: A product ineffective against Echinococcus multilocularis (tapeworm) has been administered.
34	The authorised Veterinarian details in the issuing section of the passport are absent or incomplete, or the Third Country certificate has not been signed or endorsed by the Competent Authority when required.
35	No supporting documents were produced when required, supporting documents cannot be verified or details on the supporting documents do not match those on official documentation.
36	The official documentation used is not the current model (previous model issued after the introduction of a new model), is no longer valid (according to the date of issue) or is otherwise invalid.
37	No official documentation was presented.
38	No additional certification for Nipah or Hendra requirements were provided.
39	The animal has previously been allowed to travel with a section 1 or 2 failure and the owner has not rectified the non-compliance.

2. Transporter authorisation, vehicle approval and welfare

When you pay a transporter to move a pet, welfare-in-transport rules can apply separately from the pet passport or health-certificate rules. A journey can therefore be stopped even when the pet's own travel paperwork is otherwise correct.

40	A paid pet transport service or courier does not hold the appropriate welfare-in-transport documentation. APHA specifically says that when an owner pays someone to travel with a pet, the transporter must meet welfare-in-transport requirements and hold the appropriate documentation. [1]
41	An economic-activity journey is carried out without the required transporter authorisation. Current GOV.UK guidance for England and Wales requires a UK-issued authorisation for animal transport over 65 km, with Type 2 required for journeys over 8 hours. [2]
42	A long road journey is carried out in a vehicle without the required vehicle approval. For species other than the main livestock species, current GOV.UK guidance requires vehicle approval for journeys over 12 hours within the UK or over 8 hours in a country outside the UK. [2]
43	A UK operator enters or works in the EU relying only on UK-issued transport documents where EU-issued versions are required. GOV.UK states that if transporter authorisation or vehicle approval is needed in Great Britain, EU-issued versions are also needed for transport in the EU. [3]
44	Required transport records are missing. Commercial/economic animal transport can require an animal transport certificate recording origin and ownership, departure, destination and expected journey duration, and the record must be carried and retained. [2]
45	The animal appears unfit to travel or the transport conditions are unsafe. Carriers can refuse an animal that is ill, at serious risk of heat or cold stress, inadequately restrained, too confined, poorly ventilated or without suitable access to water. [1]

3. Carrier, route and document validity

46	The pet is brought into Great Britain using a carrier or route that is not approved for pet travel, unless a specific exemption applies. Approved routes can change and should be checked before travel. [4]
47	The pet is not declared to the carrier or checker. APHA treats an undeclared animal as non-compliance; suspected smuggling can lead to the animal being held pending inspection or official action. [1]

48	Documents appear fraudulent, altered, copied or inconsistent with the animal. APHA lists colour photocopies, tampering, incorrect signatures/stamps, mismatched descriptions and improperly completed passports as fraud indicators; unresolved doubt can lead to refusal. [1]
49	A health certificate is electronically signed when an original signature is required. APHA states electronically signed certificates are not acceptable, apart from a limited USDA exception with specified endorsement requirements. [1]
50	The wrong Animal Health Certificate template is used. From 1 October 2026, the new AHC template must be used; the transition period for issuing the old template ends on 30 September 2026. [1]
51	The health certificate is outside its permitted entry window or otherwise expired. EU animal health certificates for entry from a non-EU country and GB pet health certificates have time limits that must be met at the point of entry. [1] [8]
52	The wrong passport is used for the direction of travel. In particular, EU pet passports issued to pet owners resident in Great Britain are no longer valid for travel from Great Britain into the EU; an appropriate EU animal health certificate is normally required instead. [8] [9]
53	A pet entering the EU from a non-EU country is not presented at a designated travellers' point of entry where one is required, or the owner does not make the pet available for the identity and document checks. [8] [9]

4. Breed, hybrid and protected-species restrictions

54	A banned dog type is brought into Great Britain without an existing valid Certificate of Exemption. GOV.UK states that a banned breed/type cannot be brought into Great Britain unless it already has a valid exemption. The banned types include Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro and XL Bully. [5]
55	A French Category 1 dog is brought into or even transited through France. French government guidance states that import, introduction and transit of Category 1 dogs is prohibited, including certain non-pedigree dogs morphologically similar to American Staffordshire/Pit Bull, Mastiff/Boerbull or Tosa types. [6]

56	A French Category 2 dog is introduced without meeting the additional French conditions that apply to dangerous dogs. Category 2 dogs may enter France only subject to the specific French rules for the dog and its keeper. [6]
57	An F1 hybrid cat or dog is presented for entry to Great Britain under ordinary pet travel rules. APHA says F1 hybrids cannot enter under the pet travel scheme and need an import licence plus zoo-approved quarantine arrangements. [1]
58	A Bengal, Savannah, wolf-dog or other hybrid is imported into France without evidence of recognised pedigree/domestic breed status where required. French Customs says that without acceptable proof, the animal may be treated as a hybrid and a prior import permit may be required. [7]
59	A CITES-protected pet is moved without the necessary permit or certificate, or through a port not authorised for CITES movements. Border Force can seize protected animals brought into Great Britain illegally. [10]
60	The animal is an invasive species, a dangerous/exotic animal, a non-native species or another type of pet for which a separate import licence or keeper licence is required but has not been obtained. [11]

5. Commercial movements and destination-country requirements

61	A commercial movement is presented as ordinary non-commercial pet travel. Sale, rehoming, transfer of ownership or movement outside the owner/authorised-person conditions can trigger commercial import rules; commercial consignments from non-EU countries must use the correct Border Control Post arrangements. [1] [11]
62	The carrier's own acceptance conditions are not met even though the government pet paperwork is otherwise valid. Carriers can impose additional conditions, including fitness-to-travel evidence, crate or restraint standards and limits on the animals they accept. [1] [4]
63	The destination or transit country has an additional national rule that has not been met. Examples include extra tapeworm treatment rules for certain destinations, export health certificates for non-EU countries, breed restrictions or other country-specific permits. Always check every country on the route, not only the final destination. [9] [12]

Choosing a properly authorised pet transporter

1	Ask for the transporter authorisation For an economic-activity journey over 65 km in England and Wales, current guidance requires an authorisation. Type 1 covers journeys over 65 km up to 8 hours; Type 2 covers journeys over 8 hours. The transporter should be able to produce the relevant authorisation.
2	For long international journeys, ask for vehicle approval For dogs, cats and other species outside the main livestock list, current guidance can require vehicle approval for longer journeys. The certificate is vehicle-specific.
3	Check EU-issued authorisation where needed A UK authorisation does not automatically authorise commercial animal transport in the EU. Where equivalent EU documents are required, the operator should hold them.
4	Check the company and the actual vehicle The operator providing the service, the authorisation and the vehicle being used should make sense together. If another transporter is used for part of the route, that operator must comply for its own leg.
5	Ask what paperwork travels with the pet A professional transporter should be able to explain the pet passport or AHC requirements, owner authorisation where relevant, transport records and the route used for checks.
6	Do not rely on “we never get checked” Previous journeys without inspection are not proof of compliance. Different authorities may check welfare, border, customs, vehicle or pet-travel requirements at different stages.

What can happen if a pet fails border or carrier checks

Great Britain

Depending on the problem, a pet may be refused travel or entry, referred for veterinary checks, quarantined, returned to the country of origin, or referred to APHA or Trading Standards.

European Union

Where a pet entering the EU fails compliance checks, authorities can order isolation, corrective administrative measures or re-dispatch outside the EU. EU law also provides for euthanasia as a last resort where other options are not practical, at the owner or authorised person's expense.

Important 2026 document points

- New EU pet-travel rules took effect in 2026, including updated document models and legislation.
- The old GB-issued Animal Health Certificate template can be issued only up to and including 30 September 2026. From 1 October 2026, the new template must be used.
- Electronically signed health certificates are not generally accepted for entry to Great Britain, subject to limited official exceptions.
- Approved pet carriers and routes can change. Check the route immediately before travel.

A useful rule for every journey

Do not assume a problem can be fixed at the terminal. Missing rabies validity, incorrect timing, an unreadable microchip, a banned-breed issue, the wrong route or missing commercial-import arrangements can require the journey to be abandoned or re-planned. Resolve anything uncertain before departure.

Official sources

This guide is based on official UK, EU and French government guidance available on 28 August 2026. Rules, approved routes and document models can change, so use the live official pages when checking a specific journey.

[1] Animal and Plant Health Agency - Pet travel: checks on pets by transport carriers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pet-travel-checks-on-pets-by-transport-carriers/pet-travel-checks-on-pets-by-transport-carriers>

[2] GOV.UK - Transporting animals in Great Britain

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transporting-animals-in-great-britain>

[3] GOV.UK - Transporting animals to, from or through Great Britain

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transporting-animals-to-from-or-through-great-britain>

[4] APHA/GOV.UK - Approved pet travel air, sea and rail carriers and routes

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pet-travel-approved-air-sea-and-rail-carriers-and-routes>

[5] GOV.UK - Bringing your pet dog, cat or ferret to Great Britain / banned breeds

<https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-great-britain>

[6] French Ministry of Agriculture - Category 1 and 2 dogs and dangerous dogs

<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/les-chiens-de-categorie-1-et-2-et-les-chiens-dangereux>

[7] French Customs - Travelling with a dog, cat or ferret; dangerous dogs and hybrids

<https://www.douane.gouv.fr/en/demarche/you-are-traveling-dog-cat-or-ferret>

[8] European Commission - Bringing a pet into the EU from a non-EU country

https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/live-animal-movements/dogs-cats-and-ferrets/bringing-pet-eu-non-eu-country_en

[9] Your Europe - EU rules on travelling with pets and other animals

https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/carry/pets-and-other-animals/index_en.htm

[10] GOV.UK - Bringing pets to Great Britain: endangered species / CITES

<https://www.gov.uk/bringing-pet-animals-to-great-britain/endangered-species>

[11] GOV.UK - Bringing pets to Great Britain: overview and extra rules

<https://www.gov.uk/bringing-pet-animals-to-great-britain>

[12] GOV.UK - Taking your pet abroad: travelling to a non-EU country / export health certificates

<https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-a-noneu-country>

[13] EUR-Lex / European Commission - 2026 EU pet movement rules and non-compliance measures

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32026R0273>

[14] GOV.UK - Animal welfare in transport / hiring a transporter

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare-in-transport>

[15] APHA - PETS08 non-compliance forms and checklist

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pet-travel-report-of-non-compliant-certificate/>

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