

Taking your pet abroad if there's no Brexit deal

Summary

How taking your pet to the EU would be affected if the UK leaves the EU with no deal.

Detail

If the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 without a deal, find out how this would affect pet owners who want to take their pets to the EU, and their vets (Official Veterinarians).

A scenario in which the UK leaves the EU without agreement (a 'no deal' scenario) remains unlikely given the mutual interests of the UK and the EU in securing a negotiated outcome.

Negotiations are progressing well and both we and the EU continue to work hard to seek a positive deal. However, it's our duty as a responsible government to prepare for all eventualities, including 'no deal', until we can be certain of the outcome of those negotiations.

For two years, the government has been implementing a significant programme of work to ensure the UK will be ready from day 1 in all scenarios, including a potential 'no deal' outcome in March 2019.

It has always been the case that as we get nearer to March 2019, preparations for a no deal scenario would have to be accelerated. Such an acceleration does not reflect an increased likelihood of a 'no deal' outcome. Rather it is about ensuring our plans are in place in the unlikely scenario that they need to be relied upon.

This series of technical notices sets out information to allow businesses and citizens to understand what they would need to do in a 'no deal' scenario, so they can make informed plans and preparations.

This guidance is part of that series.

Also included is an [overarching framing notice](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-governments-preparations-for-a-no-deal-scenario>) explaining the government's overarching approach to preparing the UK for this outcome in order to minimise disruption and ensure a smooth and orderly exit in all scenarios.

We are working with the devolved administrations on technical notices and we will continue to do so as plans develop.

Purpose

This notice sets out how the arrangements that allow pet owners to travel to and from the EU with pets (cats, dogs and ferrets) would change if the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 without a deal. It explains what pet owners would need to do to prepare their pets for travel, and what Official Veterinarians (OVs) would need to do to ensure UK pet owners travelling with their pets continue to meet the requirements of the EU pet travel scheme.

Before March 2019

Under the EU Pet Travel Scheme, owners of dogs, cats and ferrets can travel with their animals to and from EU countries provided they hold a valid EU pet passport. Before a pet can travel from the UK to an EU country for the first time, it must be taken to an Official Veterinarian (OV) at least 21 days before travel. The OV will ensure the animal has a microchip and rabies vaccination, before issuing an EU pet passport, which remains valid for travel for the pet's lifetime or until all of the treatment spaces are filled.

On its return to the UK, the pet has its microchip scanned (to confirm its identity) and passport checked (to ensure it corresponds with the microchip and treatment requirements are met). Dogs returning to the UK from countries that are not free from *Echinococcus multilocularis* (a type of tapeworm) must have an approved tapeworm treatment administered by a vet between one and five days before entering the UK.

After March 2019 if there's no deal

If the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 with no deal, it would become a third country for the purposes of the EU Pet Travel Scheme.

Pets would continue to be able to travel from the UK to the EU, but the requirements for documents and health checks would differ depending on what category of third country the UK becomes on the day we leave the EU. Within the Pet Travel Scheme, there are three categorisations of 'third country', linked to a country's animal health status: 'listed: Part 1', 'listed: Part 2', or 'unlisted'.

Third countries apply to the European Commission to be listed under Part 1 or Part 2 of Annex II to EU Pet Travel Regulations. A small number of countries and territories

are Part 1 listed, which means they operate under the same EU Pet Travel Scheme rules as EU member states. The majority of countries are Part 2 listed, which means additional conditions, such as the use of temporary health certificates. If a country has not applied or been accepted as a Part 1 or Part 2 listed country, it is an unlisted third country, and owners must take some specific actions several months before they wish to travel.

We are seeking technical discussions with the European Commission to allow the UK to become a listed third country on the day we leave the EU. We will continue to press the Commission to discuss this option with us. However, to allow effective contingency planning, this notice explains the impacts of all three different types of third country status in terms of the EU Pet Travel Scheme.

If the UK is a listed third country

Should the UK become a Part 1 listed country, there would be little change to the current pet travel arrangements, with only minor changes needed to documentation for travel between the UK and EU and no change for pet owners from what they currently need to do in terms of health preparations.

Should the UK become a Part 2 listed country, there would be some new requirements, but they would not be as burdensome as those for unlisted status. There would be no requirement for a blood titre test, which would remove the three month waiting period before travel, although pet owners would still need to ensure rabies vaccinations were kept up to date. Before a pet could travel from the UK to an EU country for the first time, it would still need to be taken to an Official Veterinarian (OV) at least 21 days in advance. The OV would ensure the animal has a microchip and rabies vaccination.

Pet owners would still need an OV to issue a health certificate confirming the pet was appropriately identified and vaccinated against rabies, as in an unlisted no deal scenario. This document would differ from the current EU pet passport. It would be valid for ten days after the date of issue for entry into the EU, and for four months of onward travel within the EU. Health certificates would have to be issued for each trip to the EU.

On arrival in the EU, pet owners travelling with their pet would still be required to report to a Travellers' Point of Entry as set out above.

If the UK is an unlisted third country

Should the UK become an unlisted third country, pet owners intending to travel with their pet from the UK to EU countries would need to discuss preparations for their pet's travel with an Official Veterinarian (OV) at least four months in advance of the date they wish to travel. This means pet owners intending to travel to the EU on 30 March 2019 would need to discuss requirements with their vet before the end of November 2018.

Rabies vaccinations

Pet owners would need to prove animals are effectively vaccinated against rabies before they could travel with their pet to EU countries. This would require a blood titre test to demonstrate sufficient levels of rabies antibody, which would need to be carried out a minimum of 30 days after any initial rabies vaccination.

- Pets that have previously had a blood titre test, and whose rabies vaccinations are up to date, would not be required to repeat the blood test before travel.
- Pets that have not previously had a blood titre test, but whose rabies vaccinations are up to date, would be required to have the blood test carried out prior to travel. If the result shows sufficient levels of antibody, a three-month waiting period before travel would still be required from the date the blood was drawn to ensure no rabies symptoms develop. If the result shows insufficient levels of antibody the pet will be treated as if the rabies vaccination were not up to date as described below.
- Pets that have not previously had a blood titre test, and have never had a rabies vaccination, or the vaccination is not up to date, would be required to have a rabies vaccination before the blood titre test. There must then be a 30 day waiting period before the blood sample is drawn for the titre test, to allow time for sufficient rabies antibodies to develop. Once a blood titre test shows sufficient levels of antibody, there must be a three-month waiting period between the date the blood is drawn and the date of travel.

In both the second and third cases, pet owners would need to visit their vet to discuss health preparations at least four months before they intend to travel with their pet.

The lifespan of vaccination will depend on the brand of vaccination used. The majority last for around 3 years. Provided a pet's rabies vaccinations are kept up to date once a test has shown a satisfactory blood titre, the blood test does not need to be taken again.

Pet owners travelling from the EU to the UK would need to ensure their pets had a satisfactory rabies antibody blood titre test to re-enter the EU. This would need to be administered prior to leaving the EU but there is no requirement for a three month wait period before travel.

Health certificates to travel to the EU

Once the rabies vaccination and (if required) blood titre test shows sufficient levels of antibody, pets would need to be taken back to an OV, who would then issue a health certificate confirming the pet was appropriately identified and vaccinated against rabies. This document would be different from the current EU pet passport. It would be valid for ten days after the date of issue for entry into the EU, and for four months of onward travel within the EU.

Health certificates would have to be issued for each trip to the EU. For repeat journeys, where proof of vaccination history and a satisfactory blood titre test were available, the pet owner would only have to visit an OV and obtain a new health certificate at some point within ten days before travel.

Arriving in the EU

On arrival in the EU, pet owners travelling with their pets would be required to report to a designated [Travellers' Point of Entry (TPE)](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/pet-movement/eu-legislation/non-commercial-non-eu/tpe_en). At the TPE, the pet owner would be asked to present proof of microchip, vaccination and the blood test result alongside their pet's health certificate.

Further information

More information on the documents that would be required to enter or re-enter the UK if the UK leaves the EU without a deal will be made available for pet owners and their vets in due course. The documents required to enter or re-enter the UK would be the same in both an unlisted or Part 2 listed country scenario.

Further information and instructions would be shared with OVs authorised to deal with pet travel, pet carriers and the industry in advance of the November preparation deadline.

This notice is meant for guidance only. You should consider whether you need separate professional advice before making specific preparations.

It is part of the government's ongoing programme of planning for all possible outcomes. We expect to negotiate a successful deal with the EU.

The UK government is clear that in this scenario we must respect our unique relationship with Ireland, with whom we share a land border and who are co-signatories of the Belfast Agreement. The UK government has consistently placed upholding the Agreement and its successors at the heart of our approach. It enshrines the consent principle on which Northern Ireland's constitutional status rests. We recognise the basis it has provided for the deep economic and social cooperation on the island of Ireland. This includes North-South cooperation between Northern Ireland and Ireland, which we're committed to protecting in line with the letter and spirit of Strand two of the Agreement.

The Irish government have indicated they would need to discuss arrangements in the event of no deal with the European Commission and EU Member States. The UK would stand ready in this scenario to engage constructively to meet our commitments and act in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland, recognising the very significant challenges that the lack of a UK-EU legal agreement would pose in this unique and highly sensitive context.

It remains, though, the responsibility of the UK government, as the sovereign government in Northern Ireland, to continue preparations for the full range of potential outcomes, including no deal. As we do, and as decisions are made, we'll take full account of the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.

Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area and participate in other EU arrangements. As such, in many areas, these countries adopt EU rules. Where this is the case, these technical notices may also apply to them, and EEA businesses and citizens should consider whether they need to take any steps to prepare for a 'no deal' scenario.