

Relocating Your Pet to India

A practical guide for importing dogs and cats, including transfer-of-residence eligibility, DGFT authorisation, AQCS clearance, air travel and arrival inspection.

Personally managed by Julia | Fly Your Tail

**India is an eligibility-led destination.**

Before veterinary documents or flights are finalised, the movement must be classified correctly: transfer of residence, re-import, or an import requiring DGFT authorisation.

www.flyyourtail.com

The essentials before you begin

Dogs and cats are restricted imports in India. Animal Quarantine and Certification Services, known as AQCS, issues the advance and final No Objection Certificates used for entry clearance.

Transfer of residence	Up to 2 dogs or cats may be imported as passenger baggage without DGFT authorisation when the owner is transferring residence to India after at least 2 years of continuous stay abroad.
Cargo import	When the pet is not transported as passenger baggage, DGFT import authorisation is generally required, even for a permanent move.
More than 2 pets	DGFT authorisation is required and the application is examined with supporting justification.
Temporary stay	Short-term or tourist import is generally restricted and requires DGFT authorisation; approvals are considered case by case.
Re-import	A pet previously exported from India may use the re-import pathway when earlier Indian AQCS export records prove its identity.
AQCS NOC	An advance NOC must be obtained before the airline transports the pet to India.

Commercial and ownership-transfer movements

- Commercial dog imports for breeding or other commercial activity are not permitted under the ordinary pet pathway.
- Applications made for trading, breeding, gifting or on behalf of another person can be rejected.
- Rescue, adoption or ownership-transfer cases require careful classification and should not be presented as a personal baggage import.
- The owner's travel history, relationship with the pet and purpose of import should be documented clearly.

The travel method affects the legal pathway.

A pet belonging to a relocating owner may qualify under baggage rules when travelling with the passenger, but the same pet may require DGFT authorisation if shipped separately as cargo.

THREE MAIN PATHWAYS

Which import category applies?

Pathway	Who it is for	Main requirements
Transfer of residence under baggage rules	Owners moving permanently to India after at least 2 years abroad, with up to 2 dogs or cats travelling as passenger baggage.	Proof of 2-year stay and relocation, owner travel documents, pet records, official health certificate and advance AQCS NOC.
Re-import	Pets that previously left India and are now returning.	Earlier AQCS export certificate or Indian official health records, current health documents, owner ticket and advance AQCS NOC.
DGFT-authorised import	Cargo imports, more than 2 pets, short stays, or cases that do not qualify under baggage or re-import rules.	DGFT authorisation, all conditions attached to the authorisation, official health certificate and advance AQCS NOC.

Planning time

- For baggage or re-import cases, documents for the advance AQCS NOC should generally be filed at least 7 working days before embarkation.
- For DGFT cases, the official guidance advises starting the import-authorisation application at least 2 months before travel.
- Flight booking should remain flexible until eligibility, DGFT status and AQCS documentation have been confirmed.

Start with eligibility, not with the flight.

Fly Your Tail first confirms the correct legal pathway, then builds the veterinary, airline and arrival plan around it.

DOCUMENTS AND VETERINARY PREPARATION

What normally needs to be prepared

Pet and veterinary documents

- Readable microchip certificate
- Vaccination record or pet passport
- Valid rabies vaccination
- Official veterinary health certificate signed by the competent authority
- Pet description, age, breed, sex, colour and origin
- Medical-condition and medication details where applicable

Owner and import documents

- AQCS import application
- Passport and visa or immigration documents
- Flight ticket, air waybill or sea waybill
- Proof of at least 2 years of overseas residence and transfer to India, when using baggage rules
- Earlier Indian AQCS export certificate for re-import
- DGFT import authorisation where required

Health preparation

- The official certificate should confirm that the pet is clinically healthy and free from signs of infectious disease.
- Rabies and routine vaccinations should be current and recorded against the same microchip number.
- The airline or export country may require parasite treatments, additional tests or a certificate issued within a specific number of days before departure.
- The AQCS advance NOC may include the parameters that will be checked during the physical examination on arrival.

Every document must identify the same animal.

Name variations, incorrect microchip digits or conflicting vaccination dates can delay the NOC or arrival clearance.

Step-by-step relocation pathway

1**Classify the import**

Fly Your Tail confirms whether the pet qualifies under transfer of residence, re-import or a DGFT-authorized pathway.

2**Review ownership and travel evidence**

The owner's residence history, immigration documents, ticket and relationship with the pet are checked.

3**Prepare DGFT authorisation if required**

Where baggage rules do not apply, the import-authorisation application is prepared before the AQCS NOC request.

4**Review the pet's veterinary records**

Microchip, rabies vaccination, routine vaccinations and any medical information are checked.

5**Select the airline and entry city**

The route, aircraft, travel method, kennel and destination AQCS station are coordinated.

6**Complete the official health certificate**

The export-country veterinarian and competent authority prepare the certificate accepted for the journey.

7**Apply for the advance AQCS NOC**

The application and supporting documents are submitted to the AQCS office responsible for the intended entry port.

8**Travel to India**

The airline carries the pet only after the advance NOC and transport approval are in place.

9**AQCS examination and final clearance**

The pet is physically examined on arrival. A healthy, compliant pet can receive final clearance at the port.

Passenger baggage or manifested cargo

Method	When it may be used	Key consideration
In cabin	A small pet travels in the passenger cabin where the airline and route permit it.	For baggage-rule eligibility, the pet should travel as part of the owner's accompanied journey and all AQCS requirements still apply.
Accompanied baggage	The pet travels in the aircraft hold on the owner's passenger booking.	This is the clearest fit for transfer-of-residence baggage rules when the airline offers the service.
Manifested cargo	The pet travels under an air waybill through airline cargo.	DGFT authorisation is generally required when the pet is not imported as passenger baggage.

Permitted AQCS entry points

- Delhi
- Mumbai
- Chennai
- Hyderabad
- Bengaluru
- Kolkata

The chosen airport or seaport must have the appropriate AQCS office and match the airline's live-animal service. Arrival hours, cargo-terminal procedures and examination appointments should be confirmed in advance.

Do not route the pet to an unsupported airport.

A domestic connection may be arranged only after the animal has completed AQCS and Customs clearance at the authorised international entry port.

ARRIVAL AND QUARANTINE

What happens when your pet reaches India

Arrival examination

- The AQCS officer reviews the original health certificate, vaccination and microchip documents, owner records, DGFT authorisation where applicable and the advance NOC.
- The pet is physically examined against the parameters issued with the advance NOC.
- When the pet is healthy and the documents are compliant, final NOC may be issued at the port of entry.
- For cargo imports, AQCS also completes the online clearance needed for the Customs bill of entry.

When quarantine may be required

- A pet showing relevant clinical signs can be transferred to the AQCS quarantine station.
- The current dog and cat SOPs describe a 15-day quarantine period for animals that do not pass the arrival physical examination.
- Testing may be carried out during quarantine, with laboratory charges borne by the owner.
- Release follows satisfactory health findings and negative test results.
- Serious non-compliance or positive disease findings can lead to treatment, deportation or other action at the owner's cost.

Provisional and final clearance

- Certain re-import or procedural cases may receive provisional clearance first.
- AQCS guidance states that final clearance can be issued after 30 days in relevant provisional-clearance cases.
- The actual clearance decision is made by AQCS based on the applicable rules and examination findings.

Routine quarantine is not automatic for every pet.

A healthy animal with complete documents can usually be cleared at the port, while quarantine is used when the examination or documentation raises concerns.

RISK CONTROL

Common mistakes that delay India imports

Assuming every relocating owner qualifies under baggage rules: The owner must meet the residence-transfer conditions and the pet must travel under the qualifying arrangement.

Shipping the pet as cargo without DGFT authorisation: Cargo movement generally falls outside the passenger-baggage exemption.

Applying for AQCS NOC too late: AQCS expects the application and supporting documents before embarkation.

No proof of 2 years abroad: Transfer-of-residence eligibility must be documented.

Missing earlier Indian export records: Re-import status depends on proof that the same animal previously left India.

Using an unsupported arrival airport: Pet imports are restricted to specified AQCS ports.

Incorrect microchip or vaccine details: Inconsistent identity records can stop approval or clearance.

Booking before eligibility review: The legal pathway may change the travel method and required authorisation.

Presenting a commercial or adoption movement as personal baggage: The purpose of import must match the applicable policy.

Using copies when originals are needed: Original official health and supporting documents should be available at arrival.

Your India relocation checklist

- Import category confirmed
- Transfer-of-residence evidence prepared, if applicable
- DGFT authorisation issued where required
- AQCS entry port confirmed
- Microchip and vaccination records checked
- Official health certificate arranged
- Advance AQCS NOC obtained
- Airline and travel method approved
- Original documents ready for arrival
- Destination collection or domestic onward travel planned

How we support an India relocation

Fly Your Tail can coordinate the complete journey or selected stages. Every case is personally managed by Julia, with one point of contact across eligibility, documentation, airline planning and arrival clearance.

- Transfer-of-residence, re-import and DGFT pathway assessment
- Review of owner residence and relocation evidence
- DGFT import-authorisation planning where required
- Microchip, vaccination and veterinary-document review
- AQCS advance NOC preparation and coordination
- Cabin, accompanied-baggage or cargo route assessment
- Travel-kennel sizing and airline compliance review
- Export health-certificate and government-endorsement coordination
- AQCS, Customs and cargo-arrival handling
- Domestic onward transport and final delivery where included

Planning a move to India?

Send Fly Your Tail your pet's species, breed, age, weight, measurements, current country, ownership history, intended Indian city, owner travel history and preferred travel date for an individual assessment.

Official references used for this guide

Animal Quarantine and Certification Services - Import of pets under baggage rules

<https://aqcsindia.gov.in/Home/ImportPetUnderBaggage>

AQCS - Standard Operating Procedure for import of pet dogs

<https://aqcsindia.gov.in/pdfs/india-dogs-guidance.pdf>

AQCS - Standard Operating Procedure for import of pet cats

<https://aqcsindia.gov.in/pdfs/india-cats-guidance.pdf>

DGFT - Frequently asked questions on import of dogs and cats

https://content.dgft.gov.in/Website/FAQ_IMPORT_PET.pdf

DGFT - Trade Notice 22 on import of pets

<https://content.dgft.gov.in/Website/dgftprod/e39e7e41-b6e2-4d5b-ba89-99850e1a71f1/Trade%20Notice%2022%20-%20Import%20of%20Pets.pdf>

CBIC - Transfer of Residence rules at a glance

https://www.cbic.gov.in/resources/htdocs-cbec/transfer_of_residence_rules-at_a_glance.pdf

Important disclaimer

This guide is general information prepared in August 2026. Indian import policy, AQCS procedures, DGFT authorisation criteria, Customs rules, airline policies and port arrangements can change. The current AQCS decision, DGFT authorisation, Customs requirements and official veterinary documents take precedence. Fly Your Tail verifies the applicable requirements for every individual case before travel.