

Certificates of Health Examination for Small Animals in California

Over the last year, reports of problems with Certificates for Interstate Movement of Small Animals (Form 77-043) originating in California have increased. Accredited veterinarians have learned and reported to the California Department of Food and Agriculture that unscrupulous clients have altered legitimately produced certificates, including test results, and in some cases reproduced altered certificates for use in the sale and shipment of animals never examined by the veterinarian. Consumers have reported receipt of newly purchased pets accompanied by a California Certificate for Interstate Movement of Small Animals with evidence of the document having been altered thereby raising their concern for the validity of the health status of their newly purchased pet. Additionally, astute transport company officials have reported the presentation of copies of one certificate on more than one occasion for the shipment of different animals on different dates. Upon realizing this, company officials refused to accept further shipments without presentation of an original certificate. These reports are of concern since these fraudulent acts directly impact the validity of the certificate, the critical traceability of animal movement, the credibility of the accredited veterinarian, and the consumer. Due to these concerns, the single-page unnumbered Certificate for Interstate Movement of Small Animals (Form 77-043) from the California Department of Food and Agriculture is no longer available.

Effective January 1, 2011, the United States Interstate and International Certificate of Health Examination for Small Animals (APHIS Form 7001) will be the certificate required for use by accredited licensed veterinarians in California.

The US Interstate and International Certificate of Health Examination for Small Animals (APHIS Form 7001) is an official document issued and signed by a licensed, accredited veterinarian providing verification that an animal, or group of animals, was inspected and found apparently healthy and showing no signs of contagious or communicable disease on the date of inspection. Accurate and legible completion of the document, to include the type of animals, number of animals in the shipment, animal identification, breed, age, sex, color or distinctive marks, is required. Other details required for entry into the state of shipment destination, such as vaccination history or specific test results and testing date are also recorded. Each state determines the health requirements for animals being transported into their state. Some states require specific statements about the animal disease conditions of the area or that the animal originated from an area not quarantined for rabies. Veterinarians should check for the current entry requirements for small animals with the office of the State Veterinarian in the state of destination for the animal.

USDA does not regulate the exportation of privately-owned dogs and cats, but many foreign countries do regulate the entrance of dogs and cats into their country and may require USDA endorsement of certificates of veterinary inspection for small animals. The USDA Veterinary Services maintains an online *International Animal Export Regulations* database that provides the import requirements for many countries:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/>

The best and most definitive US source of information for foreign country pet animal import regulations is the U.S. Embassy for the destination country. Embassy contacts are available at <http://www.embassy.org/embassies> . Verification of the small animal entry requirements of a foreign country is an important element in the preparation process for animal export.

Any legible Certificate of Veterinary Inspection, that includes the name, species, breed, sex, age, and description of the animal; date of examination; vaccination(s) received and date of administration; city and country of destination; and the examining veterinarian's signature, can be used unless the country of destination requires a specific certificate. The US Interstate and International Certificate of Health Examination for Small Animals (APHIS Form 7001) is well suited for this purpose.

The APHIS Form 7001 has specific sections for documentation of the owner/consignor name, address and telephone number, which would reflect the originating state for the animal shipment, and the name, address and telephone number of the consignee, which would reflect the destination state for the animal shipment. This information is an essential element in a disease outbreak to track back to the source of a disease and to trace forward to potentially exposed animals and people. The veterinary certification section of the form contains specific statements of importance, as well as the veterinarian contact information, license number and signature. Certificates are valid for use for 30 days after animal examination. Please note:

1. **Block 2 “Certificate Number” is to remain blank.**
2. If being used **for international shipment** of a small animal,
USDA APHIS VS endorsement of the certificate is most likely needed.

The accredited veterinarian issuing an APHIS Form 7001 should always retain a photocopy of the document in a hospital record.

The single-page APHIS Form 7001 is available in a fillable pdf form online at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms/pdf/APHIS7001.pdf>