



Rabies vaccination policy for the export of companion animals

Live Animal Export

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide policy guidance in relation to rabies vaccinations administered to companion animals (dogs and cats) in Australia prior to export.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to exporters, registered veterinarians and Australian Government veterinary officers who administer rabies vaccination in Australia and/or certify companion animals for export.
- 2.2 This policy outlines the circumstances where rabies vaccine may be administered to companion animals intended for export and rabies vaccine certification requirements.
- 2.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- relevant export legislation (listed under [related material](#));
 - the importing country requirements for the relevant destination market(s); and
 - state and/or territory veterinary registration board guidelines and related legislation.

3 Background

- 3.1 Rabies is a disease exotic to Australia.
- 3.2 Importing countries may require companion animals to be vaccinated against rabies prior to export from Australia.
- 3.3 Rabies vaccine is available in Australia for animals in accordance with a permit issued by the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicine Authority ([PER 14236](#)). PER 14236 includes the directions for use, conditions of supply and use and the vaccine label.

4 Instructions

- 4.1 All animals vaccinated against rabies in Australia must be microchipped prior to vaccination and vaccination details must be recorded and kept on file by the registered veterinarian.
- 4.2 Immediately prior to administering rabies vaccine to a companion animal, a registered veterinarian must scan and verify the animal's microchip.
- 4.3 Rabies vaccine, where administered to animals intended for export must be administered in accordance with PER 14236 (including the vaccine label) and the importing country requirements.

4.4 A rabies vaccination certificate for companion animals that is compliant with importing country requirements and veterinary registration board guidelines must be issued by the registered veterinarian. The department strongly recommends that registered veterinarians use the rabies vaccination certificate template available on the department's [website](#).

- Should a registered veterinarian not use the rabies vaccination certificate template available on the department's website, then the department's veterinary officer may not be able to endorse the vaccination certificate and the animal may not be eligible for export.

4.5 Where the importing country requirements require or allow a rabies vaccine to be administered to a companion animal which is less than 3 months of age (e.g. at 12 weeks of age), the rabies vaccination certificate must state that the next vaccine is due in accordance with the vaccine label and manufacturer's directions.

For the purposes of rabies certification and calculating an animal's age, an animal is three months of age, three calendar months after it was born.

e.g. if the animal was born on 7 February 2022, then it will be three months of age on 7 May 2022.

4.6 If a companion animal is vaccinated at less than three months of age in accordance with the importing country requirements, then an additional rabies vaccine may need to be administered prior to export in accordance with the vaccine label and manufacturer's directions.

This may only be a matter of days after the initial rabies vaccine was administered but is in accordance with the vaccine label and manufacturer's directions.

4.7 Australian Government veterinary officers will not sign and endorse rabies vaccination certificates prior to export if the booster vaccination due date is not consistent with the vaccine label and manufacturer's directions.

An importing country may not accept a companion animal if the rabies vaccination certificate is not endorsed by an Australian Government veterinary officer prior to export.

An exporting country may not be prepared to recognise a rabies vaccination certificate issued in Australia unless it has been endorsed by an Australian Government veterinary officer prior to the animal's export from Australia. If an exporting country is not prepared to recognise a rabies vaccination certificate issued in Australia, this may significantly delay the [import \(return\)](#) of the companion animal to Australia.

5 Related material

For more information see:

- [Export Control Act 2020](#)
- [Export Control \(Animals\) Rules 2021](#)
- [Permit to allow supply and minor use of an unregistered Agvet chemical product – Permit Number – PER 14236](#)

- [Manual of Importing Country Requirements](#)
- [Bringing cats and dogs to Australia - Cats and dogs returning to Australia](#)

6 Version control

Version	Date of issue	Author	Reason for change
1.0	2 August 2022	Live Animal Export Branch	New document