

UNCLASSIFIED



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Action: TRIPOLI, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; ALL DIPLOMATIC AND
CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: ATRN, AFIN, APER, AMGT
Reference: 12 STATE 032126
Subject: TRAVELING WITH PETS 2012

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1. Summary: This telegram provides guidance for pet owners who are preparing to transfer this year. This guidance supersedes all earlier guidance relating to traveling with pets. End summary.
2. PCS travel can be stressful for all members of the State Department family, including our pets. This annual cable provides important information enabling pet owners to plan for all aspects of pet travel. While the Department strives to make this process as easy as possible, it is important to remember that shipping a pet is the owner's responsibility. Although the USG may reimburse some costs, and posts may provide pet owners with some level of assistance, the USG does not accept any liability relating to the transportation of pets, including the death of a pet in transit.
3. The Department strongly advises travelers to contact their post of assignment to obtain post-specific information pertaining to pet shipments. Travelers are cautioned that some air carriers may refuse to transport pets during certain times of the year. The FLY America Act applies unless the travel qualifies for an exception under the EU Open Skies agreement or some other qualifying exception to Fly America. Travelers are encouraged to confirm all arrangements for their pets well in advance.
4. An excellent resource on traveling with pets is the Overseas Briefing Center (OBC) located at the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center or online at:
<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/default.asp?Sec=Overseas%20Briefing%20Center&Cat=Traveling%20with%20Pets>

This website contains valuable information and links to resources on pet travel, including current U.S. air carrier pet shipping policies, country specific pet entry requirements, import and quarantine restrictions, as well as a list of commercial pet transporting services located in the

Washington metropolitan area. OBC's DVD "Traveling with Pets" also contains up to date information and can be viewed or borrowed from Room E-2126 at the Shultz Center.

5. The Travel & Transportation section of the General Services Office (GSO) at each post will also have invaluable information that generally includes any restrictions on pet import and export, clearance procedures and fees, and quarantine (if applicable). Please contact the GSO or management officer at post for specific requirements. A current post TMTHREE will also include pet-specific information.

6. Reimbursement for Expenses: The miscellaneous expense portion of the Foreign Transfer Allowance and the Home Service Transfer Allowance (DSSR sections 241, 242, 251, and 252) provides for reimbursement of "certain extraordinary costs" related to moving to and from foreign posts. Such costs may include some expenses for shipping a pet. In keeping with current Department policy, only the transportation portion of any charges for shipping a pet from airport to airport is considered allowable when itemizing miscellaneous expenses. No other expenses related to moving the pet to a new location (e.g. veterinary costs, kennel costs, quarantine costs, transportation to and from the airport) are allowed. A traveler who claims pet transportation (and/or other receipted expenses) as a miscellaneous expense cannot also be paid the lump-sum amount for miscellaneous expenses of transfer. The two claim methods are mutually exclusive. Employees who find that their qualifying miscellaneous expenses, like pet transportation, exceed their miscellaneous lump-sum amount will benefit from itemizing; otherwise the lump sum is preferable.

Please note that only pet shipment costs from foreign post to foreign post, from foreign post to U.S. duty station, or from U.S. duty station to foreign post are allowed. Reimbursement for pet transportation costs is not authorized in connection with travel to and from a home leave address or as part of R&R. Nor is it authorized for training periods. On a post-to-post transfer where the employee takes home leave, training or R&R before proceeding to the new post, expenses related to shipping the pet to a home leave, training, or R&R address may be calculated on a cost construct basis, based on the cost of shipping the pet directly from post to post.

Without receipts, reimbursement for all miscellaneous expenses is paid at a flat rate of the lesser of \$650 or one week's gross base salary for single employees and the lesser of \$1,300 or two weeks' gross base salary for employees with families. Single employees who present itemized receipts for their miscellaneous expenses may be reimbursed for actual allowable expenditures up to the lesser of one week's gross base salary or the one-week gross base salary of a GS 13/10, (\$1,792 in 2012). Employees with families who present itemized receipts for their miscellaneous expenses may be reimbursed for actual allowable expenditures up to the lesser of two-week salary of a GS 13/10, (\$3,584 in 2012). Please visit the Office of Allowances' Intranet site at <http://aoprals.a.state.gov> for additional information.

7. Tax deductions for moving expenses: Costs beyond the limits prescribed in the DSSR are considered personal expenses. In some cases these costs may be claimed as moving expenses for income tax purposes. Check with a tax advisor or with the IRS for more information on the tax treatment of these expenses. Forms, publications, and other information are available from the IRS Internet web site: <http://www.irs.gov>. Of particular interest is IRS Publication 521, "Moving Expenses." In addition, to assist employees living abroad, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has issued a new IRS brochure, IRS Publication 4732, "Federal Tax Information for U.S. Taxpayers Living Abroad." It is available at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4732.pdf> .

8. The three ways to transport a pet via air are listed below (not all airlines provide all three options).

(a) As excess/accompanied baggage:

Depending on the airline, a pet may be able to travel on the same flight(s) as the traveler, either in the cabin or in the cargo hold. Pets transported this way may be considered excess baggage and charged accordingly. Do not assume that the pet will be allowed on the same flight. Seek confirmation in advance. Animals weighing 100 pounds or more will usually travel as cargo, even if on the same flight as the traveler. Check with the airline.

Important changes have been made to the policy on using the City Pair contract fares for PCS travel (please see ALDAC 032126, 03 April 2012, PET TRAVEL: NEW OPTIONS FOR USING NON- CONTRACT CARRIERS for complete details). When pets cannot be checked as accompanied baggage, the traveler may use the government rate of a non-contract airline that will accept the pet as baggage. This exemption to mandatory use of a contract carrier is in addition to exceptions allowing travelers to use excursion or other low advertised fares offered by various carriers. If the contract carrier does allow the pet to be checked as baggage, this exemption does not apply and the traveler must use the contract carrier. The new exemption applies to all airlines participating in the city pair program. THIS IS NOT AN EXCEPTION TO THE FLY AMERICA ACT, WHICH STILL APPLIES. A change to 14 FAM 543 a. (1) was published on April 23, 2012.

(b) As air cargo:

Pets may be transported as an air cargo shipment on a separate flight. In this case the pet does not have to be accompanied, but must be picked-up at the final destination. The cost of this service is considerably higher than shipping a pet as excess/accompanied baggage. An increasing number of airlines or countries require that pets travel as cargo even if the owner is traveling on the same flight. New European Union (EU) Pet Scheme regulations dictate that if a pet is shipped to an EU country as cargo, a professional shipper must be used.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) regulations also require that if a pet is shipped as cargo to the U.S, a professional shipper must be used.

(c) As air cargo via a commercial shipping company:

A licensed commercial shipper can arrange to ship a pet as air cargo. Some airlines require use of this method unless the pet is small enough to fit in the cabin. Charges are likely to include the cargo rate plus the shipper's fee. Arrangements for shipping pets as cargo can be lengthy. It is crucial to plan in advance. Be sure any commercial shipper used is either a "known shipper" or holds an Indirect Air Carrier (IAC) license.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) strictly enforces regulations regarding the shipment of cargo, including pets, on passenger planes. (This does not affect pets traveling in-cabin or pets traveling as excess/accompanied baggage.) Airlines will typically only accept air cargo from a "known shipper," or from a company that holds an IAC license. A "known shipper" is a shipper that does business on a regular basis with an airline. TSA now requires pets traveling as cargo to the U.S. be shipped by a certified pet shipper.

9. Shipment of pets to member countries of the European Union (EU): The EU Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) established requirements for the shipment of pets to member states. Entry requirements can vary depending upon where the pet previously resided. The pet section of each post's welcome cable (TMTHREE) should include specific pet entry requirements. The GSO or Management Officer at post can also provide detailed information. Travelers transiting an EU country for a limited number of hours and not taking possession of their pet may avoid some of the more stringent EU Pet Scheme requirements. Links to the EU and the UK Pet Scheme websites are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/nocomm_third

en.htm.

10. Independent Pet and Animal Transportation Association (IPATA): In addition to the other websites mentioned in this telegram, travelers may wish to visit the IPATA website <http://www.ipata.com/>. IPATA is an international trade association of animal handlers, pet movers, kennel operators, and veterinarians who care for pets locally, nationally, and worldwide.

11. Airline Restrictions and Pets: Some U.S. carriers impose restrictions or embargoes on shipping pets between May and September, the hottest months for pets to travel in the Northern Hemisphere. Some will not ship aggressive breeds of dogs or will not allow snub-nosed animals to be shipped in the summer months unless they are allowed in-cabin. It is important to note that restrictions imposed by U.S. carriers are not uniform from carrier to carrier. Also note that airline partners and code share flights may have different restrictions. Detailed airline-specific information is compiled in the OBC's "Shipping of Pets Checklist," which is available online from the OBC at <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/document.asp?FileID=2035>. This information is constantly updated and should be reviewed on a regular basis.

12. Any questions regarding this ALDAC may be addressed to the Overseas Briefing Center, Maureen Johnston, johnstonm5@state.gov or telephone 703-302-7277, or the Transportation and Travel Management Division at TransportationQuery@state.gov, or the Office of Allowances at AllowancesO@state.gov.

13. Minimize considered.
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Signature:

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