

INFORMATION DOCUMENT ON THE IMPORTATION OF DOGS AND CATS INTO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Updated on the 27/11/2014

General

A veterinary import permit is needed to import Dogs & Cats into South Africa.

Cats are not routinely quarantined on arrival in South Africa. The cat must however have a valid import permit and a correctly completed health certificate, signed and stamped by a government veterinarian of the exporting country. If the **originals** of both the Veterinary Import Permit (VIP) and the Veterinary Health Certificate (VHC) are not available at the time of the cat's arrival in South Africa, the cat will be kept in quarantine until the required documentation is presented at the quarantine station.

Dogs and cats must have a valid rabies vaccination. In the case of primary (first) rabies vaccination the vaccination must be given not more than 12 months and not less than 30 days before the date of import. In the case of a booster rabies vaccination the vaccination must be given not more than 12 months before the date of import.

Vaccination against rabies is not required for cats/dogs imported from Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Northern Ireland but vaccination against rabies for cats/dogs imported from these countries is advised. This will ensure that the cat/dog has sufficient immunity against rabies on arrival in South Africa to prevent it from contracting rabies in South Africa.

Puppies/Kittens under three months of age do not need to be vaccinated for rabies. But puppies/kittens less than 3 months of age can only travel to South Africa if the dam/queen of the puppy/kitten has been vaccinated for rabies more than 30 days before and less than 12 months before the birth of the puppy/kitten. These puppies/kittens must be vaccinated for rabies after arrival in South Africa at 3 months of age and proof of the vaccination must be presented to the South African Veterinary Authorities.

Quarantine of 14 days will be imposed on some dogs, depending on the country of origin of the dog. Dogs from the following list of countries below **do not need to go into quarantine on arrival in South Africa**. The dog must however have a valid import permit and a correctly completed health certificate, signed and stamped by a government veterinarian of the exporting country. If the **originals** of both the Veterinary Import Permit (VIP) and the Veterinary Health Certificate (VHC) are not available at the time of the dog's arrival in South Africa, the dog will be kept in quarantine until the required documentation is presented at the quarantine station.

Europe.

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, Norway, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania.

North America

Canada and United States of America

Australasia

Australia and New Zealand

Africa

Botswana, Comoros, Malawi, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Reunion.

Asia

Israel

South America

Argentina

Dogs imported from countries not mentioned in the above list will be quarantined on arrival. Before a quarantine booking for a dog can be confirmed, the importer must sign an indemnity form. Copies of the indemnity form can be obtained from the permit office and from the two quarantine stations (see contact details below). The original signed indemnity form needs to either be handed in at the quarantine station where the dog will be quarantined or the original signed indemnity form needs to be posted or couriered to the quarantine station. Faxed and scanned copies will not be accepted. Bookings at the quarantine stations will only be confirmed on receipt of the original signed indemnity form.

If you are importing a dog from an island please contact the Import Export Policy Unit to find out if your dog will be quarantined on arrival in South Africa.

All dogs and cats imported into South Africa must be permanently identified with a microchip (tattoos will not be accepted).

The microchip must be able to be read by an ISO 11784 or ISO 11785 scanners.

Dogs that will be quarantined on arrival in South Africa may only be imported into South Africa via OR Tambo (Johannesburg) or Cape Town International Airports. Dogs and cats that are being imported from countries not subject to quarantine can also be imported into South Africa via Durban International Airport. Dogs and cats will not be allowed to enter South Africa via any other airport or port of entry.(including land border post)

All dogs and cats imported into South Africa must be registered, as manifest cargo and can **not** fly as excess baggage. The Directorate Veterinary Services does not have veterinary officials at the passenger terminal of OR Tambo (Johannesburg) and Cape Town International Airport to check the paper work of dogs entering South Africa via the passenger terminal of the respective airports. The dogs and cats can only disembark via the cargo terminal of the respective airports.

Dogs and cats may travel in the cabin with the owner, **if allowed by the airline**, but the pets must be registered as manifest cargo and the airline staff must take the pets from the owner on landing so that they can be off loaded from the plane via the cargo terminal.

On arrival at the airport the **original** Veterinary Import Permit issued by the Directorate Veterinary Services and the **original** Veterinary Health Certificate signed, stamped and certified by Veterinary Authorities of the exporting country must be presented to the veterinary officials at the airport before the dog or cat can be released. The documents can either travel with the animal or the person collecting the animal must present the documents to the officials at the airport. The latter is only for animals that are not going into Quarantine on arrival in South Africa. The paperwork of animals going into quarantine must travel with the animal.

Testing of Dogs

Before dogs can be imported the dog needs to be certified free from the following five diseases by means of blood tests. The dog's blood can either be tested in the country of origin or the blood sample can be sent to South Africa for testing.

Disease	
1	<i>Brucella canis</i>
2	<i>Trypanosoma evansi</i>
3	<i>Babesia gibsoni</i>
4	<i>Dirofilaria immitis</i>
5	<i>Leishmania</i>

If the Veterinary Authorities of the exporting country can certify that the exporting country is free from one or more of the above mentioned five diseases then the dogs exported to South Africa do not need to have blood tests done for the disease that the exporting country is free from. Dogs imported from **EU Member States** must be tested for **all five diseases**, as listed above. The onus is on the importer to check that the correct veterinary health certificate has been issued with the veterinary import permit, as it is named on the veterinary import permit, in point 2.2.

The Directorate Animal Health require the following test or tests to be used for the above mentioned five diseases

<i>Brucella canis</i>	serum agglutination / rapid slide agglutination test
<i>Trypanosoma evansi</i>	card agglutination test and giemsa blood smear
<i>Babesia Gibsoni</i>	Immunofluorescence antibody test & giemsa blood smear
<i>Dirofilaria immitis</i>	microfilarial filtration test
Leishmaniosis:	Indirect fluorescent antibody (preferred test) or ELISA or Direct agglutination test or Western blot/membrane immunoassay

If the samples need to be sent to South Africa, these must be sent by air, accompanied by a copy of the OVI master import permit for the import of diagnostic specimen, under cover of an air waybill/courier waybill for testing to –

DIRECTOR (ATTENTION: DR LAURA LOPEZ e-mail LopezL@arc.agric.za)
ONDERSTEPSPOORT VETERINARY INSTITUTE
DIAGNOSTIC REGISTRATION TEL. NO.: 27/12/529 9272
100 OLD SOUTPAN ROAD FAX NO.: 27/12/529 9275
ONDERSTEPSPOORT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Please note that some of the blood tests for dogs are performed only on a Thursday. It is therefore recommended that samples are sent to arrive at the latest on a Wednesday. If samples arrive later, the tests will only be done the following Thursday.

The samples specimens required for testing each dog are as follows: -

2ml. Whole blood collected in an evacuated blood collecting tube with
EDTA - Purple top.

2 x 2ml Whole blood collected in a normal evacuated blood collecting tube-
Red top.

2 x blood smears - unfixed and unstained – wrapped separately in tissue
paper - then protected from moisture in a water proof plastic bag.

The samples are to be securely packed and clearly marked “Keep Refrigerated”. The Samples are to be accompanied by a copy of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute Master Veterinary Import Permit for the Import of Diagnostic Specimens (OVIMVIP) and by a certificate issued by the Veterinary Authorities of the exporting country in which the following information is furnished.

- 1) Number of the OVIMVIP referred to above
- 2) Full description of the dog(s)
- 3) Type and Number of Samples
- 4) Tests required - see above
- 5) Consignee
- 6) Consignor
- 7) Air Way Bill number and Flight Number

Arrangements must be made with the OVI regarding payment for the tests prior to commencement of the tests. Contact the laboratory at the above telephone numbers/ e-mail to get more information on what samples have to be submitted, how the samples have to be packaged and the cost of the tests.

The blood samples must be sent by air as cargo and cannot be brought in by private individuals as part of their luggage. The samples can only enter South Africa via OR Tambo (Johannesburg) International Airport.

Please contact Dr Lopez at e-mail address LopezL@arc.agric.za for a copy of the Master Veterinary Import Permit referred to above.

Please note that any dog testing positive for any of the above-mentioned five diseases will not be eligible for import into South Africa.

Bloods must be drawn within 30 days of the date of export to South Africa. Dogs may only be imported if all blood results are negative.

Dogs imported from countries not certified free from *Trypanosoma evansi* must be tested and will only be allowed into the Republic of South Africa on negative testing.

Dogs imported from countries not certified free from *Dirofilaria immitis* must be treated from the date of negative testing until export at the required intervals with:

- Diethylcarbamazine (5-6 mg/kg per os daily)
OR
- Ivermectin (6 micrograms/kg per os monthly)
OR
- Milbemycin oxime (0,5 mg/kg per os monthly)
OR
- Moxidectin (3 micrograms/kg per os monthly)
OR
- Selamectin (6mg/kg)
- (Revolution) Prophylactic only
OR
- Proheart SR12 (Subcut injection yearly) *

* If the date of the negative test falls within 11 months of giving the Proheart SR12 subcutaneous injection then no further *Dirofilaria immitis* treatment is required.

Sufficient *Dirofilaria immitis* medication needs to accompany the dog to South Africa so that the dogs can receive a six month course of medication after importation into South Africa.

All dogs that have to be quarantined on arrival in South Africa will be retested for the above mentioned five diseases. This is regardless of the results of the blood tests done before the dog was exported to South Africa and is done at the owner's expense.

Dogs found positive for the above mentioned five diseases will not be released from Quarantine.

If, while in quarantine, a dog is found to be positive for *Brucella canis*, *Lieshmania*, *Trypanosoma evansi* or *Babesia gibsoni*, the dog will either be returned to the exporting country or euthanized in the quarantine station. This will be done at the owner's expense.

In cases where you are applying on behalf of someone please make sure that you pay under that person's name or company's name.

Please take note that **no application will be processed without proof of payment.**

Proof of the deposit must be faxed to: **+27 12 329 8292; +27 12 319 7644,**
for attention: **Amanda Steyn Lerato Diale OR**

A cheque for **R140-00** made payable to the Director-General National Department of Agriculture may be attached to the application form and posted to the above-mentioned address.

Payments can also be made at the following office by the National Department of Agriculture:

◆ **Head Office**

C/o Annie Botha and Union Street
Delpen Building
Riviera
Pretoria
Tel. No. (012) 319-7461

◆ **Kempton Park Quarantine Station**

Mudfish Drive no. 3
Bonaero Park
Extension 3
Tel. No. (011) 973-2827

In cases where **quarantine of animals** is required, the importer must contact the Quarantine Officer at the port of entry:

- ◆ Johannesburg Tel +27 (0) 11 973 2827 or Fax +27 (0) 11 973 2828
- ◆ Cape Town Tel +27 (0) 21 551 2050 or Fax +27 (0) 21 551 1378

The Quarantine Officer will **make the reservation for accommodation** at the Quarantine Station and must complete the applicable part of the application form.

An Indemnity Declaration (in respect of imported animals undergoing quarantine) must also be completed and attached to the application form. This Indemnity Declaration form can also be obtained from the Permit Office.

Following receipt of the completed application form, a **Veterinary Import Permit** will be issued.

A **Veterinary Health Certificate** will also be sent to you with the Veterinary Import Permit. This needs to be completed, in English, by a veterinarian authorized thereto by the Veterinary Administration of the exporting country, **within 10 days of departure.**

The following must be presented to the South African Veterinary Import Control

Officer at the **Port of Entry**:

- i) Original Veterinary Import Permit
- ii) Original Veterinary Health Certificate
- iii) Any other documentation specified, e.g.: Indemnity Declaration, Rabies Vaccination Certificate, etc.

The Directorate Animal Health, Sub-Directorate Import Export Control in Pretoria will be able to assist you should any **further information** be required.

Contact persons:

Mrs Lerato Diale

+27 (0) 12 319 7514

+27 (0) 12 319 7414/7633

+27 (0) 12 319 7632

+27 (0) 12 319 7503

+27 (0) 12 319 7406

Please state on the application form whether the permit will be **collected or mailed** to you.

Please also note that it takes three (3) to four (4) working days to process the permit if approved.

In cases where the permit is going to be collected, please **confirm** with permit office telephonically whether the permit is ready before you come to collect.

Dogs & Cats from Neighbouring Countries

Dogs and Cats entering South Africa from Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland do not need an import permit. These dogs and cats need a health certificate that certifies that the dog or cat has been vaccinated against rabies in the last 12 months but more than 30 days before the date of departure. The cats and dogs need to have a health check within 7 days of export.

This does not apply for dogs entering South Africa from Mozambique. These dogs can only be imported into South Africa with a veterinary import permit. The dogs need to have the necessary blood tests (see testing procedure above) done prior to export and must be flown from Mozambique to either Johannesburg or Cape Town International Airports where the dogs will be placed in quarantine for approximately 14 days and will be re tested according to the normal protocol for dogs in quarantine. The dogs may not enter South Africa by road. An import permit is needed to bring cats into South Africa from Mozambique but cats can enter South Africa by road and do not need to be placed into quarantine.

Dogs & Cats from other African Countries

Dogs being imported from other African countries must have a veterinary import permit and cannot enter by road via one of our neighbouring countries. The dogs need to have the necessary blood tests (see testing procedure above) done prior to export and must be flown to either Johannesburg or Cape Town International Airports where the dogs will be quarantined for 14 days and will be re tested according to the normal protocol for dogs in quarantine.

Dogs and cats from **Malawi** do not need a veterinary import permit. These dogs and cats need a health certificate that certifies that the dog or cat has been vaccinated against rabies in the last 12 months but more than 30 days before the date of departure. The cats and dogs need to have a health check done within 10 days of export.

Cats from other African countries need a veterinary import permit and a veterinary health certificate that has been stamped and signed by a certifying veterinarian in the country of origin. This must accompany the cats. Cats must also have had a rabies vaccination less than a year but more than 30 days before the date of export. These cats can enter South Africa by road.

Dogs and Cats in Transit through South Africa to other African Countries

Dogs and cats that are moving in transit through South Africa **by road** to other African countries are considered as normal imports and therefore need to comply with South Africa's veterinary health requirements. These animals need to have a veterinary import permit from South Africa. The dogs need to have the necessary blood tests (see testing procedure above) done prior to export.

All dogs and cats travelling in transit by air to SADC countries must be accompanied by a South African veterinary intransit permit for dogs/cats and must comply with the South African import health requirements for dogs/cats. The countries that this requirement applies to are: Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zambia, Tanzania, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Kenya, Mauritius, Malawi and the Seychelles.

All dogs/cats travelling by air to countries other than the countries listed in the previous paragraph need not conform to the South African import health requirements for dogs/cats, provided these dogs/cats do not leave the customs area of the international airport in South Africa. These dogs/cats need to be accompanied by a standard South African veterinary intransit permit.

If a dog or cat is travelling intransit from Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho or Malawi via South Africa to another country the dog or cat does not need to have an intransit permit from South Africa. The dog or cat must however comply with the requirements as indicated under the section of "Dogs and Cats from Neighbouring Countries" above.

Dogs leaving South Africa for recreational purposes (shows or Holidays) for a period of 10 days

A veterinary import permit for dogs travelling out of South Africa for recreational purposes is needed for the import of such dogs that have travelled outside South Africa for a short period of time.

These permits will only be issued for dogs travelling to countries for which South Africa does not require quarantine.

The dog must be permanently identified with a microchip. The description of the dog, i.e. the name, breed, sex, colour and microchip number must be written on the application form when applying for the permit.

No blood tests are required for the dog to be re imported back into South Africa as the dog will not have been out of South Africa for 10 days and therefore the blood tests to be of any value as even if a dog is infected with one of the above mentioned five diseases the dogs will not show a positive reaction to the blood tests.

Instead of testing these dogs, the owners are required to take preventive measures to ensure that the dogs do not get infected with the diseases.

The dog must have a valid rabies vaccination. The rabies vaccination must have been done less than a year and more than 30 days before travelling.

If the country the dog is travelling to is not free from *Dirofilaria immitis* then the dog must, on arrival in the exporting country be put on one of the following medications as a preventative treatment for *Dirofilaria immitis* : Diethylcarbamazine (5-6 mg/kg per os daily), Ivermectin (6 micrograms/kg per os monthly), Milbemycin oxime (0,5 mg/kg per os monthly), Moxidectin (3 micrograms/kg per os monthly) or ProHeart SR 12 (subcut injectable yearly). The medication must be sufficient to treat the dog for six months.

If the country the dog is travelling to is not free from *Trypanosoma evansi* then the dog must be treated with either Suramin or Diminazene aceturate, according to the instructions for use thereof by the manufacturer on the day of departure back to South Africa.

If the country the dog is travelling to is not free from *Leishmania* and or *Babesia gibsoni* then the dog must be treated with an effective acaricide and with insect repellent registered in South Africa, before departure and throughout their stay.

Please contact Dr Solita Pillay or Dr Nileshnie Moonsamy, State Veterinarians, Import Export Policy Unit, Directorate Animal Health, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries at telephone +27-12-319-7599 or e-mail SolitaP@daff.gov.za or NileshnieM@daff.gov.za for more details on the import of dogs and cats into South Africa.