

# PCS “GOOD-TO-KNOW” INFO

Please call the Okinawa VETAC as soon as you know your exact flight date to schedule your Health Certificate Appointment.

## A few months before you leave:

- Visit [Aphis.Usga.org](http://Aphis.Usga.org) for the most up to date information about traveling internationally.
- When scheduling your pet’s flight, try to arrange a flight with the fewest stops and transfers. When traveling in hot weather try to schedule a flight in the morning or evening to avoid the hottest time period of the day. Some animals may be refused due to breed restrictions during summer months. Check with individual airlines.
- Your pet should be accustomed to the kennel it will be traveling in. If your pet isn’t currently accustomed to the kennel, you should start early in kennel training the pet.
- If you are traveling to **Hawaii, or a country other than the United States**, the requirements for travel may differ. The veterinary clinic can help you interpret of the information given to you, but it is ultimately your responsibility to find out the requirements of the country you will be entering. It is recommended that you contact the consulate/embassy or a nearby military veterinary clinic of the country you will be traveling to for their most current requirements. Keep in mind, some places require that you start the importation process as far out as six months prior to entry. Start researching the requirements for your next destination as early as possible.
- It is a good idea to have your kennel checked and approved by the airline you are traveling with. Most airlines have strict guidelines and requirements for the types of kennel that will be accepted. You must have a kennel that is secured together by hardware, i.e. screws and wing nuts. Snap closure kennels, kennels that have wire door tops and collapsible kennels are usually not accepted for travel on airlines. Each airline may have different requirements for kennel size. Check with the airline for the difference in kennel requirements for cargo vs. in cabin. Most cargo kennels will not work for in cabin flight.
- Call the Okinawa Veterinary Activity 3 to 4 weeks before your departure date to schedule an appointment for a health certificate. Health Certificates are completed by appointment **ONLY**. We **MUST** see the pet at the appointment to sign off on the Health Certificate.
- We are diligent in keeping the most up to date information with importing/exporting pets so please keep in mind when using a third party Pet Transport Service that they may not have the most current information. If you have any questions regarding requirements for shipping your pet please contact us. Also keep in mind, if using a third party Pet Transport Service, they will be required to have a Power of Attorney.

## As soon as you have your flight itinerary/know your flight date:

- Contact the veterinary clinic to make your health certificate appointment 3-4 weeks prior to your flight date. At this appointment you will receive the following:
  - A Veterinary Health Certificate – This form states that your pet is free from any signs of communicable diseases. This certificate is good for **10 DAYS** from the date it was signed by the veterinarian. **Please note the 10 day period starts the day the Health Certificate is issued.** Should you have a break during your travel and your certificate expires, you will need to take the original to a Veterinarian’s office and have another re-issued. If your flight is cancelled/delayed, and your Health Certificate will expire before you reach your destination, call us so we can schedule another appointment to issue you a new Health Certificate.
  - The most recent Rabies Certificate – If you received your pet’s rabies vaccine from the **Okinawa VETAC**, you will receive this certificate stating that your pet is currently vaccinated against the rabies virus. If you received your pet’s rabies vaccine from an **off base** clinic you should have been provided an original Rabies Vaccine Certificate from that Veterinarian, it should be signed in blue ink and translated into English. If you do not have this form, you must go back to the veterinarian that issued the vaccine for another certificate; the Okinawa VETAC will not issue you a replacement unless the vaccine was given here.
    - Note: Rabies tags are not required for travel; however it is a good idea to have the tag if you were given one. Rabies tags are not issued from off base veterinary clinics and can only be obtained when the pet is registered off base. The Okinawa VETAC does not provide tags for vaccines received off base. Please do not attach the rabies tag to the kennel – store it in your carry-on luggage.
  - Letter of Acclimation – This form states that your pet has been approved to fly by a Veterinarian. Keep in mind this **does not** guarantee your pet will travel. The airlines reserve the right to deny certain breeds from traveling during certain weather conditions. This form will also state if the pet was born in Japan or if the pet went through the quarantine process, and has a copy of the MDJ 270.
  - Pet Quarantine and Examination Certificate (MDJ 270) or Memorandum - These forms are used to prove to the Government of Japan that your pet followed the quarantine requirements after you arrived on island. If your pet arrived to Okinawa from another country, you will need a signed copy of the MDJ 270 stating that

they have been released from quarantine. If you no longer have this document, we will need to know what month/year your pet arrived on island and which airport your pet first landed in.

If your pet was born in Japan, and has never left the country, we will create a memorandum to that effect.

**You will not need an MDJ 270 if your pet originated in Japan.**

- Please make **5** copies of each of the above forms. Place one copy of each, plus a copy of your itinerary, and any other documents required for your destination into a Ziploc baggie and tape it securely to the outside of your pet's kennel. Make sure you tape it to a solid surface and not over any of the vent holes. Pets tend to get bored and can pull the baggie inside the kennel and shred it. It is also a good idea to place good contact information in the baggie in the event that your pet gets lost or separated from you. **Keep the original copies, the ones signed in blue ink, with you. Do not place these on the kennel.**
  - Medical Record – You will receive your pet's medical record at your Health Certificate appointment. The Okinawa VETAC maintains electronic copies of your pet's file. Please do not pack this file; keep it with you in your carry-on luggage for the duration of your trip.
  - USFJ Form 380 EJ – This form is only required if you are sending your pet unaccompanied. This form can be obtained from TMO.
- We highly recommend updating your contact information with your pet's microchip company once you get to your new location. The most common microchip brands are AVID and HOMEAGAIN. You may contact these companies online or by phone to update your information. [www.avidid.com](http://www.avidid.com) and [www.homeagain.com](http://www.homeagain.com) It is very important that this be completed upon arrival at your new home of record so that should your pet get lost, these companies would be able to help contact you if he/she is found. There is also a spot for an emergency contact, if you have a family member you trust, we recommend assigning them as the emergency contact in case you are unreachable.
- If you are traveling on a commercial flight from Naha you must report to the Naha Quarantine Office at least one day prior to your departure date. We recommend giving yourself at least 48-24 hours before flight. The Quarantine Office will need to see all of your *original* paperwork and your pet. The kennel is not required but you may bring it if you have any questions for the airline. They will stamp the paperwork and let you know if you need anything additional. If there is a problem with your paperwork, call the VETAC *as soon as possible* so there is no delay in your departure. You will be given a map at your health certificate appointment. The office is located next to the International Terminal at the Naha Airport. If you are traveling to other foreign countries other than the US, Hawaii, Guam, or Korea, you will need an appointment with the Quarantine Office, walk-ins will not be accepted. We will set up this appointment for you.

**The day before you leave and the day of departure:**

- You can feed your pet the night before departure but please give them at least 6-8 hours to void anything they have eaten before going into the kennel for the duration of the journey. Do not feed your pet the morning of the flight. Light exercise is recommended prior to travel as it will help reduce the amount of accidents in the kennel during flight.
- Animals are required to be given water. Please check with your specific airline for the guidelines regarding water access.
- When your pet is placed in the kennel it should be without any accessories i.e. collars, bandanas, harness etc... In order to keep your pet from getting hung up inside the kennel make sure you remove the collar and/or harness and any toys. You should place nothing in the kennel that your pet can choke on or be choked by. However, you can place a blanket or small bed inside for comfort purposes.
  - It is recommended that you line the kennel with an absorbent material if your pet will not shred it up. A bed pillow or layers of puppy pads work well. We recommend checking with your airline for approved materials.
- Do not lock or zip-tie the kennel door. The airlines need to inspect the kennel before flight and will secure them before boarding.
- At this time the effects of sedation at altitude are not known. Therefore, sedating animals for travel is not recommended. Airlines will refuse flight to an animal that appears sedated. Anti-anxiety meds can be prescribed for high-anxiety animals. We recommend a trial dose before flight to determine the effects.

**IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

Naha Quarantine Office, Okinawa	098-857-4468
Embassy of Japan, Washington DC	202-939-6700
USDA National Center, Import and Export, Maryland	301-734-8364
US Fish & Wildlife Service, Virginia	703-358-2104, ext. 5423

Okinawa Branch Veterinary Services

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