

Travelling abroad with your dog



National Canine Defence League

A Dog is for Life

In association with the AA

A trip abroad with your dog sounds like a great idea. In reality it is not quite so simple. This guide aims to help you plan a safe and trouble-free holiday for you and your pet.

WELFARE CONSIDERATIONS

Travelling abroad can be quite stressful for your pet, so you need to be absolutely sure that your dog is healthy enough to take the trip. Get your vet to give your dog a health check before you go. If you think your dog may be ill, is pregnant or recovering from a recent operation then it really may be in his best interests to leave him behind or, if possible, to postpone your trip. Dogs used to a temperate climate such as in the UK can find it hard to cope with a sudden change of temperature. Think carefully before you take your pet somewhere very hot or cold. Certain dogs such as greyhounds, short-nosed dogs (Bulldogs or Boxers) or overweight dogs can have difficulties in hot weather, although all dogs can die very easily from heatstroke. If you can't be certain that your dog will be comfortable and safe, then perhaps it would be fairer to leave him in alternative care in the UK. The NCDL recommends that pet dogs should not be subjected to the stress of long haul journeys (flights) just for a fortnight's holiday. Please put the welfare of your dog first.



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THE PET TRAVEL SCHEME

If you are planning to take your pet abroad and return to the UK without having to put him into quarantine, then you will need to meet the conditions laid out under the Pet Travel Scheme. The Pet Travel Scheme or PETS is run by DEFRA (The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and was fully introduced on January 31st 2001. For the most up-to-date details and an information pack, please contact the PETS helpline on 0870 241 1710.

The following conditions have to be met, and must be carried out (in this order) at least seven months before you plan to return to the UK from your holiday with your pet:

- Your dog has to be microchipped (with a microchip that conforms to ISO Standard 11784 or Annex A to ISO Standard 11785).
- After microchipping, your dog must then be vaccinated against rabies.
- After a suitable interval (usually around 30 days) your vet will take a blood sample and send it to a recognised laboratory for testing, to ensure that the vaccine has worked.
- You will then have to get a Local Veterinary Inspector (LVI) to issue your PETS certificate. Most small animal practices have a resident LVI. If not, they will be able to give you details of your nearest one.
- Your PETS certificate will then become valid six months after the successful blood test result. This period of time must elapse to ensure that your dog did not have rabies before or at the time of vaccination. You may leave the UK before this six months is up, but your dog cannot re-enter the UK until on or after the valid date filled out on your PETS certificate. The certificate will then be valid until your dog's rabies booster is due.



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An additional condition is that your dog must be treated for parasites (certain ticks and a tapeworm) 24-48 hours before re-entering the UK. This means that if you are going to France on a day-trip, your dog will have to be treated for these parasites before you leave the UK. On a longer trip, your dog will have to be treated in whichever country you are in at that time, before you return.

You will be charged for each of these steps by a vet, but it does cost significantly less than putting your dog through quarantine (around £150-250), as well as being considerably kinder!

Eligible routes & countries

Not all countries are included in the Pet Travel Scheme and you can't just come into the UK on any route that you like. You will need to contact the PETS helpline for up-to-date information as countries and routes may be added or removed from these lists at any time.

Qualifying countries at time of writing - EC countries and rabies-free islands

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| ■ Andorra | ■ Finland |
| ■ Antigua and Barbuda | ■ France (excluding French Guyana and St Pierre and Miquelon) |
| ■ Ascension Island | ■ French Polynesia |
| ■ Australia | ■ Germany |
| ■ Austria | ■ Gibraltar |
| ■ Barbados | ■ Greece |
| ■ Belgium | ■ Guadeloupe |
| ■ Bermuda | ■ Hawaii |
| ■ Cayman Islands | ■ Iceland |
| ■ Cyprus | ■ Italy |
| ■ Denmark | ■ Jamaica |
| ■ Falkland Islands | |
| ■ Fiji | |

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ■ Japan | ■ Reunion |
| ■ Liechtenstein | ■ St Helena |
| ■ Luxembourg | ■ St Kitts & Nevis |
| ■ Malta | ■ St Vincent |
| ■ Martinique | ■ San Marino |
| ■ Mauritius | ■ Spain (including the Canary Islands, excluding Ceuta and Melilla) |
| ■ Mayotte | ■ Singapore |
| ■ Monaco | ■ Sweden |
| ■ Montserrat | ■ Switzerland |
| ■ Netherlands | ■ Vanuatu |
| ■ New Caledonia | ■ Vatican |
| ■ New Zealand | ■ Wallis & Fortuna |
| ■ Norway (excluding Svalbard) | |
| ■ Portugal (excluding the Azores and Madeira) | |

Please remember that although it is possible to enter the UK from one of these countries with a PETS certificate, your dog may be put into quarantine on entering their country. You may also require export health certificates or import permits in order to enter certain countries. For further information, contact the PETS helpline, or the relevant Embassy or Tourist Office.

Approved carriers and routes of entry to the UK

The PETS applies only to England in that the approved points of entry only occur in England. Anyone trying to bring a dog into the UK at any other point other than those on the approved list (regardless of whether they possess a certificate or not) will have their pet put into quarantine. You may travel out of the UK with your dog by any means into one or more of the countries on the scheme, however, you must use one of the following routes to return to the UK.

By air (into London Heathrow Airport only) – from

- Amsterdam (Schipol) using British Midland Airways
- Brussels by British Midland Airways
- Frankfurt by Lufthansa
- Gibraltar by GB Airways
- Helsinki by Finnair
- Larnaca or Paphos by Cyprus Airways
- Madrid by British Midland Airways
- Palma (Majorca) by British Midland Airways
- Milan (Malpensa) by British Midland Airways
- Tokyo (Narita), Osaka (Kansai) and Nagoya by Japan Airlines
- Tokyo (Narita) by Nippon Airways
- Valletta by Air Malta and GB Airways
- Paris by British Midland Airways for Guide and Hearing Dogs only

By sea

- Calais to Dover using Hoverspeed, P&O Stena or SeaFrance
- Cherbourg or Le Havre to Portsmouth using P&O Portsmouth
- Caen or St Malo to Portsmouth using Brittany Ferries
- Cherbourg to Poole using Brittany Ferries
- Roscoff or Santander to Plymouth using Brittany Ferries
- Falkland Islands (Port Stanley) to Shoreham using Jeppesen Heaton

By rail (into Folkestone (Cheriton) only) – from

- Calais (Coquelles) using the Eurotunnel Shuttle Service (Please note that this is not the same as Eurostar)

TRAVEL OPTIONS AND SAFETY

The mode of transport that you choose depends on where you are going. Long haul journeys will require you to fly, but if your destination is nearer, you may choose to travel via train (the Eurotunnel) or by ferry.

Either of the latter two options will require you to use your car, although some ferry companies may allow foot passengers with dogs. Always advise your carrier when you are planning to take your dog, as there may be an extra charge and some services may not take pets. As your pet may be confined to either your car or a travel crate during the entire journey, make sure that your dog is exercised immediately before check-in and as soon as you arrive at your destination.



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Eurotunnel (not Eurostar)

Whilst on the Euroshuttle your dog will be required to stay with you in your vehicle at all times. The usual car safety advice applies (see below).

Ferry or Hovercraft

Your dog must usually stay in your vehicle during the crossing, although some companies may offer the alternative of kennels on the car deck.

- If you are concerned that your dog may be too hot in your car or that fumes may affect him, you should notify a crew member who should accompany you to check on him.
- If you are travelling in the summer, try to book your journey during the coolest part of the day or consider a night crossing.

Car travel and safety

Please read our *Safe travel and holidays with your dog in the UK* and *Dog car safety* leaflets for more information on car travel and safety.



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Aeroplane travel and safety

This is the most complicated way to travel with your dog. You can make all of the arrangements yourself but you may want to consider using a specialist pet exporter or shipping agent to help your trip go without a hitch (see useful contacts).

- Your dog must be healthy to fly. Get your dog health-checked by a vet as previously undetected heart conditions can be made worse by flying. Your dog must be at least 8 weeks of age to travel (though it is better if they are at least 12 weeks) although some countries may insist that he must be older than this to enter the country. Dogs over the age of 8 should only travel if they are very fit, or are seasoned flyers.
- You will need to notify the airline of your intention to travel with your pet when booking so they can reserve a space for your dog. Most airlines limit how many animals may travel in the hold.
- You will need to put your dog in a carrier or crate that conforms to IATA regulations. Your carrier, DEFRA or travel crate supplier should be able to give

you the correct dimensions of the container for your dog's size. Purchase your crate a while before you plan to travel and get your dog used to it. Put your dog's favourite blanket in it for the journey.

- Only feed your dog a very light meal before travelling. Try to get a travel cage with a fixed water pot so that your dog has access to water during the journey. Don't put any toys in the cage, as there is a possibility your dog could choke during the flight.
- You will not be able to visit your dog once he is in the hold. If there is a delay before or during the flight ask the captain to check the temperature of the hold. Insist on seeing your dog if you are concerned about his safety.
- Do not tranquilise your pet unless you have no other option. Some tranquilisers can cause a significant drop in blood pressure in a pressurised hold, which can be very dangerous for your dog. If your dog must be sedated, ensure that your vet is aware of these effects and prescribes an appropriate drug.
- Once you arrive at your destination you should find your dog in his cage at the luggage reclaim area. Check with the ground staff where your pet will emerge.

ENSURING YOUR HOLIDAY GOES WITHOUT A HITCH

- Get your pet some travel insurance. If your dog has an accident whilst on holiday abroad, you need to ensure that you can afford veterinary treatment, emergency repatriation or care for him if treatment lasts longer than your holiday because he is too ill to travel. If you have existing pet insurance then check if this covers travel abroad as well.
- Please also see our '*Safe travel and holidays with your dog in the UK*' leaflet for tips to help your holiday go without a hitch.

LAWS WHICH MAY AFFECT YOU AND YOUR DOG WHILST ABROAD

Certain laws that may affect you as a dog owner will apply. Always check with DEFRA and the relevant Embassy or Tourist Board for information about dog laws before you travel, as these can change at any time. Here are some examples:

Laws about transporting your dog in a car

- **Gibraltar** – Dogs must wear a lead. Legal proceedings will be taken if a dog in a car distracting a driver causes an injury.
- **Italy** – Dogs can be transported in cars provided that they do not distract the driver. If there are two or more dogs they must be kept in the rear of the car, separated from the driver by bars, or in special cages.
- **Netherlands** – Dogs must not be carried on a drivers lap.
- **Spain** – Dogs must be restrained or isolated from the driver.

'Dangerous dogs' laws

- **France** – You may only take a Staffordshire Bull Terrier or English Mastiff into France if you have



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with you their Kennel Club registration. Crosses of these breeds or purebred dogs without papers will not be allowed into the country. Once in France, these breeds and Rottweilers and Rottweiler crosses must be on a lead and muzzled at all times in public.

- **Germany** – Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Bull Terriers and bull terrier crosses should be brought into Germany with extreme caution or not at all. Certain 'large' dogs, or other breeds such as the Briard, Dobermann, Mastiff and Rottweiler may need to be kept on the lead and muzzled in public. This may differ depending on which states within Germany you travel, so always check for the most up-to-date information.
- **Spain** – All dogs must be kept on a lead in a public place.
- **UK** – Owners of pitbulls registered in the UK should check with the Home Office - 020 7273 2316 - if they intend to leave and re-enter the UK with their dogs. Non-registered pitbulls or pitbull types could be seized and destroyed.

DISEASES

Whilst abroad, your dog may be at risk from diseases not normally found in the UK. If his vaccinations are up-to-date he should already be immune to parvovirus, hepatitis, leptospirosis, distemper and of course, rabies. The treatments for ticks and tapeworm before your return to the UK should cover your dog for some foreign diseases. However, check with your vet if he will need additional preventative medication for every country you enter. Your dog could be at risk from the following:

- **Heartworm** – common in Southern France, Spain, Italy and around the Mediterranean. Transmitted by mosquitoes. Prevention is essential. Ask your vet for a preparation such as Stronghold, or visit a vet once abroad and ask for heartworm tablets.

- Babesiosis – especially common in France particularly south of the Loire Valley. Transmitted by ticks. Preventative treatment against ticks is essential. Check your dog’s coat every day and remove ticks immediately.
- Ehrlichiosis – common in southern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Rhone Valley and Finland. Transmitted by ticks. Preventative treatment is essential, as for Babesiosis.
- Leishmaniasis – common around the Mediterranean, especially Sardinia and Sicily. Transmitted by the sandfly. Visit a vet on arrival to a country where the disease is prevalent, as they should be able to suggest more effective preventative measures than a UK vet. This is often fatal – so avoid sandflies if possible.



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RETURNING TO THE UK

If you have followed all of the conditions under the Pet Travel Scheme your dog shouldn’t have to go into quarantine. When you and your dog re-enter the UK under PETS you must have the following documentation:

- Your valid PETS certificate – check that you are travelling within the specified date before you depart
- The official certificate of treatment against ticks and tapeworms – you will get this from the vet at the time of treatment
- The declaration of residence – a form to declare that you have not taken your dog outside of the PETS countries.

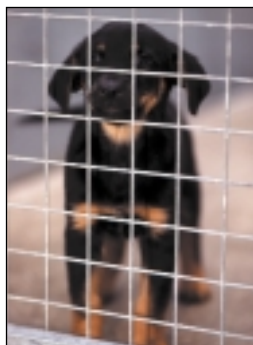
- If you are returning from a long-haul journey by air, the airline must arrange for an official seal to be put onto your dog’s travelling container to ensure that your dog has not been exposed to the risk of infection by rabies during the journey (during a stop-over, for example).

Unfortunately, there have been times when the PETS process has gone wrong, often through no fault of the owner. This can often result in quarantine for the animal concerned. Problems can occur if:

- Your pet could not be identified properly - if his microchip is unreadable. It is rare for a microchip to stop working or to move to a different part of the body. Try to make sure that your microchip can definitely be read immediately before you leave the UK. If the microchip cannot be read you may have to put your dog into quarantine for six months.
- You have incomplete documentation. If you lose your PETS certificate, you will have to delay your dog’s return to the UK whilst you obtain a new one from a government-approved vet in a qualifying country. You will need to prove to the vet that your dog has been microchipped, vaccinated and successfully blood tested.
- Your dog was not treated properly for ticks and a tapeworm. If your pet has not been treated or was treated at the wrong time (must be 24-48 hours before you enter the UK) you will have to delay your re-entry, get your dog treated and get an official certificate. If your certificate is not an official one you will have to go back to the vet that treated your dog and ask for an official certificate, or get your dog treated again and a new official certificate.
- On a long-haul flight the seal on your dog’s container has been broken. If there is a problem with the seal your dog will be taken into quarantine until you can prove that he has not been exposed to the risk of rabies during the journey. The company which transported your pet should be able to give you the evidence you need.

QUARANTINE

If your dog has to go into quarantine or you are travelling into the UK from a country not on the PETS you may want to read our factsheet entitled *Choosing a quarantine/boarding kennel*. DEFRA will supply you with a list of licensed kennels. The quality of quarantine kennels varies enormously and the most expensive does not necessarily mean the best. Most of them follow a voluntary welfare code, but there will be statutory welfare standards laid down in the near future. In the meantime QUAFF (Quarantine Abolition Fighting Fund) keeps a register written by its members from their personal experiences of using quarantine kennels and this should give you an indication of the type of care that your dog will receive.



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If you want to take your dog with you on holiday, it is your responsibility to ensure that he enjoys himself as much as you do. If you are concerned that he may not be able to cope with the climate change, then it may be wiser to leave your dog in the UK. If you decide to take your dog with you, this leaflet should help you and your hound have a safe and happy holiday.

USEFUL CONTACTS & FURTHER INFORMATION

Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) helpline 0870 241 1710
www.maff.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/PETS

**The Department for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)** 020 7904 6000
www.defra.gov.uk

**Quarantine Abolition
Fighting Fund (QUAFF)**
01243 264173

Eurotunnel
08000 969992
www.eurotunnel.co.uk

**The Automobile
Association (AA)**
0800 444500
www.theAA.com

**Pet travel
companies and
information
websites**

Dogs away
020 8441 9311
www.dogsaway.co.uk

Eurotours
01273 883838
www.eurotours.co.uk

Paws4Travel
www.paws4travel.co.uk

Petplanet
www.petplanet.co.uk/
petplanet/travel

Pets Will Travel
www.petswilltravel.co.uk

Travelpets
020 7499 4979
www.travelpets.net

**Pet exporters/shipping
agents and container
suppliers**

Airpets Oceanic
0800 371554
www.airpets.com

Chilworth Pet Exports
023 8076 6876
www.chilworthkennels.freeserve.co.uk

Par Air Livestock Shipping
01206 330332
www.parair.co.uk

Pet travel insurance
Animal Friends Insurance
0870 444 3438
www.animalfriends.net

DCT Travel
020 8522 3424

E & L
08707 423710
www.eandl.co.uk

Petplan
0800 0727000
www.petplan.co.uk

RapidInsure
www.rapidinsure.co.uk

Microchip scanners
Pet-id
0800 731 3356
www.pet-id.net

For more information or advice on this or any other dog related subject, or if you would like to support our vital work with a donation, please telephone or write to:

NCDL, 17 Wakley Street, London, EC1V 7RQ

Email: info@ncdl.org.uk

Tel: 020 7837 0006

or visit NCDL online at www.ncdl.org.uk

For details of your nearest NCDL Rehoming Centre please call 08457 646 000

The NCDL is working towards the day when all dogs can enjoy a happy life, free from the threat of unnecessary destruction.



The AA, with more than 11 million members, is the UK's biggest motoring organisation and a leading voice in road safety. Our aim is to make road travel as stress-free, accessible and safe as possible. For UK and European drivers, the AA's Internet service www.theAA.com provides traffic information, route guidance, motoring advice, international driving permits and motoring travel insurance. AA Five Star Europe personal travel insurance includes free cover for emergency veterinary and boarding fees while driving with dogs and cats on the Continent.



National Canine Defence League

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