

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

Updated on the 09/2017

## 1. 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, British Channel islands 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, British Channel islands( Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of man), 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, Seychelles.

### 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. 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 **cannot 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.**

## **2. 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. Alternatively the blood can be tested in any other country, only if the laboratory is a government approved laboratory in that specific country.

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

From October 2017 country freedom declarations will not be accepted as specified on the Veterinary health certificate issued to the importer with the import permit. The dogs must be tested for **all five diseases**, as listed above with the testing methods below. 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. **Thus it is the importer's responsibility to ensure all import requirements are met as specified on the correct Vet Health Certificate.**

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

- Brucella canis* - Serum agglutination **OR** Rapid slide agglutination test
- Trypanosoma evansi* - Card agglutination test **AND** Giemsa blood smear
- Babesia gibsoni* - Immunofluorescence antibody test **AND** Giemsa blood smear
- Dirofilaria immitis* - Microfilarial filtration test
- Leishmaniosis: - Indirect fluorescent antibody (preferred test)
  - or ELISA
  - or Direct agglutination test
  - or Western blot/membrane immunoassay

**NOTE: *T.evansi* and *B.gibsoni* needs serology AND a Giemsa blood smear (Thus 2 testing methods must be performed for these 2 diseases). Knotts test will not be accepted for Heartworm disease!**



If the samples need to be sent to South Africa, these samples 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](mailto: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, 0110**  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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

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

1 x 5ml EDTA, well mixed (purple top tube).

2 x 3ml serum: serum must be centrifuged and aliquot **clear** before shipping to SA.

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

The samples are to be securely packed and send according with **IATA regulations**. **Samples must be kept cold, but do not freeze, as this will render the sample useless.** The package should be clearly marked "**Diagnostic Specimens**". 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](mailto: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, in English, are negative.**

### **3. Preventative Treatment :**

Dogs imported must be treated **from the date of negative testing until export**, at the required intervals with *Dirofilaria immitis*:

- 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**
- Selemectin (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.**

Dog must be treated with an **effective acaricide** registered in South Africa **within 30 days** of export **as well.**

**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.



If, while in quarantine, a dog is found to be positive for *Dirofilaria immitis*, the owner will be given the option of treatment for the dog while in the quarantine station or sending the dog back to the exporting country. If the dog is treated in quarantine, it will be re-tested following treatment and will only be released from quarantine once acceptable test results are received to indicate that the dog does not pose a disease risk. All costs for quarantine, testing, treatment or return of the dog will be at the owner's expense.

#### **4. Applying for a Veterinary Import Permit (VIP):**

The required permit application form can be obtained from the Permit Office of the Directorate Animal Health.

**Room G52, Delpen Building, c/o Annie Botha and Union Street, Riviera, Pretoria**

Telephone :                    **+27 (0) 12 319 7514**                    **+27 (0) 12 319 7503/7406**  
   **+27 (0) 12 319 7461**                    **+27 (0) 12 319 7632/3**

OR

Send the form to:

The Director: Animal Health  
Import Export Policy Unit  
Private Bag X138  
PRETORIA  
0001  
SOUTH AFRICA

**OR fax to: +27 (0) 12 329 8292**

To obtain a Veterinary Import Permit you need to deposit the permit fee into the Department's bank account:

**A TARIFF IS PAYABLE AND IS AMENDED ANNUALLY FROM 01 APRIL. PLEASE CONFIRM THE NEW TARIFF, WITH THE PERMIT OFFICE ([VetPermits@daff.gov.za](mailto:VetPermits@daff.gov.za)), BEFORE APPLYING.**

The payment's details are as follows:

<b>Name of bank</b>	:	Standard Bank of South Africa
<b>Name of account holder</b>	:	National Department of Agriculture
<b>Account nr.</b>	:	011219556 International Band
<b>Branch</b>	:	010845
	:	IB BRAND 0001982 CENTRE CODE
	:	Swift Code SBZA-ZAJJ
<b>Name of the branch</b>	:	Arcadia
<b><u>IMPORTANT NOTICE</u></b>	:	<b><u>Reference</u></b> must be Importers Name & Surname

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

***You are responsible for your bank charges as well as the Foreign Bank charges; the Department will not issue a permit if the full fee for the permit is not received.***

**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**

A cheque 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 or (011) 393 7980

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 station 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 specimen **Veterinary Health Certificate** will also be provided to you with the Veterinary Import Permit. The required certification must be provided on the **official certificate paper**, in English, by a veterinarian authorized thereto by the Veterinary Authority 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.
- iv) The pre-import test results, for the 5 diseases the RSA needs official testing for, have to be presented at the Port of entry. The results must be in English.

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:

**Amanda Steyn**

**+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 five **(5) to ten (10) 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.

## **5. Dogs & Cats from RSA 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 (Inter-territorial movement permit) 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 normal veterinary import permit and vet health certificate. 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 **O.R. Tambo** 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.** A veterinary 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.



## **6. Dogs & Cats from other African Countries:**

Dogs being imported from **other African countries** than the previously mentioned neighbouring countries must have a Veterinary Import Permit and Vet Health Certificate; **they 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(O.R. Tambo) 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.

## **7. 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 and veterinary health certificate 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 in-transit permit for dogs/cats and must comply with the South African import health requirements for dogs/cats. The **SADC 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 in-transit permit**.

If a dog or cat is travelling in-transit from Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho or Malawi via South Africa to another country the dog or cat does not need to have an in-transit 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.



## **8. 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. Therefore the blood tests to be of any value as 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 **Mrs Lerato Diale** or **Mr Weekend Mantshidi**, Animal Health Technicians, Import Export Policy Unit, Directorate Animal Health, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries at telephone **+27-12-319-7559** or e-mail [LeratoDI@daff.gov.za](mailto:LeratoDI@daff.gov.za) or [WeekendM@daff.gov.za](mailto:WeekendM@daff.gov.za) for **more details** on the import of dogs and cats into South Africa.



**Example of a brief summary for importing dogs into the RSA from countries OTHER than the official Neighbouring countries, updated 2017:**

**Step 1:**

Apply for **Veterinary import permit** at [VetPermits@daff.gov.za](mailto:VetPermits@daff.gov.za) as described in the information document. If your dog needs to be quarantined, bookings at the quarantine station should be made first.



**Step 2:**

Draft a timeline for the Veterinary Health Certificate. (An example only for reference)

- Check that **rabies vaccine** is administered according to import specifications.
- Collect **blood sample** 30 days pre-export and test for all 5 diseases as stated on page 3 of the information document at a government approved laboratory.
- **Heartworm medication** should be administered on **sample date** according to the information document on page 5.
- **Preventative tick treatment** administered 30 days pre-export, please make sure it does not have a detrimental effect to your dog's health together with the Heartworm medication.



**Step 3:**

**10 days before export** the dog should have a veterinary check-up. The **official government veterinarian** authorized to do export certification should endorse the Vet Health Certificate within 10 days of export.



**Step 4:**

Send to the blood tests results to review pre-export the port of entry or import export policy unit, if there is any uncertainties. (This step can also be performed before step 3).

(This summary is only an addition to the information document, it should under no means be used as the only source of reference for the import of dogs and cats into the RSA).

