



THE LABRADOR RESCUE TRUST

ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO TAKING YOUR DOG ON HOLIDAY

Please also read Help Sheet 5 - Essential Guide to Travelling with your Dog, and Help Sheet 7 – Essential Guide to Boarding your Dog

Going on holiday – outside the United Kingdom

The Labrador Rescue Trust does not recommend or condone taking dogs abroad. We urge you to seriously consider the risks before embarking upon the decision to travel abroad with your dog.

These are the regulations (as of March 2009) – IT IS IMPERATIVE that you check the very latest regulations with your UK vet.

However, should you decide to, these are the risks and issues.

Since the introduction of the Pet Passport Scheme the procedure for taking your dog abroad has been greatly streamlined and simplified. Dogs now have a proper passport which cuts out the need for endless form filling. And vets, at least in France, are well versed in what needs to be done before the dog returns to the UK. A significant number speak English, as do the pet passport officers at designated ports of entry. Taking your dog abroad, does need considerable thought and there are significant start-up costs involved (a minimum of £200 approximately). Some of these costs will be renewable. The figure quoted is for guidance purposes and does not take into account the actual cost of travelling.

Taking your dogs to Southern European countries between May and mid September is not advised. The length of journey, coupled with the heat for a dog whose coat is grown to protect him in UK temperatures, does not have time to adjust for a short visit abroad. Furthermore, regulations for taking dogs on the beach are probably more stringent around the Mediterranean than they are in the UK. Leaving your dog in a car must be completely out of the question, even for very short periods of time. The heat is such that they would be dead in minutes.

There are, however many people with holiday homes in mid or northern France, and other Northern European countries where the temperatures are not dissimilar from the UK where family visits are made throughout the year, sometimes for prolonged periods of time and in such cases, you may want to take your dog with you.



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Preparing your dog for overseas travel

Full details of the Pet Travel Scheme can be found at www.defra.gov.uk and you should read these notes carefully.

You should discuss the matter with your vet who can advise you on the suitability of your particular dog for overseas travel. Your dog must be fully vaccinated and microchipped. The process then is as follows:

1. Your vet will give your dog a health check and then a vaccination against rabies.
2. Three weeks after the vaccination a blood sample is taken from your dog and will be tested to ensure that the vaccination is successful.
3. The passport will be issued once a successful blood test result has been received.
4. Your dog can then go abroad. **BUT he cannot return to the UK within six months of the blood sample being taken.** Effectively this means that you have to wait six months before you can take your dog abroad if you are going for a short visit.

The whole procedure for preparing your dog for overseas travel will, therefore, take a minimum of seven months to complete.

The regulations at present state that the rabies vaccination must be renewed every three years and the pet passport updated. It is important to remember that different vaccinations are licensed for different periods, so it is worth discussing this with your vet, as in areas affected by rabies annual vaccination may be recommended. The date of the renewal of the rabies vaccination is always written in the passport, but if this is allowed to lapse, even by just one day, the whole procedure starts again from scratch. As regulations do change it is always important to check with your UK vet on a regular basis to ensure you are fully compliant.

Preparing your dog for the visit abroad

Remember to take your dog's bedding and toys, an adequate supply of the dog's usual food and a supply of water for the journey. Make sure that the dog has adequate space in the car for the journey, preferably the back of an estate car. Make sure there is adequate ventilation if your car does not have air conditioning. You will find window blinds (such as those used for children) will keep the sun out and your dog more comfortable. The French motorway system has an excellent network of rest areas, usually about every 20 kilometres. Many of them have extensive picnic and wooded areas, where you can take



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your dog for a good walk. Almost all motorway restaurants will bring your dog a bowl of water. Well behaved dogs are welcome in most restaurants and hotels.

Your UK pet insurance is unlikely to cover visits overseas, but most companies provide short term relatively inexpensive insurance cover for the purpose, so ensure that you take out cover for the time you are away from home.

It is advisable to spray your dog against ticks before you leave and you should seek the advice of your vet about the most effective treatment for the area to where you are travelling. Nothing beats a daily check for ticks and all owners should take a tick removing hook with them (made by O'tom) which are easy to use and very cheap. **There are many serious and sometimes fatal diseases** to which UK dogs are not usually exposed that are transmitted by ticks and other biting insects. The vet has to spray your dog again before returning home (within the timescale set out on page 4) and the passport is stamped to record the fact, so take the spray with you to save having to buy more.

You should also bear in mind that there are other exotic diseases that are common overseas but absent from home. Many diseases occurring abroad, but not seen in the UK, are transmitted by biting insects and ticks and British pets abroad will not have met these diseases before and are likely to be highly susceptible to them. They include *Babesiosis* (transmitted by ticks and causing fever, jaundice and anaemia), *Ehrlichiosis* (transmitted by ticks and causing fever, depression, lethargy, loss of appetite, shortness of breath, joint pain and stiffness, bruising), *Heartworm* (transmitted by mosquito and causing breathing difficulties, haemorrhages and followed by heart failure and ultimately can be fatal), *Hepatozoonosis* (caused by ingestion of affected ticks through grooming/licking and causing fever, lethargy, depression, weight loss, bloody diarrhoea, hind-limb and back pain), *Leishmaniasis* (transmitted by the sand fly and causing skin sores which do not appear for weeks or months from the time of the bite, fever, damage to the spleen and liver and anaemia). Some of these conditions can lie dormant until long after you have returned from your travels and many may not be recognised by UK vets who do not see these conditions that exist outside of the UK shores, so if your dog should show signs of illness following your return, be sure to mention to your vet where your dog has been.

Many Mediterranean countries have wild boar roaming freely, poisonous snakes and many large ants that can cause extreme irritation. It is always advisable that your dog should be restricted from venturing into unknown areas.

You are strongly advised to consult a vet when you arrive at your destination to check what parasites are prevalent in that area and obtain the necessary protection for your dog.



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You will need to visit a vet before you return home (see below) so making contact early on is no bad thing.

The most satisfactory way of getting across the Channel is through the tunnel which is quick, and you and your dog can stay together in your car. If you use one of the ferry services, check with the company concerned to make sure adequate provision is available for your dog on the journey.

DON'T FORGET TO TAKE YOUR DOG'S PASSPORT AND OVERSEAS TRAVEL INSURANCE DOCUMENTS.

Finally, there have been one or two reports in the papers of dogs who have arrived back at the ferry port to come home and the pet passport officer has been unable to find a microchip reading, so the dog has been taken into quarantine causing great distress to both the dog and owner, not to mention expense. Your dog is not scanned at the departure port, so it is advisable to get your dog scanned before leaving home to make sure that the microchip is active. You should also note where the chip is located. Sometimes they do slip from the back of the neck to other parts of the body which is why they are sometimes missed. Fortunately chips fail very very rarely, but it is always better to be safe than sorry.

Before you return to the UK

Your dog has to be treated for ticks and worms before returning to the UK. This must be done not less than 24 hours and not more than 48 hours before your return. That is to say, the clock starts ticking from the hour that your dog is treated by the vet abroad and you have to be back in the UK within 48 hours of that date and time. Your journey home must be planned to take this into account.

WE URGE YOU MOST STRONGLY TO THINK VERY CAREFULLY BEFORE EXPOSING YOUR DOG TO THESE RISKS.

Going on holiday – in the United Kingdom

Many seaside resorts do not allow dogs on beaches during late Spring to early Autumn. Even those that do tend to restrict you to the extremities of the beach. There are even restrictions in many inland resorts and National Parks these days which can give you problems when taking your dog with you. This means that you may have a problem with what to do with your dog.

Assuming that you have carefully considered your dog's welfare and that you decide to take your dog on holiday with you, you need to prepare the items that you will need to



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take with you. For the journey, see our Help Sheet 5 – Essential Guide to Travelling with your Dog. You should also make sure that you have all items that you will need for your dog, such as water bowl, food bowl, sufficient dog food, bed, blankets, towels, grooming kit, collar and lead (take extra ones in case of loss), some toys and any medications. Always remember to take a clean up kit and pick up after your dog wherever you are.

If you are going on to the beach, you will need to take some fresh water and a bowl as well as some means of giving your dog some shade – and some food if you will not be back in time for his regular feed time. You should also be sure that you have some form of restraint available so that he does not cause a nuisance to other people on the beach.

If you are going to the countryside, be sure that you conform to the Countryside Code. Always keep a careful watch on your dog at all times so that he does not get lost nor cause a nuisance to other people.

You will also need to consider where your dog will sleep at night. It is most important that your dog is comfortable and, in particular, safe. He should not be able to escape to cause nuisance to other people but, above all, it must be remembered that your dog is in unfamiliar surroundings and needs to feel safe not stressed.

You should carefully consider whether or not to take your dog with you at all.

General

Never leave your dog at home by himself when you go on holiday. Your dog will feel abandoned and become very stressed being on his own for, probably, twenty three hours of every day that you are away. An alternative option is for reliable neighbours/ friends/dog sitters to look after him in your home, although this may not be a practical solution in some situations. If you do not have a very reliable member of your family or a close friend, then the best place for your dog to go is into a reputable Boarding Kennels. See Help Sheet 7 – Essential Guide to Boarding your Dog.

These Information Sheets are intended to serve as a guideline to new homes and foster homes. They are the result of many years of experience from our helpers and we hope that they provide a useful insight. Please note that these are only guidelines and The Labrador Rescue Trust, its helpers and officers make clear that it is the responsibility of each home/foster home to recognise the needs of their dog and to react to those needs. The Trust, its helpers and officers cannot be held responsible for the behaviour of any individual dog.

THE LABRADOR RESCUE TRUST COMPANY

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