

Pet Travel Scheme

The Pet Travel Scheme allows pet dogs and cats from certain countries to enter Malta without quarantine as long as they meet certain rules.

1. The rules

Which animals can take part in PETS?

Pet dogs and cats which:

- Enter or re-enter MALTA on approved routes;
- Have not been outside certain countries;
- Have been identified with a microchip;
- Meet certain health conditions

The Pet travel scheme does not apply to other pet animals

We strongly recommend that you obtain all the necessary certification before you travel, including any certificates required for entry into other countries.

2. The six month rule

Your pet cannot enter MALTA until at least six calendar months after the date your vet took the blood sample that gave a successful test result.

This is because an animal that is infected before or at the time of vaccine would not be protected against rabies by the vaccine. Six months (equivalent to the length of quarantine) is the time needed for most infected animals to display any clinical signs of rabies, which would prevent it being brought into MALTA.

3. The qualifying countries

Pets resident in MALTA can go to one or more of the countries listed below and return to MALTA under PETS. Pets that come from one of these countries and have been resident in any of them for at least six months can also enter MALTA under PETS as long as they are accompanied by the appropriate official certification.

Andorra

Austria

Belgium

Denmark

Finland

France (*except Martinique, Gaudeloupe, French Guyana, La Reunion, French Polynesia, Wallis and Fortuna, Moyette, St Pierre and Niquelon and New Caledonia*)

Germany

Gibraltar

Greece

Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Leichtenstein
Luxemburg
Monaco
Netherlands
Norway (*except for Svalbard*)
Portugal (*including Madeira and the Azores*)
San Marino
Spain (*including the Canary Islands but excluding Ceutas and Melilla*)
Sweden
Switzerland
U.K.
Vatican City
Ascension Island
Australia
Barbados
Bermuda
Cyprus
Falkland Islands
Hawaii
Japan
Monsterrat
New Caledonia
New Zealand
St Helena
Singapore
Vanuatu

PROCEDURES

Vets will charge you for carrying out this work. Any vet can microchip and vaccinate your pet and arrange for it to be blood tested.

4. Microchipping

For your pet to qualify for PETS, it must be fitted with a microchip. This acts as a permanent record of identity. We recommend that the microchip meets ISO (International Standards Organisation) Standard 11784 or Annex A to ISO Standard 11785. Ask your vet to make sure that the microchip meets one of these specifications.

Ask your vet to test that the microchip works by checking its number once it has been fitted. It is also advisable to ask your vet to check the microchip every time you visit them.

If the microchip does not meet either of these standards, anyone who needs to read it may

not be able to do so. In that case, you would have to provide your own microchip reader (at your expense) to enable the microchip number to be read successfully.

5. Vaccination

The vaccine must be an inactivated rabies vaccine authorised for use in MALTA, or by the Government of the qualifying country in which it is administered. If in doubt consult your vet.

When to vaccinate.

Your pet must be at least three months old before it can be vaccinated against rabies. It can be vaccinated any time after your pet has been fitted with a microchip. Before vaccinating your pet, the vet will check its microchip number and enter it on your pet's vaccination record when it is vaccinated.

Your pet's vaccination record.

When your pet is vaccinated, make sure that your vet has recorded the following details on its vaccination record;

- Its date of birth / age (if known)
- The microchip number
- The date of vaccination
- The vaccine product name
- The batch number
- The date the booster vaccination is due.

Booster vaccinations

After your pet has been vaccinated and blood tested, it will need regular booster vaccinations at intervals specified by the vaccine manufacturer. Your vet will advise you further. You must make sure that your pet is given its booster on time otherwise it will not meet the conditions of the scheme and would have to be vaccinated and blood tested again and the six month rule would have to be met again.

When you need to renew your official PETS certificate, then provided your pet has its booster on time, it will not need another blood test and the six month rule will not apply.

6. The blood test

After your pet has been vaccinated, it will need a blood test to make sure that the vaccine has given your pet sufficient protection against rabies. A vet will take a sample of your pet's blood and send it to a recognized laboratory for testing. The vet who vaccinated your pet can arrange this for you. You will need to take your pet's vaccination record with you when the blood sample is taken.

Your vet will advise you on the best time to get your pet blood tested.

Make sure that your vet gives you a signed record of the date the blood sample was taken.

The blood test should show that the rabies neutralising antibody titre was equal to or greater than 0.5 IU/ml. If the test does not give this result, your vet will not be able to sign the official PETS certificate.

Failed blood test

Your vet will advise you if your pet fails its blood test (in other words, the result shows that it has not been satisfactorily protected against rabies). Your pet may need to be re-vaccinated and blood tested again.

7. Treatment against parasites

Treatment

The treatment must be carried out between 24 and 48 hours before you check in with the approved transport company for your journey to MALTA and has to be done every time your pet is entering MALTA.

If you are taking your animal out of MALTA on a day trip, you will need to get the treatment done in MALTA 24 to 48 hour period before your return journey starts.

Your pet must be treated with *Praziquantel* for the tapeworm. For animals treated in rabies free islands, their tick treatment must contain *Fiprinol*.

8. Documentation

(a) THE PETS CERTIFICATE

To get your pet into MALTA (or back into MALTA), you will need an official PETS certificate. This will be issued by a vet authorised by the Malta Government or by the Government of one of the qualifying countries. Keep it safe because the transport company checking your pet will need to see it.

The certificate will show that your pet:

- Is identified by its microchip number
- Has a current vaccination against rabies
- Had a blood test showing satisfactory protection against rabies.

If your pet does not meet these conditions, it will not get a PETS certificate.

How long is the certificate valid for?

A certificate will not be valid until six months has elapsed after the date of the blood sample which gave a successful test result. It will then be valid for a specific period of time, expiring on the date your pet's booster vaccination is required.

For certificates issued in rabies free islands, some island authorities may issue certificates which are valid for only one trip to MALTA. Vets in these islands will be able to advise you further.

Obtaining a certificate

For MALTA resident pets, the PETS certificate is completed and issued by a Government

– authorised vet. Your own vet may be able to tell where to contact the Veterinary Services Department of you can find detain listed in your phone book under: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

For pets residents in other qualifying countries, a Government – authorized vet in that country will issue the certificate.

(b) THE OFFICIAL CERTIFICATE OF TREATMENT AGAINST TICKS AND TAPEWORMS

When you get your pet treated against ticks and tapeworms, the vet will give you an official certificate of treatment to show that this has been done. Make sure you get the certificate and that it shows your pets microchip number, the date and time of treatment, the products used and that the vet has signed and stamped it.

(c) THE DECLARATION OF RESIDENCE

You will have to fill in a form to declare that you have not taken your pet outside the PETS countries. Where you are flying to MALTA from a rabies free island, you may still sign this declaration as long as your pet has not left the confines of the airport during transit or stopover in a non qualifying country. You can either fill the form when you present your animal for checking.

Certification for pets leaving MALTA.

Depending on which country you intend to visit or travel through, you may need a veterinary health certificate so that your pet can enter a country.

9. The health and Welfare of pets traveling out of MALTA

If you are taking your pet out of MALTA, you should be aware that it may be exposed to diseases which do not normally occur here, e.g. diseases transmitted by the biter of ticks and certain parasites such as heartworm and tapeworm

We strongly recommend that you consult your vet before you take your pet abroad. Depending on where you are going, they may be able to advise you on preventative treatments, on any other precautions you may need to take and how to look for signs of ill health in your pet.

You should also think about the welfare of your pet, and whether it will benefit from being taken abroad with you

10. Dangerous dogs

In MALTA, it is illegal to possess certain types of dogs, the Pitbull Terrier, the Japanese Tosa, the Dog Argentino and the Fila Brasileiro. The introduction of the PETS travel scheme has not effected this ban. If you bring one of these dogs into MALTA, you could be prosecuted and the dog seized and destroyed. If in doubt don't travel with it.