

# THE PET TRAVEL SCHEME

## AN OVERVIEW



### 1) What is the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)?

Traditionally, travelling with a pet would involve very strict, lengthy quarantine rules. In 2000, new legislation was introduced that would allow you to travel between the UK and qualified, listed countries with your pet under the Pet Travel Scheme. In January 2012, the pet travel scheme came under review to harmonise with the EU and certain components of the scheme have now been relaxed or abolished.

Primarily, the aim of the Pet Travel Scheme is to protect the health of the UK HUMAN POPULATION (NOT the health of your pet). The scheme aims to prevent the introduction and establishment of certain diseases to the UK, an example would be rabies. However the scheme does not enforce protection of your pet against a large number of other equally dangerous diseases whilst abroad (some carried by parasites that we do not yet have in the UK). You must think carefully about the pros and cons of pet travel and read through the separate leaflet on 'The Health Risks of Pet Travel'.

Whilst the individual requirements of the Pet Travel Scheme have been relaxed, failure to meet the strict guidelines could still render your pet from being refused re-entry into the UK and may be required to spend 6 months in quarantine (usually in the country from which you have travelled).

The following is a guide to help you through the complicated process of travelling with your pet (**based upon the assumption your pet is resident only in the UK, has never travelled before and will only travel to and from listed EU and listed non EU countries and territories**).

### 2) Which countries and pets are eligible?

The Pet Travel Scheme only applies to dogs, cats and ferrets travelling between the UK and certain countries and territories. For a full list of qualifying countries and individual requirements please visit:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/countries/>

Please note pets that are resident in the UK can travel to and from the Channel Islands and The Isle of Man without requiring a passport. From 1 January 2012, all pets travelling from the Republic of Ireland to the UK should be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and accompanied by a pet passport. This is the government regulation. No checks are made by the UK or Ireland authorities. We advise our clients to follow the regulations as stated to avoid any complications.



### 3) General Advice Regarding Travelling With Your Pet

- Contact a local vet in the area you wish to travel to and ask them what their recommendation is for local animal infectious disease prevention
- Check with your insurance company that your pet will still be covered if taken outside of the UK
- Think carefully about travelling with older pets. The stress of travelling, unfamiliar surroundings and a hot climate can make an older pet very uncomfortable. Would it be kinder to source a highly recommended kennel, cattery or pet hotel for them to stay in whilst you are away? Have you considered a house sitter so your pet can stay at home?
- **DOGS DIE IN HOT CARS!** A familiar statement. Please do not overlook how important this is. The reason a dog 'pants' is to cool itself down. This happens by heat exchanging from the warm tongue to the cold air surrounding it and so the body cools down. In a car, however, the air space is closed so eventually the air is the same temperature as the tongue and no further heat exchange can occur. The dog then cannot cool down and essentially overheats very quickly to the point of death. If you are travelling to an area you would not want to leave your car windows open then you should not leave your dog in the car. Pack water bowls, fans and plenty of bottles of water.
- Stock up on any medication your pet is receiving to make sure you have a plentiful supply whilst abroad
- Once you have arrived, make it a priority to find your nearest vet. Make a note of their contact details, location and 'out of hours' set up. If faced with an emergency, you do not want to have to find these details in a panic.
- Take a first aid kit for your pet
- Remember – travelling with your pet these days is a great luxury. However, this may come at quite a cost. Not only expensive, there are serious animal health considerations to take into account. The Pet Travel Scheme is not designed to protect the health of your pet, it is designed to protect the health of the human population.
- No anti-parasite treatment will offer 100% protection against contracting a vector borne disease
- If you are travelling with your pet make sure you are aware of all that is required, not only by law but also as a responsible pet owner to make sure these fatal diseases can be PREVENTED as TREATMENT may not be a viable option.

### 4) Where do I start and what do I need to do?

#### For pets to enter the UK from the EU and listed non-EU countries

(under the new guidelines THE BLOOD SAMPLE, 6 MONTH WAIT RULE and TICK TREATMENT PRIOR TO RE-ENTRY are no longer required and the TIME RESTRICTION FOR TAPE TREATMENT has been extended)

*Step 1)* Your pet will have a **microchip** implanted by a vet. If your pet is already chipped we will need to scan your pet to ensure the chip is working properly and record the chip number. We will also need to see your microchip certificate so we have proof of when the microchip was implanted.

*Step 2)* A **rabies vaccination** will be administered (this can be done on the same day as the microchip). The minimum age an animal can start the rabies vaccination for pet travel is **12 WEEKS OLD**. Rabies boosters are required every 3 years. Please note we DO NOT send reminders for rabies boosters, it is your responsibility to ensure the pet passport is up to date.

*Step 3)* **DOCUMENTATION = ISSUE PET PASSPORT**

*Step 4)* **A STATUTORY 21 DAY WAITING PERIOD** applies from the date of vaccination to leave or re-enter the UK.

*Step 5)* **DOGS ONLY** - On return to the UK, your dog needs to be treated by a vet to administer a **TAPEWORM** treatment and sign the pet passport appropriately. This must be done no less than 24 hours and not more than 120 hours (ie 1-5 days) before the scheduled entry time in the UK (bear in mind – if travelling for less than 5 days

duration we may be able to administer the tapeworm treatment here prior to travel without needing a repeat treatment before return).

**Step 6) Arrange for your animal to travel with an approved transport company on an authorised route** – Your pet must enter the UK from a listed country or territory travelling with an approved transport company on an authorised route (no treatment required for dogs entering from Finland, Ireland or Malta).

### **For pets entering the UK from non-approved countries**

Please consult the DEFRA website for full details as your pet will require additional steps to those listed above (for example some countries still require a blood test and a longer waiting period).

## **5) The Passport**

In order to issue your pet with a Pet Passport, we invite you to attend an extended consultation. Within the consultation we implant the microchip, give the rabies vaccination, explain the pet passport and double check all your details are entered correctly. We will run through the process of travelling with your pet, the finer details and the pitfalls!



## **6) The Tick and Tapeworm treatment**

### **1. Tick Prophylaxis:**

Whilst you are no longer required under the Pet Travel Scheme to see a vet 24-48 hours prior to you return to the UK to administer a prophylactic tick treatment, we cannot stress enough how important it is for your pet to receive tick prophylaxis whilst abroad.

The type of tick you or your pet may encounter whilst abroad is likely to be a different species of tick to that found in the UK. Tick prophylaxis not only reduces the likelihood of your pet being responsible for the introduction of one of these 'exotic' ticks into the UK but will also reduce the likelihood of your pet contracting a 'tick borne disease' (see separate info).

As a result, we recommend the following:

- **Apply monthly tick prophylaxis whilst abroad.** The correct use of a product such as 'Advantix' or 'Scalibor Collar' will significantly reduce the risk of your dog picking up a tick. These products will repel and kill ticks. This will therefore reduce the likelihood of the tick transmitting a 'tick borne disease' (see handout: Health considerations of taking your pet abroad). However, these two products are extremely toxic to cats so the use of Frontline Combo is the preferred option for feline travelers.
- **Check your pet (and yourselves) for ticks every 24 hours.** By correctly removing ticks with a tick hook within 24 hours of attachment, you effectively prohibit the transmission of most tick borne diseases from tick to host.
- Inform the correct authorities if you spot a tick on your animal when you get home.

## 2. Tapeworm prophylaxis:

Your **DOG** must have received a tapeworm treatment 1-5 days before re-entry to the UK. This is to prevent *Echinococcus multilocularis* (a specific type of tapeworm) from becoming endemic in the UK. This species of tapeworm can spread from animals to humans and the resulting infection behaves in a similar manner to an aggressive cancer, spreading around the body. It is essential that you worm your dog whilst abroad every month with a suitable product containing the drug 'praziquantel' (for example Milbemax).

### 7) The Rabies Booster

- **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE YOUR PETS RABIES VACCINATIONS ARE UP TO DATE.** After the initial vaccination, your pet will require a booster every **THREE** years. Unlike the routine annual vaccinations, the rabies booster cannot become overdue. **IF THE RABIES BOOSTER VACCINATION IS EVEN 1 DAY OVERDUE, THE PASSPORT IS INVALID. YOUR PET WILL NOT BE ABLE TO TRAVEL AND MAY FACE QUARANTINE.**
- PLEASE NOTE – **WE DO NOT SEND OUT RABIES BOOSTER REMINDERS.** The responsibility of ensuring the rabies boosters are up to date rests with the pet's owner. We do however keep detailed records and if you are unsure when the booster is due, please telephone the practice and we will be able to advise you. The rabies vaccination can be given at the same time as your pet's routine annual vaccinations. *Bear in mind, if the booster will be due WHILST you are abroad, it will be necessary to perform the vaccination PRIOR to your departure.*

### 8) What are the common problems seen on returning home?

An example of some of the problems that could arise:

- The Pet Passport has not been completed in full (i.e. you have not seen a vet to administer the anti-parasite treatment prior to return travel)
- The Pet Passport is lost
- Failure to record the date, time, stamp and signature for the tape treatment
- Failure of timing tape treatment (*bear in mind – if you see a vet 1-5 days prior to travel but your plane/ferry is unexpectedly delayed, it is always worth seeking advice from the relevant personnel in case the treatments need to be repeated*)
- The microchip cannot be read
- The rabies booster vaccination was late
- The duration of your trip abroad was under 24 hours, in which case the tape treatment needed to be administered in the UK before you travelled.
- The duration of your trip was long enough for the animal to become 'resident' in that country and become subject to residency implications (for example – a pet in France becomes resident after 3 months)

If you are a new client to Viking Vets and have been issued a Pet Passport with your previous vets – we are more than happy to double-check the passport to ensure all the relevant sections have been filled in.

## 9) Private veterinary health statements

From the DEFRA website: 'While veterinary health statements are not required by DEFRA for the movement of pet animals, you may find that approved transport companies require veterinary evidence your pet is healthy and fit to travel before they will allow it to board their aircraft or ship'.

With this in mind we would advise you to contact your transport company. Ask whether they require a private veterinary health statement and if so in what form that should take:

1) They may ask for completion of section IX of the EU Pet Passport by a practising veterinarian confirming that 'the animal is in good health and able to withstand carriage to its destination.' or

2) a private statement from a practising veterinarian stating that: 'On [date], I examined the animal described in EU Pet Passport/third country official veterinary certificate numbered [enter serial number] and found it to be free from clinical signs of infectious or contagious disease, including external parasites, and in my opinion, is fit to travel.'

The majority of transport companies will send a 'tick sheet' of all the documentation required for you to travel to your chosen destination but it is always worth checking. If no health statement is required, there is no specific need for your pet to be examined by a vet prior to travel unless you have a cause for concern.

Please note: For travel to and from any country outside of the Pet Travel Scheme, to export a pet or to travel with any animal other than a dog, cat or ferret, please refer to the DEFRA website or phone the practice for more information. This information is intended as a guide only, correct at January 2012. Please refer to DEFRA's website for full details of the Pet Travel Scheme: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/>