

Dogs, cats and ferrets

- import to Finland from EU countries and non-EU countries





Import of dogs, cats and ferrets to Finland from EU countries and non-EU countries

The requirements associated with the import of dogs, cats, and ferrets aim at the prevention of the spread of animal diseases. For this reason the import regulations depend on the animal disease situation in the country of origin. The import requirements for importing animals from EU countries and countries comparable to these are different from the requirements for countries outside the EU. The main purpose of the import rules is to prevent the spread of rabies and echinococcosis to Finland.

If an animal sent to Finland is not accompanied by a passenger or if the animal is acquired for further sale or transfer, the conditions for commercial import apply to the import of the animal.

A pet passport is compulsory for dogs, cats and ferrets in all transports between EU member countries. The passport can be obtained from a veterinarian. Before issuing the passport, the veterinarian verifies that the animal has identification (a microchip or tattoo) and that it has been vaccinated against rabies.

Rabies

Rabies is a disease affecting the central nervous system. It is caused by a virus and is contagious to both animals and humans. In most cases the disease is transmitted via the bite of an infected animal. The principal carriers of rabies are wild carnivores, such as fox, raccoon dog, wolf and badger and, among domestic animals, dogs and cats.

An infected animal may excrete the rabies virus in its saliva even a couple of weeks before the symptoms appear. The incubation period (from the time of the bite to the appearance of symptoms) can be up to six months. After the symptoms have appeared, the disease invariably leads to death in both humans and animals. In humans the disease can be prevented through vaccination treatment administered immediately after exposure. Rabies occurs in Eastern Europe and Asia, Africa, North and South America.

Echinococcus multilocularis tapeworm

The requirement to medicate dogs and cats imported to Finland against echinococcus is to prevent the spread to Finland of the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis*, which is dangerous to humans. *E. multilocularis* is common in large areas of Central Europe.

The principal hosts of the parasite are for example dogs, foxes and wolves. The infection is transmitted to humans in the excrement of an animal infected by the parasite through for example wild berries contaminated by fox excrement or through soiled dog hair.





Import from within the EU, Norway, Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland and the Vatican

Identification

The animal must have identification in the form of a microchip or clearly legible tattoo.

Rabies vaccination

The animal must have been vaccinated against rabies with an inactivated vaccine, which meets the international standard (OIE) at least 21 days before the import. The animal must have identification before the rabies vaccination. For the booster vaccination no 21-day waiting period is required, provided the vaccination is administered within the period of validity of the previous vaccination.



Treatment against echinococcosis

Dogs and cats must be medicated against tapeworm causing echinococcosis no more than 30 days before import. Evira recommends that the animals be re-medicated thirty days after the first medication.

No medication is required if the animal is imported directly from Sweden, Norway (except for Spitzbergen), Malta, the United Kingdom or Ireland, or if the animal is brought back to Finland within 24 hours after leaving the country.

Medication against echinococcosis is not required for animals under the age of three months.

Pet passport

The animal must be accompanied by a certificate (or a so-called pet passport) showing the identification data on the animal and documentation from a veterinarian of a valid rabies vaccination and echinococcus treatment.

Import of one or several animals travelling as freight

If an animal or animals are travelling by plane as freight unaccompanied by a passenger or if there are more than 5 animals or if the animal is intended for sale or transfer to a new owner after the import, the conditions for commercial import apply to the import of the animal. For commercial import there is a requirement for a clinical examination carried out by a veterinarian within 24 hours before dispatch in addition to the other conditions.

Import of unvaccinated puppies and kittens under the age of three months

Import is permitted from the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Iceland, Greece, Cyprus, Luxemburg, Malta, Norway, Portugal, France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, the Czech Republic and United Kingdom.

Identification

The animal must have identification in the form of a microchip or clearly legible tattoo.

Pet passport

The animal must be accompanied by a certificate (or a so-called pet passport) showing the identification data on the animal.

Other requirements

The animal must be imported directly to Finland from the country of dispatch. The animal must be accompanied by a declaration signed by the breeder, stating that the animal was born on the breeder's premises and was kept on these premises, separate from wildlife, until the time of export. At the time of import the animal must be less than three months old.

Import of unvaccinated ferrets under the age of three months to Finland is prohibited.



The animal must be accompanied by a certificate (or a so-called pet passport) showing the identification data on the animal.



Import from non-EU countries

These import requirements apply to animals that travel with their owner or with a person responsible for them during the transport, which are not intended for sale or for transfer to a new owner and the number of animals is no more than five.

Approved points of entry

The animal must be imported to Finland via an approved point of entry, where a customs officer checks the identification and import documents of the animal.

Identification

The animal must have identification in the form of a microchip or clearly legible tattoo. The animal must have identification before it is vaccinated against rabies.

Rabies vaccination

The animal must have been vaccinated against rabies with an inactivated vaccine, which meets the international standard (OIE) at least 21 days before the import when importing from countries for which a rabies antibody titration is not required. For the booster vaccination no 21-day waiting period is required, provided that the vaccination is administered within the period of validity of the previous vaccination.

Rabies antibody titration

A rabies antibody titration is required when importing animals from countries where rabies is not under control. A blood sample for rabies antibody titration must be taken from the animal no less than 30 days after the rabies vaccination. The antibody test must be carried out in a laboratory approved by the EU. The neutralising antibody titre must be at least equal to 0.5 IU/ml. The animal can not be imported to Finland until at least three months after the blood sample has been taken. The antibody titration must also be carried out on Finnish animals that even for short periods of time visit non-EU countries in which rabies has not been brought under control. The test result must be recorded in the veterinary certificate (or pet passport).

Countries in which rabies has not been brought under control include e.g. Brazil, South Africa, India, Israel, the People's Republic of China, Turkey, Ukraine and Thailand. A list of the countries for which a rabies antibody titration is not required is found on the internet at the address www.evira.fi.



Treatment against echinococcosis

Dogs and cats must be medicated against tapeworm causing echinococcosis no more than 30 days before import. Evira recommends that the animals be re-medicated thirty days after the first medication. No medication is required if the animal is brought back to Finland within 24 hours after leaving.

Veterinary certificate (or pet passport)

The animal must be accompanied by an official EU certificate issued by an official veterinarian or other veterinarian authorised by the competent authority of the country of dispatch, showing the identification data on the animal, certification of rabies vaccination and medication against echinococcosis. A model certificate can be printed from Evira's internet pages. For a pet animal that originally comes from an EU country and is accompanied by a pet passport, the pet passport replaces the veterinary certificate. The original vaccination certificate must be attached to the certificate.

Import of one or several animals travelling as freight

If an animal or animals are travelling by plane as freight unaccompanied by a passenger, if there are more than 5 animals or if the animal is acquired for sale or transfer to a new owner, the conditions for commercial import apply to the import of the animal. Commercial import is permitted only from certain countries outside the EU. Commercial import is not permitted from for example Egypt or Cameroon.

The health certificate model is different for commercial import. The conditions for a health certificate are mainly the same as for non-commercial import (identification, rabies vaccination, rabies antibody titration from certain countries, treatment for echinococcosis) but in addition a clinical examination carried out by a veterinarian is required within 24 hours before dispatch. The animals may enter EU territory only via such a customs point (e.g. an airport) which has a veterinary border inspection post approved for inspecting pets. The veterinary border control, which is subject to a fee, is always carried out on live animals in the first EU country they arrive to. In Finland there are approved veterinary border inspection posts for pets at Helsinki-Vantaa airport and on the Vaalimaa road. A notification has to be given in advance for a veterinary border control, at the latest on the last working day prior to arrival, using a CVED form.

Safe-guard measures

The imports are also limited by the safe-guard measures issued by the Commission. The safe-guard measures in force can be found on the internet pages of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry www.mmm.fi.

If the import conditions are not fulfilled

There is no possibility for quarantine of animals in Finland. If the import conditions are not fulfilled, the animal will have to be returned to the country of dispatch, and if this is not possible, it will have to be put down. The importer covers the costs.



Import of unvaccinated puppies and kittens under the age of three months

Importation is permitted from Australia, Japan and New Zealand.

Approved points of entry

The animal must be imported to Finland via an approved point of entry, where a customs officer or, if it is a commercial import (see the definition of commercial import and the conditions for commercial import), the border veterinarian checks the identification and import documents of the animal.

Identification

The animal must have identification in the form of a microchip or clearly legible tattoo.

Treatment against echinococcosis

The puppy must be medicated against tapeworm causing echinococcosis no more than 30 days before import.

Veterinary certificate

The animal must be accompanied by an official certificate issued by an official veterinarian or other veterinarian authorised by the competent authority of the country of dispatch, showing the data on the identification of the animal and medication against echinococcosis. A model certificate can be printed from Evira's internet pages.

Other requirements

The animal must be imported directly to Finland from the country of dispatch. The animal must be accompanied by a declaration signed by the breeder, stating that the animal was born on the breeder's premises and was kept on these premises, separate from wildlife, until the time of export. At the time of import the animal must be less than three months old.

Import of unvaccinated ferrets under the age of three months to Finland is prohibited.

More detailed information

More detailed information on the import of dogs, cats and ferrets can be found on Evira's internet pages www.evira.fi or from the provincial veterinary officer of your own province.

Questions related to the subject can be sent to Evira by e-mail to the address ehyt@evira.fi.



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