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Pet Travel



Travelling Abroad with Your Pet

Since the UK left the EU on 1st January 2021, the rules for taking pets abroad have changed. Previously issued Pet Passports are no longer valid and a new Animal Health Certificate is required instead. The new requirements were emailed to all clients with old-style pet passports and the new regulations are listed on the Acorn House website and at <https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad>.

The new certificates take a long time to prepare and complete. A new Animal Health Certificate is required each time a pet is taken abroad. The Animal Health Certificates contain many more restrictions and requirements than the old-style passports.

Taking your pet to Europe

The rules for taking pets to Europe changed on 1st January 2021. The original requirements for pets to have a microchip and then a rabies vaccination at least 21 days before travel remains.



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However, Pet Passports have been replaced by Animal Health Certificates (AHC). The main difference for clients is that Pet Passports used to be valid for repeated travel as long as the pet's rabies vaccination was up to date, whereas under the new rules a new AHC needs to be obtained every time you wish to take your pet to the EU. The AHC has to be completed and signed by the vet within 10 days of travel. Please note that 21 days must pass between the rabies vaccine being given, and the AHC being completed by the vet.

If you have a Pet Passport do not throw it away (it is evidence of your pet's rabies vaccination). If you have definite plans to travel, please call the surgery to make an appointment that falls within 10 days of the date of intended travel.

Only vets with Official Veterinarian (OV) status can complete the AHCs. At present, these veterinary surgeons are Rosie Theakston, Ola Bonarska, Henry Phillips, Ruth Halpin, and Sarah Rees-Fallow.

If you are making an appointment for an AHC please tell the Receptionist that this is what the appointment is for. The practice will need at least 48 hours between the time of booking and the appointment slot, because the OV needs to go onto online government system and apply for the AHC on your behalf before you attend. You will also be asked to complete and return a form to confirm some details about your pet and your trip before the appointment.



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The cost of obtaining an AHC from Acorn House will be £298 for one pet. This covers the admin time applying for the AHC prior to the certificate appointment and the 45-minute appointment with the OV to examine the pet and complete the AHC. If additional pets in the household are travelling on the same trip, they can share one AHC. An additional 15 minutes of appointment time needs to be booked for every additional pet travelling, and an additional fee of £67 per pet will be charged. Payment must be made at the time of booking and is non-refundable if you later decide not to attend the appointment or collect the AHC.

Summary of new process for pets travelling from the UK to EU countries after 1st January

1. Insert a microchip if the pet is not already microchipped (not required if pet already microchipped).
2. Give a rabies vaccination (not required if you have evidence that your pet is up to date with rabies vaccination such as a valid old-style Pet Passport, or clinical records from the vet that gave the vaccine). There must be at least 21 days between the rabies vaccination and the date that the AHC is signed by the vet.
3. Ring Acorn House and tell the practice the date that you plan to take your pet to an EU country. Our receptionists will book you an appointment with one of our OVs that is within 10 days of your date of travel. Payment will be taken at this point.
4. The Receptionist will email you with a form to complete and return to the practice before your appointment.



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5. The OV will apply for an AHC before you attend your appointment. For this reason, at least 48 hours must lapse between you making the appointment and the appointment date itself and payment is not refundable if you later decide not to attend your appointment.
6. The OV will examine your pet, check your pet's microchip, and ensure that your pet is up to date with rabies vaccination by examining your old-style Pet Passport or by checking our records at Acorn House if the pet was vaccinated with us. If you do not have an old-style Pet Passport and your pet was vaccinated against rabies by a different veterinary surgery, it MAY be possible for our OVs to issue the AHC. This is dependent on obtaining appropriate records from the veterinary practice that administer the rabies vaccine. If the records are not in the approved format our veterinary surgeons will not be able to use them as evidence of vaccination and your pet will need to be vaccinated again, wait 21 days and then have the AHC completed.
7. The pet may travel to the EU using the usual approved routes.
8. If your pet is travelling to Finland, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway or Malta it must have treatment for tapeworm between 1 and 5 days of arrival into any of these countries. This will need to be included on the AHC. It will be simplest if the OV that is completing the AHC administers the tapeworm treatment at the same time as completing the AHC (so



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for these countries, the AHC should be completed between 1 and 5 days before travel, not 10 days).

9. On the return journey, pets will continue to require a tapeworm treatment to be administered and signed by a vet between 1 and 5 days of the date they will arrive back in the UK, just as they do now. Dogs returning from Finland, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway or Malta will not need to have this treatment.

What about a blood test?

If the UK had been classified as an “unlisted” country after 1st January, pets travelling to the EU would have had to have a blood test 30 days after rabies vaccination and then wait a further 3 months before travelling to the EU. Some of our clients completed this process in 2020 so that they were prepared for all eventualities in 2021.

Negotiations meant that the eventual agreement regarding pet travel between the UK and the EU does not require pets to have a blood test prior to travel.

What will be the cost of an AHC from Acorn House?

Our fees are as follows:

Insert microchip £28 (per pet travelling)

Rabies vaccination £90 (per pet travelling) (2 courses £145 if required)



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AHC applied for and issued £298 for first pet on AHC (£67 for subsequent pets on the same certificate)

Will I need an AHC every time I take my pet abroad?

Yes, a new AHC must be issued by an OV every time you wish to take your pet abroad. The cost will be £298 each time.

How often does the rabies vaccination need to be repeated?

The rabies vaccination used at Acorn House is usually valid for 3 years. Vaccinations given in other countries or using a different brand of vaccine may only be valid for 1 year. You can check when your pet's rabies vaccination is due by looking in your old-style Pet Passport, or asking the veterinary practice that vaccinated your pet.

Can I book an AHC appointment for the same day that I am making the booking?

No, our vets require at least 48 hours' notice before you attend the practice. This is because the vet will need to request a specific AHC to be allocated to your pet, using an online government system, in advance of the appointment itself. You will also need time to receive, complete and return the pre-AHC form that we will send you before the appointment.

Why do I have to pay at the time of booking?

Our vets need to apply for your AHC in advance of your appointment (see above). We also need to reserve an extended appointment slot with one of our Official Veterinarians to issue the



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AHC. We cannot commit to this if we are unsure whether your appointment is going to

go ahead or have concerns that you may need to change your appointment (the nominated OV may not be available on another day).

What if I already have a Pet Passport?

Do not throw your passport away as it is evidence of your pet's rabies vaccination. It will speed up the process of your vet being able to issue an AHC when you do want to travel. However, you will no longer need to take your Pet Passport with you when you travel with your pet.

Which vets at Acorn House are Official Veterinarians?

The OVs at Acorn House are Rosie Theakston, Sarah Ress-Fallow, Ruth Halpin, Henry Phillips, and Ola Bonarska.

Which animals can travel to the EU using an AHC?

Pet dogs, cats and ferrets can use this system to travel to the EU. Other species, or groups of more than 5 pets (unless they are all over 6 months old and travelling to participate in a competition) are considered differently – please contact the Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA) for specific advice on 0370 241 1710 or email pettravel@apha.gov.uk.

How long is the AHC valid for?

You must travel to the EU within 10 days of the AHC being signed by the OV at Acorn House.



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It is valid for a single trip only.

Once you have entered the EU, the AHC will remain valid for 4 months, or whenever your pet's rabies vaccination expires (whichever comes first). This will include onward travel through different EU countries.

The AHC is valid for return to the UK for up to 4 months after the date of issuing.

What about returning to the UK?

The requirements remain as previously – pets must receive an authorised tapeworm treatment from a veterinary surgeon before leaving. This must be given between 1 and 5 days before the pet arrives back in the UK. A few countries are exempt from this requirement (Malta, Ireland, Finland, Norway).

The documents that will be accepted for pets coming INTO the UK from 1st January are as follows:

1. A valid Pet Passport (issued in the EU, or one issued in the Great Britain prior to 1st January 2021 if the rabies vaccine is still valid); or
2. The AHC issued in Great Britain prior to travel (valid for up to 4 months after being issued); or
3. A UK pet health certificate

Your pet will not require this documentation on return to Great Britain if you are returning from Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, The Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland.



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I am likely to want to travel to the EU with my pet but I am not sure when I will be going

Make sure that your pet is microchipped and arrange for your pet to receive a rabies vaccination at least 3 weeks before the earliest possible date that you might want to travel.

After that, there is nothing else that you can do until you know the date that you are going to travel.

Once you know this date, ring our reception desk to book an appointment within 10 days of the travel date, with one of our Official Vets. You will be asked to pay for this appointment at the time of booking.

I wish to take my pet abroad but to a non-EU country, what shall I do?

Contact the APHA to find out the requirements for the country that you wish to visit. They will ask you some questions and prepare appropriate documentation which our Official Vets will then be able to complete and sign for you. Make these enquiries well in advance of travel, as some countries require additional vaccinations, blood tests and waiting periods of several months before you can travel. The contact details are as follows: 0370 241 1710 or email pettravel@apha.gov.uk.

Should I take my pet abroad with me?

Before pet passports were introduced in 2001 it was very rare for people to take pets abroad with them unless they were making a permanent move abroad. The pet passport scheme made it so



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simple to take pets abroad that it then became quite normal to take pets even just for a long weekend away. The post-Brexit pet travel scheme is not as user-friendly (for pet owners or vets!) as the pet passport scheme so you may wish to consider whether it would suit you better to leave your pet with a friend or pet boarding service instead of taking them abroad, especially if you are only intending a short trip.

What about getting an EU passport for my pet?

Acorn House is unable to advise specifically on this issue, but we are aware that some clients who have properties in EU countries and spend a lot of time in these countries, are considering having an EU pet passport issued by an EU vet whilst they are resident in the EU. This document would then be valid for back-and-forth travel between the EU and UK in a way very similar to the old pet passports. Please be aware that UK vets do not have authority to make entries in an EU passport, so pets with an EU passport will have to have their rabies vaccination boosters in the EU.

Please note that AHCs are available for Acorn House clients only. We are unable to process certificates for pets that are registered with other practices.