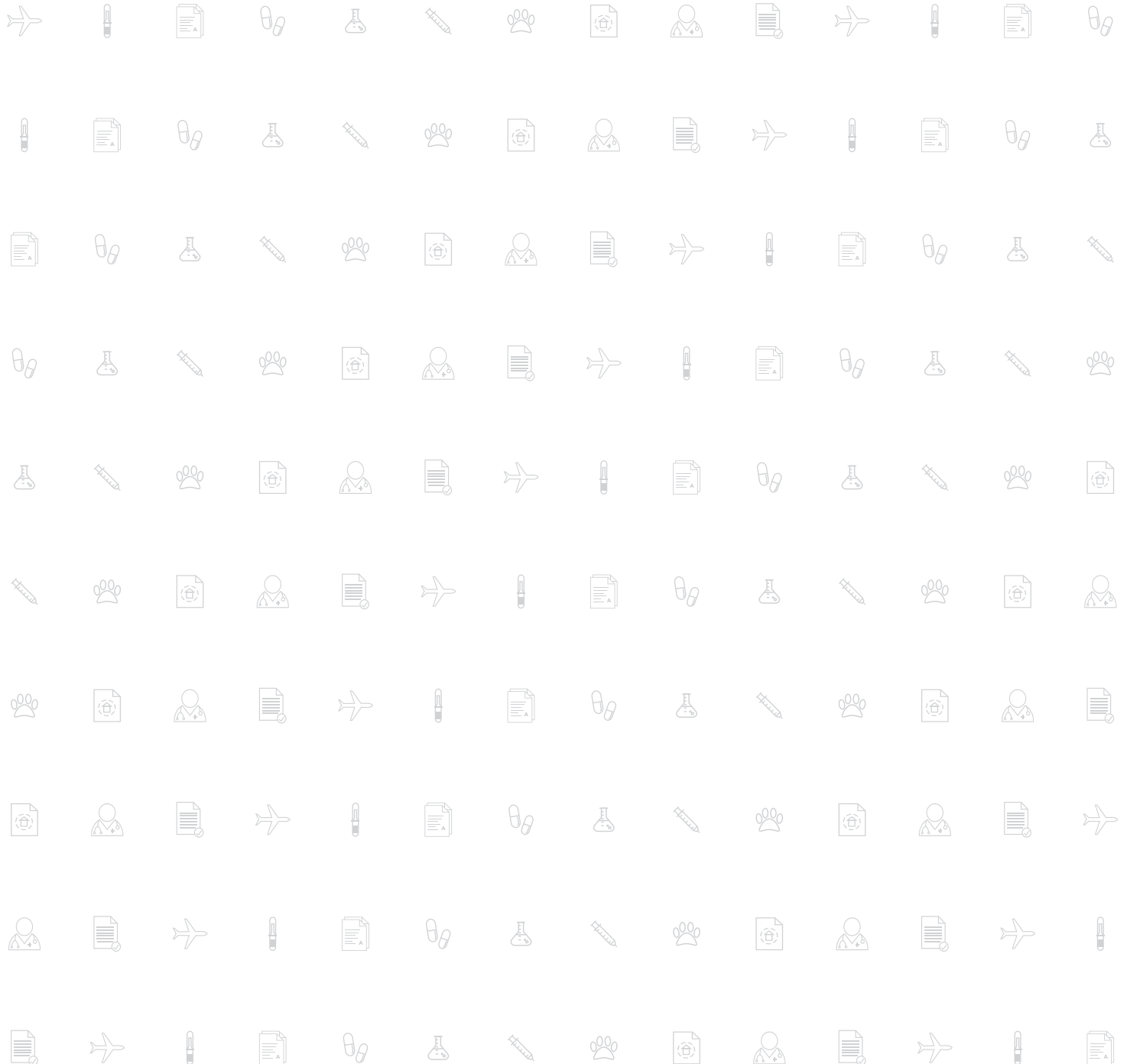




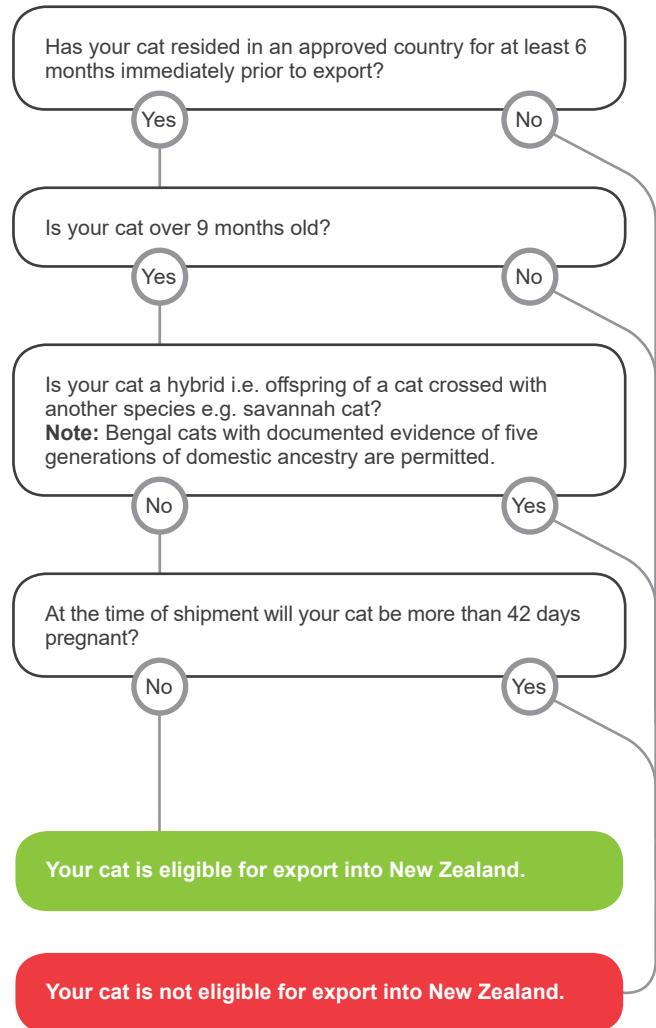
# Bringing your Cat to New Zealand

## Cats from Category 3 Countries

Support document and checklist



## Eligibility questions



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# About

There are three different categories of country you can import cats and dogs from:

- Category 1: Australia (including Norfolk Island)
- Category 2: Rabies free
- Category 3: Rabies absent or well controlled

This supporting document is to help people bring their cat to New Zealand from a **Category 3** (rabies absent or well-controlled) country. Check the category of the country your cat is coming from in the [Guidance Document: Cats and Dogs](#)

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is the competent authority in New Zealand. We set the rules for bringing in your cat.

The [Import Health Standard: Cats and Dogs](#) provides the requirements (must do) for importing your cat, and the accompanying guidance document provides advice on how to meet the requirements.

We recommend you familiarise yourself with the process and the requirements.

# Overview

New Zealand's requirements to import cats are amongst the strictest in the world, reflecting the absence of many pests and diseases. If your cat doesn't meet all requirements your cat might be (at your cost):

- held longer than the minimum requirement of 10 days in quarantine
- required to complete additional testing or treatments
- reshipped back to the country of origin
- put down/euthanised (in the worst-case scenario)

If this is the first time you have arranged a cat to come to New Zealand, you may find it time-consuming and complicated. MPI recommends you use a pet transporter to help arrange tests, treatments, flights, shipping crates, etc. Be aware that some airlines only accept bookings made by a pet transporter. We recommend checking directly with airlines about booking requirements, and any other conditions that may be imposed.

You also need to consider your cat's welfare and whether your cat is fit enough to travel to New Zealand.

## How to use this document

This guide is to help people bring their cat to New Zealand from a **Category 3** (rabies absent or well-controlled) country. The document has been broken down into stages to help you navigate through the process. A checklist is included to help ensure you complete each step at the correct time.

### Eligibility

To be **eligible** to be shipped to New Zealand your cat must:

- be a domestic cat (*Felis catus*).
- be 9 months of age or older on the date of travel to New Zealand.
- reside in an approved country for at least 6 months (or since birth) immediately before coming to New Zealand.

Your cat **cannot** come to New Zealand if it is:

- a hybrid (i.e. offspring of cats crossed with another species e.g. savannah cat), with the exception of Bengal cats.  
**Note:** Documentation of five generations of ancestry must be provided to import Bengal cats.
- more than 42 days pregnant on the date of travel to New Zealand.

### Timeframe

**You need to follow all steps carefully and do them at the correct time to avoid complications, such as having to repeat steps, rebook flights or have your cat not meet the requirements on arrival.**



### Documentation

You must provide proof that your cat meets all requirements (such as vaccination certificates, laboratory test results etc). Your cat's microchip number must be recorded on all documentation.

### Medication

If your cat is on any medication, you will need to include a copy of the veterinarian's prescription with the export documentation.

If the medication is travelling with your cat, attach a *Declaration of Medicines* to the export documents.



### Tests and treatments

There are two types of veterinarian involved in this process.

A **registered or licensed veterinarian** who can:

- administer tests and treatments and provide advice
- verify your cat's identity by scanning the microchip prior to each test, treatment or vaccination
- send samples to and receive results back from laboratories
- fill out the *Official Veterinarian Declaration (OVD)* and *Model Certificate A*

An **official government veterinarian** who:

- is trained and authorised by the government
- completes, signs and stamps *Model Veterinary Certificate B*
- signs and stamps all other export documentation

Check the export requirements for the country your cat is travelling from. Some countries have different rules about which veterinarian prepares your cat. Additionally, try to find an experienced veterinarian that has previously prepared cats to move to either New Zealand or Australia.

## Travel Arrangements

### Travel crate

Your cat will be transported in a crate in the air-conditioned cargo hold of the airplane that is temperature controlled and pressurised just like the cabin. The crate the cat travels in must comply with the *International Air Transport Association (IATA)* regulations.

Read the [IATA requirements](#) when choosing a crate that best meets your cat's needs.

The crate must:

- be clean, dry and free of pests
- only have inert bedding. Straw or hay bedding is not permitted.
- anything that travels with your cat will be destroyed on arrival in New Zealand (such as bedding, toys or clothing).

Contact the export country's competent authority to discuss how to get the official government seal on the crate.

### Notify Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)

You are not required to give notification of arrival of your cat. The quarantine facility will do this for you.

### Travelling with medicines

If your cat is taking any medication, you must send MPI a copy of the prescription before or when your pet arrives in New Zealand. If the veterinary medicine is travelling with your pet, you must complete a [Declaration of Medicines](#). Attach the declaration and a copy of the prescription to the documents. Generally, MPI will give clearance for up to a 3-month supply.

### On the day

On the date of travel, your cat must be in its crate and must travel with the following:

- [Import permit](#) (issued by MPI)
- the original [Model Veterinary Certificate A](#) signed, endorsed and dated
- the original [Model Veterinary Certificate B](#) signed, endorsed and dated
- original laboratory reports and rabies vaccination records; or copies endorsed by the official government veterinarian
- if the cat has medication, a copy of the prescription and declaration (if needed)
- any other documents as required by the airline.

### Arrival in New Zealand

On arrival in New Zealand, your cat will be transported directly to the quarantine facility named on the import permit for a minimum of 10 days quarantine. The quarantine facility arranges the transport. Your cat will be inspected by a veterinarian from MPI at the beginning and end of quarantine.

Once your cat meets all the import requirements, your cat will be cleared to leave the facility.

If your cat is unwell during quarantine they may have to stay in quarantine longer.

If your cat is found to have fleas or ticks, this will extend the period of quarantine. If your cat is found to have fleas or ticks after release from quarantine or is unwell, you should take it to a veterinarian. Tell the veterinarian that your cat has recently arrived in New Zealand and what country it came from.

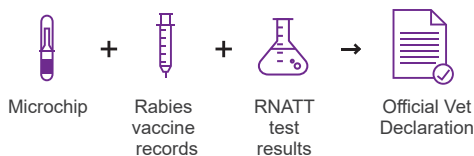
## Documentation

### Quarantine facility

Your cat must be booked in for a ten-day quarantine period in New Zealand at a [MPI-approved quarantine facility](#). We recommend you enquire about the costs involved and the conditions of quarantine (e.g. feeding and visitation rights).

**Keep the booking confirmation letter for your Import permit application.**

### Official Veterinarian Declaration (OVD)



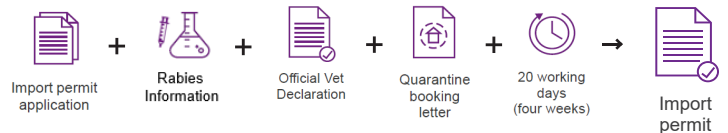
Your veterinarian must prepare the OVD then an official government veterinarian must sign and endorse the OVD. This OVD certifies the following:

- microchip number of your cat
- date microchip was implanted or the date the presence of a microchip was verified by a veterinarian
- date the blood sample was taken for the Rabies Neutralising Antibody Titre Test (RNATT)
- result of the Rabies Neutralising Antibody Titre Test (RNATT)
- date(s) of rabies vaccination(s)

Any copies of any documentation must also be endorsed by an official government veterinarian.

**The OVD must be fully completed before you can apply for the import permit.**

### Import permit



Your [Import permit application](#) must also include the rabies vaccination records and Rabies Neutralising Antibody Titre Test (RNATT) laboratory test report.

MPI needs at least 20 working days (four weeks) to process your application for a permit. Ensure you have submitted the application with enough time for processing, and booking flights. Some airlines require the permit for booking.

To prevent delays in processing your application please ensure you attach all of the following required documents and email to [animal.imports@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:animal.imports@mpi.govt.nz).

- A completed application form that applies to the category of country your cat will be exported from
- A copy of your quarantine booking confirmation letter
- Completed and signed OVD form
- Rabies Neutralising Antibody Titre Test (RNATT) laboratory report
- Rabies vaccination records

The standard fee of NZD \$220.74 allows 20 working days (four weeks) for the Ministry for Primary Industries to issue the permit.

## Model Veterinary Certificates A and B



Different countries have different rules for which veterinarian completes which certificate, so check the rules for the country your cat will be travelling from. Generally, once your veterinarian has completed the testing and treatments for your cat:

- your veterinarian prepares *Model Veterinary Certificates A and B*.
- the official government veterinarian signs, dates and endorses *Model Veterinary Certificates A and B*.

## Declarations for Model Veterinary Certificates A and B

To get the [Model Veterinary Certificate A](#) and [Model Veterinary Certificate B](#), you must be ready to declare that your cat:

- will be more than 9 months of age at the date of shipment.
- will not be more than 42 days pregnant at the date of shipment.
- has resided continuously (or since birth) in an approved country for the six months immediately before export.

For at least **21 days prior** to shipment, your cat:

- was not kept in a place where there were cats or dogs showing clinical signs of infectious respiratory disease.
- showed no clinical signs of infectious respiratory disease.

We recommend that you check with your pet transporter or airline which documents need to travel with your cat on the flight.

## Tests and Treatments

The checklist on page 10 is set out to help you and your veterinarian plan when to test and treat your cat for export.

You need to know what date your cat is scheduled to fly out of the country to book appointments with your veterinarian on the correct dates.



### Finding the right people to help you

Contact the competent authority in the country your cat is leaving from. This is the official government body in charge of the export of animals. The competent authority will help you locate:

- a veterinarian authorised to do the required tests and treatments to prepare your cat to come to New Zealand
- a veterinarian authorised to complete and sign *Model Veterinary Certificate A*
- approved testing laboratory(ies)
- an official government veterinarian authorised to endorse *Model Veterinary Certificate B* and other export documentation.

Using a pet transporter makes preparing your cat easier.



### Microchip

Your cat must be implanted with a microchip and the microchip scanned to verify the identity of your cat before any of the vaccinations, tests or treatments required for import into New Zealand.

Microchips that meet International Standards Organisation (ISO) specifications 11784 or Annex A of 11785 are generally used. If the microchip does not meet ISO standard specifications, you will need to check the microchip can be read in New Zealand.

**Keep the documentation. You will need proof of when the microchip was implanted or the date it was verified by the veterinarian for the OVD.**

The microchip number must be recorded on all documents.



### List of all tests and treatments

Take your cat to a registered/licensed veterinarian to conduct the following tests and treatments.

#### Rabies Vaccination

Your cat must be vaccinated with an inactivated rabies vaccine or recombinant vaccine that was administered when the cat was at least three months old.

- If this is your cat's primary (first) rabies vaccination, the vaccine must be administered no less than 6 months and no more than 12 months prior to travel. You must provide the primary rabies vaccination certificate.
- If your cat is receiving a booster vaccination then it must be administered before the previous rabies vaccination has lapsed and no more than 12 months prior to travel. You must provide a record of the most recent and previous vaccination.

If the previous vaccination has lapsed, the next vaccination will be considered a primary vaccination.

**Keep the rabies vaccination documentation for the OVD.**

#### Rabies Neutralising Antibody Titre Test (RNATT)

A RNATT must be performed to show your cat is adequately protected against rabies. We recommend that you wait three to four weeks after your cat has received its primary vaccination.

- A RNATT must be performed on a blood sample collected not less than 3 months and not more than 24 months prior to your cat departing for New Zealand.
- The sample must be subjected to either a (FAVN) fluorescent antibody virus neutralisation test, or a (RFFIT) rapid fluorescent focus inhibition test by a government-approved laboratory.
- The test result must be 0.5 IU/ml or more. If the result is less than this the cat will need to be re-vaccinated and the titre test repeated 3–4 weeks later.
- Your cat must remain continuously vaccinated against rabies from the date that the blood sample was taken for the RNATT.

**Keep any RNATT documentation for your OVD.**



## Routine quarantine vaccinations

Check what vaccinations are required with the quarantine facility that your cat will be going to. The vaccines may include:

- feline calicivirus
- feline panleukopenia (enteritis)
- feline rhinotracheitis

## External parasites

Your cat must be treated twice, with the first treatment given in the 30 days prior to flying and at least two weeks before the second treatment which is given in the two days prior to flying to New Zealand. External parasite treatment must be effective against fleas and ticks.

## Internal parasites

Your cat must be treated twice with the first treatment given 30 days prior to flying and at least two weeks before the second treatment, which is given in the four days prior to flying. Internal parasite treatment must be effective against nematodes and cestodes.

## Final veterinary examination

A veterinarian must perform a final pre-export clinical examination in the 2 days prior to arrival. Your cat must be free of evidence of external parasites, and clinical signs of infectious and contagious disease.

## In New Zealand

### Settling in

If your cat is found to be unwell after release from quarantine, you should take it to a veterinarian. Tell the veterinarian that your cat has recently arrived in New Zealand and what country it came from.

You must register your cat with your local Council in New Zealand.

## What if...

### The flight is delayed?

Contact [animal.imports@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:animal.imports@mpi.govt.nz).

### My cat is unwell or injured prior to travel?

It is very important that your cat is fit and healthy to travel prior to shipment. Contact animal imports for further information at [animal.imports@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:animal.imports@mpi.govt.nz).

## Appendix

### Category 3 import permit application

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1578/send>

### Category 3 Model Veterinary Certificate A

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/5782-category-3-model-veterinary-certificate-a-cats-and-dogs-from-specified-countries-or-territories-where-rabies-is-absent-or-well-controlled>

### Category 3 Model Veterinary Certificate B

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/5785-category-3-model-veterinary-certificate-b-cats-and-dogs-from-specified-countries-or-territories-where-rabies-is-absent-or-well-controlled>

### Declaration of medicines

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1580-acvm-21-importation-of-veterinary-medicines-for-use-only-on-accompanied-animals>

### Guidance Document: Cats and Dogs

<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1575-cats-and-dogs-import-health-standard-guidance-document>

### IATA requirements for travel crates

<https://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/live-animals/Documents/pet-container-requirements.pdf>

### Import Health Standard: Cats and Dogs

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1574-cats-and-dogs-import-health-standard>

### MPI approved quarantine facilities

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/resources/registers-and-lists/registered-quarantine-facilities/>

## Glossary

### Competent authority

The veterinary or government authority of an exporting country with responsibilities for providing international veterinary certification.

### FAVN

Fluorescent antibody virus neutralisation test

### IATA

International air transport association

### MPI

Ministry for Primary Industries

### Official government veterinarian

A veterinarian authorised in the country of export to sign and endorse veterinary certificates and supporting documentation for export.

### OVD

Official Veterinarian Declaration

### Registered/licensed veterinarian

A veterinarian who can do all tests and treatments and provide advice.

### RNATT

Rabies Neutralising Antibody Titre Test

# Cat import checklist

Follow the checklist to prepare your cat to come into New Zealand.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) recommends you use a pet transporter to assist with the arrangements of tests, treatments, flights, shipping crates etc. Some airlines only accept bookings made by a pet transporter. Check directly with airlines about booking requirements and any other conditions.

**Keep all documentation as proof that your cat meets all requirements. Your cat's microchip number must be recorded on all documentation.**

**Start here and follow the checklist below.**

## In the 12 months before export

**OR**

## In the 6–12 months before export

Ask your veterinarian to:

- Implant a microchip, or check the presence of a microchip
- Give your pet a rabies booster<sup>1</sup> vaccination
- Record the microchip number and vaccination details

Ask your veterinarian to:

- Implant a microchip, or check the presence of a microchip
- Give your pet a rabies primary<sup>2</sup> vaccination(s)
- Record the microchip number and vaccination details

Date completed:

Notes

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## At least 3 months before export

Ask your veterinarian to:

- Scan and check the microchip number
- Take a blood sample to test that your pet is protected against rabies

Date completed:

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## 7–8 weeks before export

- Book your pet into an MPI-approved quarantine facility in New Zealand and get a booking confirmation form
- Get an *official veterinarian declaration (OVD)* completed by a veterinarian that is signed and endorsed by an official government veterinarian
- Apply for an import permit
- Organise a travel crate

Date completed:

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## In the 30 days before export

Ask your veterinarian to:

- Scan and check the microchip number
- Perform an examination to ensure your pet is free from visible signs of external parasites
- Give the first treatment for external parasites (fleas and ticks)
- Give the first treatment for internal parasites (nematodes and cestodes)

Date completed:

Notes

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## Notes

- A booster vaccination is one that is given before the previous vaccination expires
- A primary vaccination is the first rabies vaccination(s) that your pet has received, or a vaccination given after the previous vaccination has expired

### In the 2 days before export

Ask your veterinarian to:

- Scan and check the microchip number
- Perform an examination to check your pet is free from:
  - External parasites
  - Clinical signs of infectious disease
- Check your pet is fit and healthy to travel
- Give your pet their second internal and external parasite treatment (fleas, ticks, nematodes and cestodes)
- Get *Model Veterinary Certificate A* and *B* signed, dated and stamped by an official government veterinarian
- Complete canine influenza declaration (if *Model Veterinary Certificate A* does not include a canine influenza clause this declaration must accompany your cat)
- Get an official seal to put on your pet's crate

Date completed:

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### On the day of travel

- Put the seal on the travel crate

Make sure the following documents travel with your pet:

- Import permit
- Original *Model Veterinary Certificates A* and *B*
- Original RNATT laboratory reports, or copies endorsed by an official government veterinarian
- Original vaccination records
- Declaration of medicines (if required)
- Other documents required by the airline

Date completed:

Notes

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