



MS V 18-2
May 26, 2020

Via Electronic Mail

Re: FEDERAL DOG IMPORT REQUIREMENTS

Dear Colleagues:

There have recently been a number of dogs denied entry by the CDC because of invalid rabies vaccination documentation. CDC is writing this letter to provide clarifying information relating to its dog import regulations which includes requirements for rabies vaccination of imported dogs arriving into the United States.

CDC's dog import regulations are enacted under the authority of Section 361 of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. § 264, which authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make and enforce regulations necessary to prevent the introduction, transmission, and spread of communicable diseases into the United States and from one state or possession into another. Criminal penalties may be imposed for violating regulations enacted under 42 U.S.C § 264.

CDC regulations (42 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 71.51) require that dogs being imported from a rabies-endemic country be healthy and fully immunized against rabies prior to arrival in the United States. The dogs must be vaccinated no earlier than 3 months of age and no less than 30 days before arriving at a U.S. port of entry.

A valid rabies vaccine certificate must contain all the following information **in English** (or be accompanied by a certified English translation):

- Name and address of owner
- Breed, sex, date of birth (approximate age if date of birth unknown), color, markings, and other identifying information for the dog
- Date of rabies vaccination and vaccine product information
- Date the vaccination expires
- Name, license number, address, and signature of veterinarian who administered the vaccine

Rabies vaccination certificates must be completed before arrival by the veterinarian **who administered** the rabies vaccine to the pet. CDC does not accept Health Certificates in lieu of rabies vaccination certificates. Recent submissions of health certificates titled "rabies certificates" are invalid. Rabies vaccination certificates have also lacked the name and address of the owner, descriptions of the animal, and the name and address of the veterinarian who administered the rabies vaccine. All of these omissions are grounds for denial of entry.

CDC will only consider documentation **originally** included in the animal's importation packet and will not accept additional or corrected documentation after the animal has arrived.

Under 18 U.S.C §§ 3559 & 3557 and 42 C.F.R. § 71.2, individuals may be fined up to \$250,000 if a violation of the regulation results in the death of a person or up to \$100,000 if a violation of the regulation does not result in a death. Organizations, including business entities, may be fined up to \$200,000 per event if the violation does not result in a death or \$500,000 per event if the violation results in a death. Individuals may also be imprisoned for up to one year.

Your future shipments must meet CDC's entry requirements as outlined above, and we appreciate your help in communicating this information to your clients **before** they attempt to import an animal into the United States. CDC's rabies vaccination requirements can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/vaccine-certificate.html>

Additional questions should be sent to cdcanimalimports@cdc.gov.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Martin S. Cetron". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Martin S. Cetron, M.D.
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