



# Pet Travel Health Certificates

By Dr. Nelva J. Bryant, Airline Industry Veterinarian and Pet Travel Expert

There is so much misinformation regarding pet travel health certificates. If you search the internet, you will find ads to fillable forms and images of multi-use pet health certificates used for various settings. It can be confusing, and some might wonder the significance of pet travel health certificates. As veterinarians, we must be able to dispel the misinformation and provide education on the requirements for interstate travel. This article will focus on domestic travel in the US and address common questions regarding Pet Travel Health Certificates.

## What is it?

The pet travel health certificate, also known as a "Certificate of Veterinary Inspection" is issued by a USDA-accredited veterinarian after a pet has been examined and deemed free of diseases infectious to pets or people. The certificate also acknowledges that the pet meets the requirements of the destination state. If the destination state requires a rabies vaccination and/or other vaccinations and diagnostic tests, the certificate must have the information documented.

Calling it a health certificate is misleading, since it does not mean that the pet is healthy. ***Pet owners often assume their pet is healthy and medically fit for air travel after receiving the certificate. However, the certificate does not address medical fitness for travel. For pets traveling via air, a review of the pets' veterinary medical records is needed to determine if it is fit for air travel.***

## Why is it required?

A health certificate is required to comply with state regulations for the interstate movement of animals. The regulations are used to prevent the entry of diseases infectious to people and animals, stop the spread of disease, and assist with outbreak investigations. ***Each state will have their own animal entry requirements. Never assume that the entry requirements are the same for each state in the US.*** Review and comply with the destination states' animal entry requirements. ***The USDA Pet Travel Website is a great resource to search for pet entry requirements.***

Airlines require health certificates to transport pets in compliance with USDA Animal Welfare Act Regulations. ***Pet travel health certificates are required when pets are being transported as cargo, checked baggage, and/or being transported in-cabin.*** It is recommended to research and comply with the live animal policies for the airline, for a pet can be denied transport due to non-compliance.



If an animal is being transported across state lines, a health certificate is required. Think of the health certificate for a pet like a persons' driver's license; it is a form of identification. You would not consider traveling without identification. If a pet is transported out of state, it should have a pet travel health certificate in case of an emergency.

## What is required on a pet travel health certificate?

A health certificate contains the following information:

- The shippers' or consignors' info (name, address, emergency contact #)
- The person receiving the animal or consignee info (name, address, emergency contact #)
- Official Animal ID (microchip # or tattoo #)
- A description of animal (name, age/date of birth, gender, breed, coloration, markings, and weight)
- The destination states' required vaccinations (vaccine lot/serial #, expiration date of vaccine, date of vaccination, and expiration date of vaccination) and/or diagnostic test results
- A certification statement
- Official signature by the USDA-accredited veterinarian

## Who completes the certificate?

**Only veterinarians that are USDA-accredited in the state of issuance can perform the duties (examinations, vaccinations, and diagnostic tests) to complete the health certificate.** If you are unsure of your accreditation status or want to obtain accreditation, refer to the USDA APHIS National Veterinary Accreditation Program. **Remember that your accreditation must be renewed every 3 years.**

## What is new regarding pet travel health certificates?

The APHIS 7001 form (US Interstate and International Certificate of Health Examination for Small Animals) was commonly used for pet travel; however, ensuring the validity of the form became an issue. As a result, **many states do not accept the APHIS 7001 form. Instead, electronic certificates of veterinary inspections (eCVI) that comply with the standards of the National Association of State Animal Health Officials are used.** The eCVI may be state-derived or obtained via providers-such as: Vet Sentry, Global Vet LINK, and Veterinary Services Process Streamlining. **Check with the destination state to determine whether they accept the APHIS 7001 form or an eCVI.**

## Need Pet Air Travel Education?

As the only airline industry veterinarian in the US, I've noticed that education is needed for veterinarians and pet owners. I have made observations to help prepare pets for air travel and presented them at National Veterinary Conferences (AVMA, VMX, WVC, and fetch), via sponsored webinars (dvm360, Global Vet LINK), and locally for GVMA (LEAP-CE). I've also developed **"When Pets Fly" - a resource of pet travel education for pet parents. When Pets Fly is on Facebook, Instagram, and the website is: [www.whenpets.com](http://www.whenpets.com).**

If you have questions regarding pet air travel or have an interest in obtaining additional training, please email me at: [whenpetsfly@gmail.com](mailto:whenpetsfly@gmail.com).

### Resources

USDA Pet Travel Website: **USDA APHIS | APHIS Pet Travel**

National Veterinary Accreditation Program: **USDA APHIS | National Veterinary Accreditation Program**



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Veterinary Expertise: International and domestic travel of companion animals, CDC's dog importation regulations, infectious and zoonotic diseases of animals, veterinary public health, animal welfare, veterinary consulting, preventive veterinary medicine, and small animal medicine.

Dr. Nelva Bryant has a unique veterinary career. As a retired LCDR in the US Public Health Service, she held various positions in the US Federal Government (USDA, FDA, and CDC), where she was able to benefit animal and public health. Currently working in the airline industry, her mission is to improve pet travel via promoting animal welfare, education, and veterinary oversight.

Education: Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine-1993; University of Iowa-MPH for Practicing Veterinarians Program-2013  
Training: Live Animal Transportation Course at the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) Center, Amsterdam, Netherlands; USDA Accredited Veterinarian (Category 1 and 2)

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For questions, please email me at: [whenpetsfly@gmail.com](mailto:whenpetsfly@gmail.com) or go to my website at [WhenPets.com](http://WhenPets.com) for more information.

