

Pets Immigrating to New Zealand – Cats and Dogs

The NZ Customs Service and the Ministry of Primary Industries (**MPI**) handle the import of animals coming into New Zealand. Your pets must meet certain health standards, depending on which country you are arriving from.

Prohibited animals and pets

There are some animals you cannot bring into New Zealand, including:

- live birds
- ferrets
- guinea pigs (except from Australia)
- mice and rats (except laboratory animals)
- snakes and other reptiles (except for zoos)

Prohibited dog breeds

Unfortunately, you cannot bring in some specific dog breeds. These include:

- American Pit Bull Terriers;
- Brazilian Fila;
- Dogo Argentino;
- Japanese Tosa and;
- Perro de Presa Canario.

However, the prohibition does not apply if your dog is registered under the Dog Control Act 1996, a guide or hearing dog, or a companion dog. If applicable, you will need to provide evidence the dog it is certified as an assistance dog.

Pregnant cats and dogs

Cats and dogs cannot be more than 42 days pregnant on the date of shipment to New Zealand.



Steps to importing your pet

1. Research biosecurity and other requirements

Firstly, you must ensure that your pet is eligible to be imported to New Zealand.

The below link from the Ministry of Primary Industries provides information on the biosecurity requirements pets must meet.

[Pets travelling to NZ | NZ Government](#)

There are specific requirements for each kind of animal. For example, if bringing over a cat or dog, there are three categories of countries you can import them from, including:

- Australia;
- rabies-free countries; and
- rabies-absent or well controlled countries.

You will also need a veterinary certificate signed off by an official Government Veterinarian from the exporting country. There are specific requirements and tests depending on which of the above categories your pet falls under.

Further, cats and dogs, except from Australia, must have been living in the country you are exporting them from for at least 6 months (or birth) immediately before shipment date. There are some exceptions for cats and dogs who were originally born in New Zealand.

If you're bringing a dog into New Zealand which has not been registered in New Zealand, you are required to complete an 'Exempting statutory declaration'. This can be found on the NZ Customs website.

[Import pets and animals - New Zealand Customs Service](#)

2. Arranging travel – Pet Transporter

You must then arrange travel for your pet with an approved Pet Transporter. Most airlines will not accept animal bookings if you do not go through this avenue.

Pet Transporters ensure that pets go through the formal registration and approval process prior to arranging travel.

You will receive an 'Air Waybill' from the transport company.

Please note that cats and dogs must enter New Zealand from either Auckland or Christchurch airports.

3. Booking a quarantine facility

All cats and dogs, except from Australia, are required to have a minimum of 10 days quarantine at an MPI approved quarantine facility. You will need booking confirmation of quarantine with your application for a permit to import.

You can find approved quarantine facilities on the MPI website.

[Step-by-step guide to bringing cats and dogs to NZ | NZ Government](#)

4. Apply for a permit to import

It is recommended that you apply for this permit at least six weeks before travelling. MPI need at least 30 working days to process the application.

You can apply for an import permit here:

<https://animalplantimportpermit.mpi.govt.nz/>

5. Email documentation to Customs

It is best to email service.delivery@customs.govt.nz with the following documents:

- NZCS 231 form – this can be found on the Customs website.
- Copy of your photo ID.
- Proof of ownership or purchase of animal.
- Air Waybill.
- Veterinary Certificate.
- Exempting statutory declaration form.

6. Notifying MPI before arrival

You do not need to notify MPI if your cat or dog is going into quarantine upon arrival.

If arriving from Australia, you need to notify MPI at least 5 working days before the scheduled arrival time, using the MPI veterinary inspection form, found on the MPI website. You will then need to email the form to ozdogsandcats@mpi.govt.nz

7. Welcome to New Zealand!

Once your pet has passed final veterinary inspections, which is at the border if coming from Australia, or after a minimum of 10-days if going into quarantine, they will be cleared for entry. Your furry friend will now be free to explore New Zealand with you!

Contact our immigration team today for expert advice tailored to your situation.