

Frequently asked questions regarding pet travel from the USA.

Please find below the answers to the most frequently asked questions regarding pet travel. If you need any further information please feel free to call our Contact Centre on 1 800 828 6822.

How do I qualify for the Pet Travel Scheme?

You need to start the process at least 6 months before you want your pet to fly, then follow the steps below:

- The first step is to have your pet fitted with a microchip and the number must be logged on all paperwork.
- Once the microchip has been fitted your pet must then be vaccinated against rabies.
- Your vet can then take a blood sample from your pet for testing and if the result is successful your pet can enter the UK 6 months after the date of the test.
- You will need to obtain a correctly completed official EU pet passport or third country PETS certificate from a Government authorised veterinary surgeon and this must be endorsed by the USDA.
- Finally, your pet needs to be treated for tick and tapeworm between 24-48 hours prior to the time of check-in for the flight. Please note this treatment must contain the ingredient Prazequantal.

Under what circumstances would my pet fail the Pet Passport Scheme?

It is essential that the paperwork for the Pet Passport Scheme is done in the right order and completed according to DEFRA requirements. A few examples of where your pets documentation would not be passed by DEFRA could be:

- The tick and tapeworm treatments were not given between 24-48 hours prior to check-in.
- Your PETS certificate has not been endorsed by a USDA vet. In this situation and if DEFRA have enough accompanying paperwork, they will be able to have a vet issue a pet passport in the UK and then your pet can be released back to you, usually the same day.
- If the microchip was fitted after the date of the rabies vaccination, this is not resolveable and the owner must choose between sending the pet back to the USA or quarantine in the UK for up to 6 months. All charges for re-entry into the USA or the period of quarantine must be paid by the owner.

Please note any treatments or documentation arranged in the UK on arrival will be charged to the pet owner.

What days of the week can I fly my pet?

We usually fly pets from the USA into Heathrow from Monday through to Friday and into Gatwick from Sunday to Thursday. Please double check this with the Contact Centre before booking your flight.

Can my pet fly in the cabin with me?

Under the UK Pet Travel Scheme, all pets must travel as cargo in the hold of the aircraft. The conditions in this area of the aircraft are temperature regulated and air-conditioned just like the cabin. The only exception to this rule is for registered service dogs as they are eligible to travel in the cabin.

Why is the check-in time so early?

We ask you to arrive at Virgin Cargo four hours prior to departure for the following reasons. If there are any problems with paperwork or the kennel size, we will have time to help resolve them. Also, once we have accepted a pet for a flight, documentation has to be completed and approved by the Virgin representative to get your pet ready to travel. The early check-in time also allows for any traffic problems en-route to the airport, plus if you are travelling on the flight with your pet you will need to check-in up to 3 hours before departure.

Can my pet fly with a collar on?

In order to avoid any possibility of injury to your pet and to ensure a comfortable flight, all collars, leads and clothing must be removed before they are settled into the kennel.

Can my pet be sedated?

On the advice of a veterinary clinic, we do not accept any sedated pets for our flights. Sedation can put your pet's general health at risk at altitude. If your pet has a nervous temperament, we recommend that you purchase a kennel as soon as possible and train your pet to be familiar with it. There are also herbal remedies that your vet can advise you about which can have a calming effect.

How long will it take to have my pet released back to me in the UK?

You will normally be reunited with your pet/s within 3 or 4 hours of landing in the UK. However, this is dependent on the daily work of DEFRA, so this may vary. A member of the UK Virgin Shipping team will keep you updated with the progress of the paperwork.

What are the charges for in the UK?

The charges to be paid on arrival into the UK include:

- Pick up from the aircraft in our air-conditioned/heated pet quarantine van and transportation to the Animal Reception Centre.
- Customs clearance.
- Ground handling fees.
- Animal Reception Centre charge.

We pay a minimum charge to the Animal Reception Centre which covers the boarding of your pet up to 48 hrs.

Do I have to accompany my pet on the flight?

If you are flying into Heathrow airport you do not have to accompany your pet. However, the UK charges are more if your pet travels unaccompanied – this charge is levied by DEFRA. Your pet must be accompanied if you are flying into Gatwick airport.

Can I fly onward with my pet from the UK on arrival to another country/destination?

If you want to fly onward from London to another destination in the UK or another country, you will need to arrange this trip yourself. We can only be involved as far as arrival into London. You must go to the Animal Reception Centre to collect your pet before checking in for the next flight, therefore you will need to leave a considerable amount of time between the connections. You must also ensure that you have both the documentation for clearance in the UK and for the final destination.

Will the temperature/weather conditions affect my pet's booking/flight?

We have the facilities to protect your pet from extreme temperatures and therefore this would not affect the acceptance of your pet on a Virgin Atlantic flight. For instance we have an air-conditioned van to pick up your pet from the aircraft at Heathrow, and at Gatwick the Animal Reception Centre is located next to the landing area. The exception is on flights VS006 from Miami and VS016 from Orlando, where we have an embargo on the pet service from June–September. At these destinations the aircraft is waiting on the ground for a lengthy amount of time, which means that the hold temperature before take-off is too high and therefore would be uncomfortable for pets.

Can my two pets travel together in the same kennel?

IATA Live Animals Regulations stipulate that two pets can travel together in a kennel only when they are both under 6 months old and they must each weigh less than 9kg (20lbs). An adult and a puppy/kitten may not travel together in the same kennel. However, as Virgin Atlantic Airways only accepts pets under the DEFRA Pet Travel Scheme, which takes 6 months to complete, all pets travelling to the UK would need to travel in separate cages.

Can I send food with my pet in/on the kennel?

We do not feed your pet whilst they are in our care but on arrival into the UK the Animal Reception Centre will offer them a meal. If your pet has a special dietary requirement, please make them known on the top of the kennel, as this is the owner's responsibility to advise us.

What travel kennel should I purchase for my pet?

You must obtain an IATA approved crate in order to fly your pet on an aircraft. It needs to meet the following specifications:

- The crate must be made of wood or hard plastic.
- It must be rigid on all sides (non-collapsible) and not have a roof with a grill that opens.
- It must be equipped with an adequate sized water dish, attached to the inside door of the kennel.
- It must be ventilated around all 4 sides.
- The base must be leak-proof.
- It must have absorbent material in the bottom of the pet kennel (i.e. shredded newspaper) for the comfort of your pet.
- A door must form the whole of one side of the container and be either hinged or sliding.

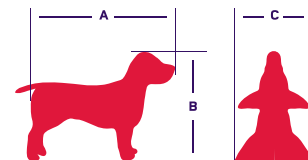
How do I ensure that I purchase the correct sized kennel for my pet?

The size of the kennel should follow the guidelines below:

- A. Length in cm = Nose to root of tail – tail excluded
- B. Height in cm = Floor to top of head while standing
- C. Width in cm = At the widest point

These measurements will ensure that your pet will have sufficient space to stand up and lie down comfortably.

Kennels must be large enough to comfortably accommodate your pet to stand up and turn around freely, leaving at least 2" headroom space between the top of your pet's head and the roof top of the kennel. Please note failure to have your kennel and pet checked for this very important detail could result in your pet being refused for transport on the day of your departure.



How old does my puppy/kitten have to be to travel with Virgin?

We will accept puppies/kittens from the age of 10 weeks old, however your pet must have completed the Pet Passport Scheme in order to travel and therefore needs to be at least 6 months old.

How many other pets could be booked on the same flight as my pet?

We will only accept two families of pets on any one flight, and the number able to be flown is dependent on the type of aircraft used on the day.

Can I travel with an assistance dog?

All registered assistance dogs must adhere to the same regulations as other pets that enter the UK and they will be able to travel in the cabin with you. Please call our passenger services team on 1 203 750 8055 to arrange your booking.