

Relocating Your Pet to the United Arab Emirates



A practical guide for importing dogs and cats, including permits, rabies requirements, airline options, prohibited breeds and arrival clearance.

Personally managed by Julia | Fly Your Tail

The UAE requires advance import approval.

Every dog or cat must have a valid MOCCAE import permit, permanent microchip identification, the required vaccinations, an official health certificate and veterinary inspection at the port of entry.

www.flyyourtail.com

The essentials before you begin

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, known as MOCCAE, controls the import of companion dogs and cats into the United Arab Emirates.

Import permit	A MOCCAE import permit must be obtained before travel and is valid for 90 days from issue.
Personal import limit	An individual may generally import no more than 2 companion animals per year, excluding eligible returning UAE-resident pets.
Microchip	The pet must have a permanent microchip, and the number must match the health certificate and vaccination record.
Minimum age	Pets from low-risk countries must be at least 12 weeks old; pets from high-risk countries must be at least 15 weeks old.
Quarantine	Routine quarantine is not normally required when all import conditions are satisfied.
Arrival inspection	The pet is examined at an approved veterinary quarantine entry point before release.

Documents presented for release

- Customs declaration or air waybill showing the shipment details
- Original vaccination record or pet passport
- Government-issued or government-endorsed veterinary health certificate
- Rabies antibody titre report when the pet comes from a high-risk country
- Valid MOCCAE import permit

The permit should be issued before the flight is finalised.

The permit validity, veterinary timing, airline acceptance and arrival handling all need to align with the intended travel date.

RABIES-RISK CLASSIFICATION

Low-risk and high-risk origin countries

The UAE uses a published low-risk country list. Countries not included on that list are treated as high risk for rabies-related import requirements.

Origin category	Main requirements	Minimum age
Low-risk country	Microchip, valid rabies vaccination, core vaccinations, parasite treatment, official health certificate and import permit. A rabies titre test is not normally required.	At least 12 weeks
High-risk country	All standard requirements plus a rabies antibody titre result of at least 0.5 IU/ml from an approved laboratory.	At least 15 weeks

Rabies titre rules for high-risk countries

- For a first rabies vaccination or after a vaccination lapse, at least 21 days must pass after vaccination before the blood sample is taken.
- When the pet has a valid booster with no lapse, the blood sample may be taken without waiting another 21 days.
- The laboratory result must be at least 0.5 IU/ml.
- The UAE states that the titre report is valid for 365 days while the rabies vaccination remains continuously valid.
- A new booster can affect titre validity under the current MOCCAE wording, so the sequence should be checked before vaccination or sampling.

The rabies timeline should be planned before the sample is collected.

A valid result depends on the vaccination history, sampling date, laboratory acceptance and consistent microchip details.

VETERINARY PREPARATION

Vaccinations and parasite treatment

Dogs	Cats
• Rabies • Canine distemper virus • Canine parvovirus • Infectious canine hepatitis • Leptospirosis, or an accepted test where vaccination is not used in the export country	• Rabies • Feline panleukopenia • Feline rhinotracheitis • Feline calicivirus

Record details

- The vaccination record or passport should show the microchip number and full description of the pet.
- It should include the vaccine name, manufacturer, batch number and vaccination date.
- The pet must have been at least 12 weeks old when the rabies vaccination programme began.
- The validity period follows the vaccine manufacturer's instructions.
- Internal and external parasite treatment must be administered within 14 days before shipment and recorded in the health certificate or pet passport.

Official health certificate

- The certificate must be issued or endorsed by the competent veterinary authority in the country of export.
- It must confirm that the pet was clinically examined and showed no signs of disease.
- All identity, vaccination, parasite-treatment and titre details must match the supporting records.
- The airline may impose a shorter certificate-validity period than the government entry rule, so both timelines must be checked.

Document consistency is essential.

A different microchip number, incomplete vaccine record or missing government endorsement can delay release or result in the pet being returned at the owner's expense.

Step-by-step relocation pathway

1**Check eligibility**

Confirm the breed, country risk category, age, microchip and intended UAE airport or border entry point.

2**Review vaccinations and rabies testing**

Fly Your Tail builds the veterinary timeline from the pet's existing records and the current MOCCAE conditions.

3**Apply for the import permit**

The permit is requested through MOCCAE's digital service and remains valid for 90 days.

4**Confirm the airline route**

The airline, aircraft, travel method, transit rules and kennel requirements are checked before final booking.

5**Complete final veterinary preparation**

Parasite treatments and the official health certificate are completed within the applicable time windows.

6**Arrange customs and veterinary clearance**

A receiving agent or authorised contact prepares the arrival file and coordinates the veterinary quarantine entry point.

7**Travel to the UAE**

The pet travels under the airline-approved cabin, accompanied-baggage or manifested-cargo arrangement available for that route.

8**Arrival inspection**

The microchip and original documents are checked by the veterinary authority.

9**Release and delivery**

After veterinary and customs clearance, the pet is collected or delivered to the final address where included.

AIR TRAVEL OPTIONS

Cabin, accompanied baggage or manifested cargo

The UAE government import rules do not guarantee a particular airline travel method. The airline makes the final decision according to its own policy, aircraft, route, pet size and breed.

Method	How it works	Important points
In cabin	A small dog or cat travels in an approved carrier in the passenger cabin when the airline and route permit it.	Etihad currently offers a Pets Onboard service on eligible Etihad-operated routes to and from Abu Dhabi. Route, weight, carrier and booking restrictions apply.
Accompanied baggage	The pet travels in the aircraft hold on the owner's passenger booking where offered.	Availability is airline- and route-specific and may not be offered by UAE carriers on many services.
Manifested cargo	The pet is booked under an air waybill through the airline cargo system.	Common for large pets, unaccompanied pets, routes without baggage carriage and imports into Dubai or other UAE airports.

Etihad cabin travel to Abu Dhabi

- Small dogs and cats may travel on board selected Etihad-operated flights to and from Abu Dhabi.
- The service must be requested in advance, and all health, permit and airline documents must be approved before travel.
- Some countries, routes and dog breeds are excluded for government or operational reasons.
- The pet's cabin booking does not replace MOCCAE import approval or arrival veterinary inspection.
- Airline policies and prices change; the exact terms must be reconfirmed for the chosen flight.

Cabin travel is not available on every UAE route.

Fly Your Tail compares the airline options for the individual pet and explains whether cabin, baggage or cargo is realistically available.

BREED AND ENTRY RESTRICTIONS

Dogs that may not be imported

UAE legislation and MOCCAE import conditions prohibit a number of dog breeds and related types, subject to limited exceptions for qualifying service, emotional-support or medical-purpose dogs.

- Staffordshire Bull Terrier
- American Pit Bull Terrier
- American Staffordshire Terrier
- American Bully
- Brazilian Mastiff or Fila Brasileiro
- Dogo Argentino
- Tibetan Mastiff
- Neapolitan Mastiff
- Dogue de Bordeaux or French Mastiff
- Boerboel
- Bullmastiff
- Cane Corso
- Bully Kutta or Indian Mastiff
- Perro de Presa Canario or Presa Canario
- Japanese Tosa

Airlines can apply broader breed restrictions than the government list. For example, an airline may also refuse Rottweilers, Dobermans, Boxers, mastiff crosses or other strong breeds.

Bengal and serval cats

- Bengal and serval cats imported as pets require pedigree evidence showing fifth generation status under the current MOCCAE conditions.
- The airline and local emirate may request additional information before acceptance.

Approved arrival points

- Veterinary quarantine services are available at designated airports, cargo villages, seaports and land borders.
- Common air entry points include Dubai International cargo facilities, Al Maktoum International Airport, Zayed International Airport, Sharjah Airport and Ras Al Khaimah Airport.
- The receiving arrangement must match the airline's arrival terminal and the veterinary entry-point operating process.

Government eligibility and airline acceptance are separate checks.

A dog may be legally importable but still be refused by a particular airline because of its breed, size, kennel or route.

FEES AND RISK CONTROL

Government charges and common mistakes

Published MOCCAE service fees

- Import permit: AED 200 per dog or cat
- Release inspection for a dog: AED 500 per animal
- Release inspection for a cat: AED 250 per animal
- Additional customs, cargo-terminal, handling, storage, agent and delivery charges may apply.

Common mistakes that delay UAE imports

Applying too early or too late: The import permit is valid for only 90 days.

Using an expired rabies vaccination: A lapse can change the titre-testing sequence and earliest travel date.

Sampling too soon: A first-vaccination case from a high-risk country needs the required 21-day period before the titre sample.

Incorrect microchip details: The same number must appear on the pet, health certificate, vaccination record and titre report.

Missing parasite treatment: Internal and external treatment must be recorded within 14 days before shipment.

Assuming cabin travel is always possible: Airline and route restrictions can require manifested cargo.

Ignoring prohibited-breed rules: Government and airline breed lists must both be checked.

No receiving arrangement: Cargo imports require coordinated veterinary inspection, customs clearance and terminal release.

Arriving with copies only: Original or officially accepted documents must be available for release.

Your UAE relocation checklist

- Breed and age eligibility confirmed
- Country risk category confirmed
- Microchip readable and consistent
- Vaccinations valid and complete
- Rabies titre valid where required
- MOCCAE import permit issued
- Airline and travel method approved
- Final parasite treatment and health certificate scheduled
- Receiving agent and entry point confirmed
- Original documents prepared for arrival

How we support a UAE relocation

Fly Your Tail can coordinate the full journey or selected stages. Every case is personally managed by Julia, with one point of contact across the veterinary, permit, airline and arrival process.

- Country-risk, breed and age eligibility assessment
- Microchip, vaccination and rabies-titre timeline
- International RNATT sample-logistics coordination
- MOCCAE import-permit support
- Official health-certificate preparation and review
- Cabin, accompanied-baggage or cargo route assessment
- Travel-kennel sizing and airline compliance review
- Airline booking, cargo and export-handling coordination
- UAE veterinary inspection, customs clearance and delivery planning
- Travel-day monitoring through final release

Planning a move to the United Arab Emirates?

Send Fly Your Tail your pet's species, breed, age, weight, measurements, current country, vaccination history, destination emirate and preferred travel date for an individual assessment.

Official references used for this guide

MOCCAE - Importing companion animals: cats and dogs

<https://www.moccae.gov.ae/ar/services/import-permit-pets>

UAE Legislation - Federal Law No. 22 of 2016 regulating dangerous animals

<https://uaelegislation.gov.ae/en/legislations/1162>

UAE Legislation - Executive Regulations of the Dangerous Animals Law

<https://uaelegislation.gov.ae/en/legislations/1163>

Dubai Customs - Pet import guidance

<https://www.dubaicustoms.gov.ae/en/mobile/pages/faq.aspx>

Etihad Airways - Travelling with pets

<https://www.etihad.com/en/plan/travel-companion/travelling-with-pets>

Important disclaimer

This guide is general information prepared in August 2026. UAE country classifications, permit conditions, service fees, airline policies, approved entry points and breed restrictions can change. The current MOCCAE import permit, official veterinary certificate and airline approval take precedence. Fly Your Tail verifies the applicable requirements for every individual case before travel.