



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

MSN 1799 (M+F)

Rabies - Carriage of Animals on Ships

Notice to all Owners, Masters, Skippers and Seafarers

This notice updates and replaces Merchant Shipping Notice M. 1363

Summary

- Rabies is a fatal disease for humans
- Animals on ships are a risk to Great Britain
- Animals should only be landed in this country in accordance with regulations

1. This notice is to bring to the attention of owners, masters, skippers and seafarers the provisions of the Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats and Other Mammals) Order 1974 (as amended), European Regulation 998/2003 on the animal health requirements on the non-commercial movement of pet animals (as amended), the Non Commercial Movement of Pet Animals (England) Regulations 2004, and Council Directive 92/65/EEC of 13 July 1992 laying down animal health requirements for the movement of commercially traded animals (as amended). To prevent the introduction of rabies into Great Britain, this legislation controls the landing in this country of certain animals.

2. In respect of the animals to which it applies (see Annex), the Rabies Order 1974 prohibits their landing into this country unless:

- (i) they comply with the conditions imposed by a licence previously granted by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in England and Wales or the Secretary of State in Scotland; or
- (ii) they comply with the terms of European Regulation 998/2003 and the Non Commercial Movement of Pet Animals (England) Regulations 2004; or
- (iii) they comply with the terms of Council Directive 92/65/EEC.

However, there are no requirements in respect of mammals coming from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man providing such animals have not been outside the British Isles within the preceding 6 months.

3. Animals entering under point 2(i) may be licensed to be landed only at prescribed ports (and airports). They must be moved as soon as practicable after landing by authorised quarantine carriers to authorised quarantine premises where they are to be kept for the prescribed period of quarantine.

4. Dogs, cats and ferrets entering under point 2(ii) must meet identification, veterinary and waiting time requirements and have appropriate documentation. They may only arrive in Great Britain with a transport company approved by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in England, or the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department in Scotland, on an authorised route. Other animals entering under point 2(ii) must meet any conditions imposed by the legislation. Merchant and private vessels are not approved for entry under 2(ii).

5. Animals entering under point 2(iii) must meet identification, veterinary and waiting time requirements and have appropriate documentation. Importers must give advance notice in writing of the animal's arrival to the local Divisional Veterinary Manager in whose division the animals are to be held.

6. A person will be liable to prosecution if he or she knowingly and with intent to evade the provisions of the above legislation or of a licence lands, or attempts to land, or causes or permits the landing or attempted landing, of an animal in contravention of the legislation or a licence, or contravenes any provisions relating to quarantine.

7. Rabies is a virus infection to which humans and all other mammals are susceptible. It attacks the central nervous system, causing paralysis and convulsions and in humans is usually fatal once signs have developed. Most people who contract it normally do so from the bite of an animal, usually a dog or cat, which has been infected by an animal in a country where rabies is endemic.

8. The incubation period of rabies in humans is variable and can be many months. A person exposed to rabies should be given a course of preventative injections, which can be very unpleasant and not always successful. The victim has to face a long period of distress before knowing whether the disease will develop.

9. Shipboard mammals, including pets, acquired overseas constitute a possible source of dangerous infection to all on board. Even more seriously, if they are landed other than in accordance with the above regulations, or if they escape, they may be the cause of a rabies outbreak in this country, or possibly the cause of the disease becoming established permanently in British wildlife, with disastrous results.

10. Detailed guidance on the landing in Great Britain of live animals and animal products is provided on the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs website at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/int-trde/default.htm>.

ANIMALS SUBJECT TO QUARANTINE FOR LIFE

Order		Common names of some species
Chiroptera	Desmodontidae only	Vampire bats

ANIMALS SUBJECT TO 6 MONTHS' QUARANTINE

Order		Common names of some species
Carnivora	All families and species	Dogs, cats, jackals, foxes, wolves, bears, raccoons, coatis, pandas, otters, weasels, martens, polecats, badgers, skunks, mink, ratels, genets, civets, linsangs, mongooses, hyaenas, ocelots, pumas, cheetahs, lions, tigers, leopards.
Chiroptera	All families except Desmodontidae	Bats, flying foxes.
Dermoptera		Flying lemurs.
Edentata		Anteaters, sloths, armadillos.
Hyracoidea		Hyraxes.
Insectivora		Solenodons, tenrecs, otter shrews, golden moles, hedgehogs, elephant shrews, shrews, moles, desmans.
Lagomorpha		Pikas, rabbits, hares.
Marsupialia		Opossums, marsupial mice, dasyures, marsupial moles, marsupial anteaters, bandicoots, rat opossums, cuscuses, phalangers, koalas, wombats, wallabies, kangaroos.
Primates	All families except Hominidae (Man)	Tree-shrews, lemurs, indrises, sifakas, aye-ayes, lorises, bushbabies, tarsiers, titis, uakaris, sakis, howlers, capuchins, squirrel monkeys, marmosets, tamarins, macaques, mangabeys, baboons, langurs, gibbons, great apes.
Rodentia		Gophers, squirrels, chipmunks, marmots, scaly-tailed squirrels, pocket mice, kangaroo-rats, beavers, mountain beavers, springhaas, mice, rats, hamsters, lemmings, voles, gerbils, water rats, dormice, jumping mice, jerboas, porcupines, cavies (including guinea-pigs), capybaras, chinchillas, spiny rats, gundis.

More Information

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