

Technical Instructions for CDC-Registered Animal Care Facilities (ACF)

Purpose

Under CDC's regulation, foreign-vaccinated dogs that have been in a [high-risk country](#) for dog-maintained rabies virus variant (DMRVV) during the previous 6 months may only be imported through a CDC-registered Animal Care Facility (ACF).

Upon arrival at the ACF, the dogs must be examined, revaccinated against rabies, and, if they do not have documentation of adequate and valid rabies serologic titer, must be held in quarantine at the facility until they meet [CDC entry requirements](#).

This document provides technical instructions for ACFs responsible for holding or receiving imported dogs that enter into the United States from high-risk countries.

Requirements to operate a CDC-registered Animal Care Facility

1. The business owner or operating manager must own the animal care facility or have a valid and active lease for the entire facility where the dogs will be housed.
2. The business owner or operating manager of the facility must receive and maintain all required city, county, and state business or other licenses as required to run an animal kennel and quarantine facility in the jurisdiction.
3. The business owner or operating manager of the facility must hold a current US Department of Agriculture (USDA) intermediate handler (Class H) registration for the facility and any other required licenses as determined by USDA, such as a Class B license, if applicable.
4. The business owner or operating manager of the facility must have a US Customs and Border Protection (CBP)-issued Facility Information and Resource Management System (FIRMS) code for the facility.
5. The USDA Class H registration (and licenses if applicable) and FIRMS code must be held by the same individual, either the business owner or operating manager, of the facility.
6. The facility must utilize one or more USDA-category I or II accredited veterinarians to perform all examinations and vaccinations.
 - a. For each veterinarian, the facility must provide the following to CDC: a copy of the veterinarian's license number, state of issuance, and expiration date, and the veterinarian's USDA accreditation number and expiration date.
 - b. CDC recommends having a veterinarian onsite; however, if the facility chooses to utilize an offsite veterinarian or if the facility is not staffed by a veterinarian at all times, the facility must identify a USDA-accredited veterinarian who can be available on short notice (within 2 hours) for routine or non-urgent care, and the ACF must also identify a 24-hour veterinary hospital within 15 miles of the animal care facility that can provide care in the event of an emergency.
7. The facility must be located within 35 miles of a [CDC port health station](#).

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8. The facility must successfully submit all required applications to CBP and relevant port authorities and be able to obtain access to secure areas of the port in order to retrieve dogs directly from carriers.
 - a. The facility must have the ability to transport dogs from the airport to the Animal Care Facility (and back to the airport, if needed) in appropriately sized and maintained vehicles and crates meeting USDA [Animal Welfare Act](#) requirements.
 - b. The facilities must be able to transport animals to offsite veterinary hospitals in the event of an emergency in appropriately sized vehicles and crates meeting USDA Animal Welfare Act requirements.
9. The facility must be open and available to provide services for imported dogs a minimum of 20 out of 30 days every month.
10. The facility must be available to pick up dogs from the airport 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
11. The facilities may not provide services solely to the commercial dog industry (i.e., dogs imported for rescue, resale, or adoption). Facilities must make importation and quarantine services available to members of the public importing their personal pets.
12. The facility may only accept reservations if it can commit to a minimum 28-day isolation or quarantine for an unexpected illness or disease exposure should the dog be placed on a medical hold by CDC, USDA, or state or local health agencies.
13. The facility must restrict access to dogs held in quarantine to authorized persons; dogs may not be visited by unauthorized persons (including owners, importers, media, etc.) while in quarantine at a CDC-registered Animal Care Facility.
14. Prior to issuing a reservation, the facility must receive the following documentation from the importer no less than 5 days before the dog's arrival:
 - a. Completed *Certification of Foreign Rabies Vaccination and Microchip* form issued at or after 12 weeks of age and at least 28 days before arrival. The 28-day waiting period may be waived after a booster vaccination for dogs over 15 months of age with proof of at least 1 rabies vaccine administered previously at or after 12 weeks of age.
 - b. 15-digit ISO (International Standards Organization)-compatible microchip number.
 - i. If the microchip isn't ISO-compatible, the importer can travel with a personal microchip scanner to verify the microchip number.
 - c. Verification of an adequate rabies serologic titer from an approved laboratory (if applicable) sampled in accordance with *CDC's technical instructions*.¹
 - d. Dental photos to verify the dog's age.
 - e. Flight arrival information confirming the dog will only be arriving at the US port of entry where the CDC-registered ACF is located.
 - i. Changes in flight arrival dates and times before arrival of the dog are grounds for the facility to cancel the reservation if the facility cannot accommodate the requested change.
 - f. Receipt confirming submission of the CDC Import Submission Form.
 - g. A USDA Animal Care dog import permit if the dog is being imported into the US for rescue, resale, or adoption (or documentation from USDA Animal Care that a USDA dog import permit is not needed).
15. Prior to granting a reservation or prior to requesting release from the ACF, the ACF must upload the air waybill (AWB) or other CDC-approved airline documentation into SAFE TraQ.

¹ The titer sample must be in accordance with *CDC's serology technical instructions*.

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- a. ACF must verify the microchip, age, and identification of the dog is consistent across all documents before issuing a reservation.
 - i. Discrepancies in documentation are grounds for CDC to require a 28-day quarantine or deny entry to the dog and require return to the country of departure at the importer's expense.
16. The facility must provide the following services for each dog² from a high-risk country upon arrival and ensure each dog meets CDC entry requirements³ prior to release from the facility:
 - a. Veterinary examination by a USDA-accredited (level I or II) veterinarian; the examination must take place within 1 business day after the dog's arrival.
 - b. Any illness must be noted on the initial intake/exam form including diarrhea, vomiting, skin lesions, alopecia, ticks or other parasites, ocular or nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, abnormal heart or lung sounds, neurologic abnormalities, etc.
 - c. Any animal exhibiting signs of illness must be reported to CDC immediately by phone, email, text, or SAFE TraQ VMO alert to determine if additional diagnostics are required prior to requesting release.
 - d. CDC may require additional notification to USDA or state or local health agencies prior to release of the animal.
 - e. Verification of microchip and confirmation that the microchip number matches the animal's health records.
 - f. Verification that dog is over six months of age via a dental examination.
 - g. Verification of a valid foreign-issued *Certification of Foreign Rabies Vaccination and Microchip* form issued prior to arrival.
 - h. Verification of an adequate rabies serologic titer from an [approved laboratory](#)⁴ OR 28-day quarantine after administration of the USDA-licensed rabies vaccine.^{5,6}
 - i. Vaccination against rabies at the ACF by a USDA accredited veterinarian using a USDA-licensed vaccine. The facility must issue a *Certification of U.S.-issued Rabies Vaccination* form upon revaccination of the dog. The form must be signed by the USDA-accredited veterinarian, but does not need to be certified by a USDA official veterinarian unless the importer requests it.

18. The facility must monitor dogs during the exam and quarantine period for signs of illness, including signs consistent with zoonotic diseases, and [foreign animal diseases](#), such as screwworm. Any dog that is ill upon arrival or becomes ill while at the CDC-approved facility must be examined by a USDA-accredited

² This applies to dogs arriving in the United States with a reservation. If the dog doesn't arrive with a reservation, CDC will deny entry to the dog unless the facility determines it has space for the dog (for up to 28 days in the event of possible quarantine) and is able to receive the dog.

³ Dogs that do not meet CDC's entry requirements (under 6 months of age, no microchip, no foreign rabies vaccination certificate, importer refuses to pay for required testing or treatment) will be denied entry and returned to the country of departure at the importer's expense on the next available flight.

⁴ The titer sample must be collected at least 45 days before arrival, is valid for 1 year from the date the sample was collected, and must have a value of ≥ 0.5 IU/mL to be considered adequate.

⁵ The titer or quarantine requirements apply to foreign-vaccinated dogs. If the dog is up to date with a US-issued rabies vaccine before arrival, neither titer nor quarantine are required.

⁶ Shortened quarantine periods may be authorized if the ACF conducts prospective serologic monitoring (PSM) according to CDC's *technical instructions*. A CDC Veterinary Medical Officer must review and authorize all requests to perform a PSM on a dog.

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veterinarian immediately and undergo any diagnostic testing required by CDC to rule out communicable [diseases of public health concern](#). All costs associated with examination, diagnostics, hospitalization, and treatment are the responsibility of the importer.

19. Any abnormal exam findings or illnesses identified during an intake exam or the quarantine period must be reported to CDC by phone, text, email, or SafeTraQ VMO alert prior to requesting release of an animal. CDC authorization is required to release the animal.

- a. Suspected or confirmed [zoonotic diseases of public health concern](#) must be reported to CDC within 24 hours of identification and may delay the animal's release.
 - b. Suspected or confirmed [foreign animal diseases](#) and reportable infectious animal diseases must be reported to CDC within 24 hours of identification and may delay the animal's release.
20. Any dog that dies at a CDC-approved facility before it has been cleared for entry is required to undergo a CDC-directed veterinary evaluation to rule out communicable diseases of as the cause of death. This may include a necropsy and diagnostic testing. The importer is responsible for all costs associated with necropsy, testing, and disposition of remains.
21. If an importer chooses to euthanize a dog or cat while it is in the custody of the ACF, the ACF is required to conduct a necropsy at the importer's expense (or airline carrier's expense if the animal is abandoned).
22. Before the facility releases any dog from quarantine, the facility must ensure that a USDA-accredited veterinarian has verified the health status of the dog by examination. Ill dogs may not be released from quarantine without CDC authorization.
23. The facility must retain records regarding each imported dog. *All records for imported dogs must be uploaded into CDC's SAFE TraQ system prior to requesting release of the dog from the facility.*
24. The facility must have a worker protection plan comparable to standards in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) publication Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs⁷ and the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV) Compendium of Veterinary Standard Precautions for Zoonotic Disease Prevention in Veterinary Personnel.⁸
25. The facility must follow best practices for limiting the spread of diseases between animals.⁹
26. Veterinary medical records, including vaccination records, may not be shared with anyone other than the registered importer unless the facility is directed by CDC to do so.
27. The facility may provide a copy of the veterinary intake exam directly to the importer, if requested. A copy of the rabies vaccine certificate for the USDA-approved rabies vaccine must be provided to the importer. All other data (e.g., importer/owner information, flight information, medical records, test results) maintained in SAFE TraQ are prohibited from being shared without written authorization from CDC.

⁷ [Safety Management - A safe workplace is sound business | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](#)

⁸ [VeterinaryStandardPrecautions.pdf \(nasphv.org\)](#)

⁹ [Companion animal care guidelines | American Veterinary Medical Association \(avma.org\)](#); [Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations \(usda.gov\)](#)

Recommendations for CDC-registered Animal Care Facilities

1. The business owner or operating manager of the facility should maintain an *active membership* with the International Pet and Animal Transportation Association (IPATA) or other equivalent organization.
2. A facility should:
 - a. Request documentation of additional vaccinations or treatments (distemper, parvovirus, canine influenza virus, parasite treatment, etc.) as required by the facility prior to arrival.
 - b. Provide an estimate to dog importers of the cost and amount of time the dog will spend at the facility (for example, if the flight is scheduled to arrive on Friday evening and the facility would be unable to vaccinate the dog until the following Monday or if government officials cannot clear dogs outside business hours, the ACF should inform the importer of the estimated cost to board the dog at the ACF until cleared for entry).
 - c. Consider charging a deposit or the full payment as part of the reservation process.
 - d. Provide an estimate which includes the cost to quarantine the dog until CDC requirements are met if titer results from an approved laboratory are not available.
 - i. A dog arriving without a valid titer will be required to undergo a 28-day quarantine after revaccination with a USDA-licensed rabies vaccine (unless undergoing PSM as outlined in 17 (h)).

Acknowledgement of CDC's Technical Instructions for CDC-Registered Animal Care Facilities

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Technical Instructions for CDC-registered Animal Care Facilities. I understand that failure to adhere to the standards set forth in this document may result in suspension or revocation of the Animal Care Facility's status by CDC.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Facility Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____