

Dogs brought to US must be microchipped, older than 6 months: CDC

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Dogs brought into the United States from abroad must be compliant with new rules to help fight rabies in this country, according to updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued

Wednesday.

"Starting on August 1, 2024, all [dogs](#) entering the United States must: Appear healthy upon arrival; be at least six months of age [old enough for the [rabies vaccine](#)]; be microchipped; and be accompanied by a CDC Dog Import Form online submission receipt," the agency said in a statement.

The microchip, implanted under the skin, would carry a code that would let inspectors know that the dog has been vaccinated against rabies.

There's a key reason behind the tougher rules: "The rabies virus variant carried by dogs (dog rabies) was eliminated in the United States in 2007 and CDC wants to prevent the re-introduction of dog rabies into the United States," the agency explained.

Four dogs with rabies have been detected entering the U.S. from abroad since 2015.

The owners of any dog arriving from a foreign country—including those returning home to the U.S.—must show up-to-date vaccination against the disease, the CDC said.

Additional entry requirements (for example, blood testing from CDC-approved labs) may be applied, depending on whether or not the dog received rabies vaccination while in the U.S., and what countries the dog has been in during the past six months.

These rules apply to pets brought into the country by their U.S. owners as well as breeders and rescue organizations.

The [updated CDC guidance](#) follows from a pandemic-era order that suspended the importation of all dogs from more than 100 countries

where rabies is still a problem.

"This suspension will expire when the updated regulation goes into effect on August 1, 2024," the CDC said.

The agency added that the new rules are more in keeping with the World Organization for Animal Health's guidance, aimed at slowing the spread of dog rabies between nations.

"Furthermore, it addresses recent challenges seen with international dog importations, such as fraudulent documentation and dogs housed in unsafe conditions if they didn't meet requirements for entry to the United States," the CDC said.

Given all these changes, the agency is urging people who plan any future travel with their dogs to "plan in advance" with the new regulations for re-entry in mind.

Angela Passman owns a Dallas company that helps people move their pets country-to-country. She said that some people do want to adopt an animal they encounter while traveling abroad, and the new rules aren't a huge departure from how importation was done in the past.

"It's more work for the pet owner, but the end result is a good thing," Passman told the Associated Press. She is also a board member for the International Pet and Animal Transportation Association.

Rabies is a viral disease, typically transmitted through biting, that ravages the nervous system and is often fatal in animals and humans. Once symptoms begin, rabies has no cure.

More information: Find out more about the rabies vaccine for your dog at the [ASPCA](#).

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