



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Division of Public Health • Epidemiology Section**  
**Communicable Disease Branch**  
1902 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1902  
Tel 919-733-3419 • Fax 919-733-0490

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor  
Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

Jeffrey P. Engel, MD  
State Health Director

DATE: 28 JUNE 2010

TO: Animal rescue groups, shelters, transporters & persons exporting companion animals from NC to other states  
FROM: Carl Williams and Marilyn Haskell, Public Health Veterinarians, NC DPH  
SUBJECT: STATE OF DESTINATION ANIMAL IMPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

People and organizations commonly take domestic companion animals from North Carolina animal shelters to other states to be sold or adopted. Domestic companion animals **must** be moved to the state of destination in accordance with that state's laws. If you are taking a dog, cat or ferret from NC to another state for any reason you must comply with all importation requirements set forth by the state of destination and these requirements vary from state-to-state.

The state of destination, typically the agriculture department, should always be consulted prior to moving animals into that state to ensure compliance with all appropriate state laws, rules and regulations. Always consult with a USDA accredited veterinarian prior to moving any animals to another state. The importation requirements and contact information by state are located at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/animals/animal\\_import/animal\\_imports\\_states.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports_states.shtml).

#### RABIES CERTIFICATES and HEALTH CERTIFICATES

These requirements may vary from state-to state; for example to be imported into NC dogs, cats and ferrets must

1. have proof of current vaccination against rabies by 4 months of age (age requirement may vary among states),
2. be accompanied by a certificate of veterinary examination signed by a licensed & accredited veterinarian indicating the animal
  - a. has not been exposed to rabies
  - b. does not originate from a rabies quarantine area
  - c. is free from contagious or communicable diseases (may not be limited to zoonotic diseases).

#### ACCREDITED VETERINARIANS

Veterinarians that complete Certificates of Veterinary Examination (health certificates) for animals going to other states must be NC licensed and accredited by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and should have knowledge of the state of destination's import requirements. Those requirements can be found online at the USDA website: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/animals/animal\\_import/animal\\_imports\\_states.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports_states.shtml).

#### REGULATION OF COMPANION ANIMAL SALE/DISTRIBUTION

In addition to importation requirements some states may also regulate the manner in which companion animals are sold or distributed within their state, for example:

- Rhode Island requires persons engaged in the sale or distribution of dogs to be licensed with the State Department of Agriculture (<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE4/4-19/INDEX.HTM>).
- Massachusetts requires that all dogs or cats brought or shipped into the Commonwealth for commercial resale shall be inoculated against distemper not more than thirty nor less than seven days before entry and all dogs or cats imported for resale shall be held in isolation by the importer for a period of two days prior to offering for sale (<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/140-138a.htm>).
- MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources issued an Emergency Order (attached) on animal importation.

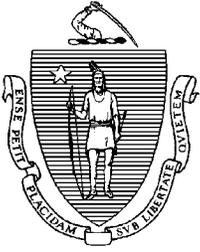
Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions please call the Veterinary Public Health program at 919-733-3410 or contact the state of destination to ensure all import requirements are met.



North Carolina Public Health  
Working for a healthier and safer North Carolina  
Everywhere. Everyday. Everybody.



Location: 225 N. McDowell Street • Raleigh, N.C. 27603  
An Equal Opportunity Employer



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
**Department of Agricultural Resources**  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114  
617-626-1700 fax 617-626-1850 www.Mass.gov/AGR



MITT ROMNEY  
Governor

ELLEN ROY HERZFELDER  
Secretary

KERRY HEALEY  
Lieutenant Governor

DOUGLAS P. GILLESPIE  
Commissioner

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
May 26, 2005

**CONTACT:** Brad Mitchell  
617-626-1771

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES  
ISSUES EMERGENCY ORDER TO STRENGTHEN ANIMAL IMPORT LAWS**  
New Regulations Necessary to Protect Human and Animal Health

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) announced an emergency order today to strengthen the regulations pertaining to animals brought into the Commonwealth from other states. DAR has found that additional requirements are necessary to prevent rescue organizations, shelters and other groups from bringing animals into the state that pose risks to human and animal health.

More than 200 rescue and adoption groups are currently relocating animals to Massachusetts for adoption and sale. Today's emergency order will address the weaknesses in the current import laws in order to minimize health risks in Massachusetts with the following four new requirements:

- **Record keeping** – Every rescue group and shelter will be required to keep and provide detailed records on the animal's place of origin, where it was housed prior to arriving in Massachusetts and ultimately on its new home. Rescue groups and shelters will also be required to keep detailed medical records on each animal to aid in epidemiology investigations and follow-up.
- **Isolation** – Every animal coming into Massachusetts for adoption must be isolated for 48 hours. This will serve two important purposes: 1) Any disease afflicting an animal will have the opportunity to manifest itself after the stress of transport, and 2) Imported animals will have enough time after transport to recover and exhibit either symptoms of disease or behavior consistent with a healthy animal.
- **Veterinary Examination** – Every animal must be given a health exam and issued a health certificate by a Massachusetts veterinarian at the end of the 48-hour isolation period.
- **Registration Form:** Every rescue group and shelter will be required to be registered with the state of Massachusetts and be able to furnish proof of registration so that state enforcement agencies remain aware of all importing entities in the state and the precise nature of their operations.

“We are pleased that Massachusetts is a state in which humane relocation efforts have been so successful in providing homes for stray animals from other states,” said Douglas Gillespie, Commissioner of the Department of Agricultural Resources. “But, the time has come to be more vigilant in how we regulate this practice to prevent diseases and other health threats from reaching our residents, pets and livestock in Massachusetts.”

Some of the more serious issues that these new regulations seek to minimize include nonexistent or forged health records and certificates, introduction of diseases and parasites not previously found in Massachusetts and importation of animals with serious, contagious diseases such as rabies. “We have seen instances where families with young children were adopting sick dogs right off the back of an out of state transport truck, with few if any steps taken to protect the safety or health of the adopting family or their pets” added Commissioner Gillespie. “These rescue organizations do wonderful work; we just need to ensure that they are doing it right from an animal health and human health perspective” he concluded.

###



## THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

### Tips on credentialing rescue groups!

#### OFFICERS

Anita W. Coupe, Esq.  
Chair of the Board  
Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.  
Vice Chair of the Board  
Walter J. Stewart, Esq.  
Board Treasurer  
Wayne Paccelle  
President & CEO  
Michael Markarian  
Executive Vice President & COO  
G. Thomas Waite III  
Treasurer & CFO  
Andrew N. Rowan, Ph.D.  
Chief International Officer  
& Chief Scientific Officer  
Roger A. Kindler, Esq.  
General Counsel & CLO  
Janet D. Frake  
Secretary

#### STAFF VICE PRESIDENTS

Holly Hazard  
Chief Innovations Officer  
John Balzar  
Senior Vice President  
Communications  
John W. Grandy, Ph.D.  
Senior Vice President  
Wildlife & Habitat Protection  
Heidi Prescott  
Senior Vice President  
Campaigns  
Geoffrey L. Handy  
Media and Online  
Communications  
Nancy Lawson  
Publications &  
Brand Management  
Jonathan R. Lovvorn, Esq.  
Animal Protection Litigation  
Nancy Perry, Esq.  
Government Affairs  
Kelly Peterson  
Field Services  
Robert G. Roop, Ph.D., SPHR  
Human Resources &  
Education Programs  
Melissa Seide Rubin, Esq.  
Animal Care Centers  
& Veterinary Services  
John M. Snyder  
Companion Animals  
Martin L. Stephens, Ph.D.  
Animal Research Issues

#### DIRECTORS

Jeffrey J. Arcinigo  
Peter A. Bender  
Eric L. Bernthal, Esq.  
Barbara S. Brack  
Anita W. Coupe, Esq.  
Neil B. Fang, Esq., C.P.A.  
Jane Greenspun Gale  
Paula A. Kislak, D.V.M.  
Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.  
Kathleen M. Linehan, Esq.  
Dwight E. Lowell II  
John Mackey  
William F. Mancuso  
Mary I. Max  
Patrick L. McDonnell  
Judy Ney  
Sharon Lee Patrick  
Judy J. Peil  
Marian G. Probst  
Joshua S. Reichert, Ph.D.  
Walter J. Stewart, Esq.  
Andrew Weinstein  
Persia White  
David O. Wiebers, M.D.  
Lona Williams

**Do we have matching missions?** Do the groups in question seem to understand your goal to help all the animals in the community? How do they promote their services? If a breed-adoption group is tooting its own horn at your expense—saying it "rescues" animals from sheltering facilities—maybe it's time for some educational meetings to help explain who you are and what you do.

**Are our partnerships clearly defined?** A common perception among shelters is that if they open their doors to one breed-placement group, they will be opening a floodgate to harassment and criticism from those groups they'd rather not work with. But the fact is, every group is different, and you don't have to have the same relationship with each one of them. Do only what your time and comfort levels allow. Remember that releasing animals is only one of many avenues; breed-placement groups can also help you by simply referring adopters to your facility. And remember that the decision to work or not to work with a breed-placement group is entirely yours to make.

**Do we have a system for deciding who should stay and who should go?** To make the process as smooth as possible, determine in advance which situations will call for placing an animal with a breed-placement group. Has the animal been showing signs of stress in the shelter environment? Does the animal have a minor but highly treatable medical problem? Would the dog make a great pet but, for whatever reason, hasn't successfully shown his true colors to visitors? Setting parameters in the beginning will help you create a system that everyone can understand and abide by.

**Do we have a fee structure in place?** How much shelters choose to charge breed-placement groups for released animals is more than just a matter of arithmetic. Sure, the fee will help pay for the cost the shelter has incurred in caring for the animal. But it can also act as a deterrent to potential animal hoarders, who most likely would not be able to foot the fees over and over again. For these reasons, some shelters charge a higher fee initially, and then lower that fee once a group has proven itself trustworthy. Other shelters charge only the cost of a spay/neuter surgery, a microchip, or vaccinations; some may also factor in the costs of health evaluations and behavior assessments. Whatever you do, just make sure you're comfortable with it; reputable groups understand a shelter's constant need for resources and funds to pay for basic operations.

**How well do we screen the screener?** The best relationships derive from a mutual understanding of philosophies and practices. Through careful screening of a breed-placement group's adoption guidelines and mission statements, you can ensure the groups you're working with are just as concerned about the appropriate placement of animals as you are. Those groups that place aggressive dogs, for instance, should not be welcomed as breed-placement partners. And those that set loose adoption guidelines—or guidelines so strict that dogs rarely get placed—will also create problems for your shelter.

**Are released animals going into safe environments?** In some states, such as Colorado and Missouri, breed-placement groups are subject to regulation and inspection. In others, such as Washington and Michigan, breed-placement partners have formed large alliances and developed codes of ethics or policy handbooks. Where applicable, adoption groups that approach your shelter should already be tuned in to these resources. If you are going to release animals to a breed-placement group, someone at your shelter should conduct periodic home visits to help you ensure you're not working with an animal hoarder or with someone who cannot guarantee a humane environment.

**Will working with a breed-placement group put my shelter at risk of potential liability?** Some shelters require breed rescues to sign forms releasing the shelter from all liability in cases of dog bites or other injuries caused by or inflicted upon released animals. Other shelters retain the ownership of released animals, requiring final adoptions to be processed back at the shelter. For specific help on this issue, you should ask for assistance from your shelter's lawyer.

**Do I have an effective method for keeping track of breed-placement group activities?** You can monitor breed-placement groups more easily by maintaining files on each one you work with. These files should include the names of the groups, their contact information, and the nature of your relationships (release, referral, or both) with them. Does the group accept mixed breeds? How much advance notification does the group require for picking up released animals? Answers to these questions should be noted. Create a form for recording interactions with each placement group and the outcomes of those interactions; keep the form in the file. Disapproved placement groups should be clearly labeled as such.

**Do I know our animals have ended up in good homes?** When you allow a breed-placement group to bring home an animal, it is best to have a contract that transfers ownership of that animal to the group. But your shelter should still require notification as to when and where the animal is placed. Ask breed-placement groups to forward copies of adoption paperwork so contact information and other details about new adopters can be duly recorded. This adds an element of accountability to the process and gives your shelter the opportunity to follow up if necessary. By keeping track of the number of animals you've released to a given group, you can also keep an eye on the group's activities and make sure you haven't got a hoarder on your hands.

**Will animals released to breed-placement groups go back into the community sterilized?** As an organization charged with stopping the cycle of breeding and pet homelessness, your shelter should always ensure that every animal leaving your facility is sterilized prior to placement with adopters or breed-placement groups. Never release American Kennel Club (AKC) records to breed-placement groups; instead, send a photocopy to the AKC to show breeders that many of their animals end up homeless, and then tear the originals in half and save them for your files.

**Do I know how to spot the warning signs of a group that may not have my shelter's best interests at heart?** In trying to help as many animals as possible, it's easy for breed-placement groups to overextend themselves. Be wary of groups that start to expand—those that start off with two or three animals one year and have 20 cats and 14 dogs the next. Red flags should also go up when groups try to find exceptions to your spay/neuter policies; these groups may be more interested in breeding than in helping animals. Lastly, if a group is less than forthright about its activities, or if it becomes more vague as to the status of the animals in its care, that's a good sign there's something amiss in the way it's operating.