



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, MARKETS & FOOD  
DIVISION OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY  
603-271-2404



**Frequently Asked Questions - RSA 437**  
**1.10.2020**

**1. Who needs to get a health certificate?**

Any person, firm, corporation, or other entity transferring any dog, cat, or ferret to a member of the public, with or without a fee or donation, must obtain an official NH health certificate from an appropriately licensed veterinarian. New Hampshire health certificates can only be written for animals that have passed a physical exam and are free of contagious or infectious diseases and internal and external parasites.

**2. When do I need to get a health certificate?**

An official health certificate is necessary any time that anyone transfers ownership of a dog, cat, or ferret in New Hampshire; RSA 437:8, VI. A dog, cat, or ferret must be accompanied by an official health certificate that was issued within the prior 14 days.

**3. What is the difference between a health certificate and a certificate of veterinary inspection?**

An official health certificate is a document defined in state statute, RSA 437:8. Its use is limited to the transfer of dogs, cats, and ferrets. A certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) is a federally defined document that is required for interstate movement. Additional contents of a CVI can be specified by state import regulation. An official health certificate assures health from a number of infections, while a CVI only assures a general examination and freedom from clinical illness unless state-specific import requirements go farther.

An official health certificate and a CVI are not interchangeable or equivalent.

**4. When do I need a license?**

A license is required in New Hampshire when someone transfers a certain number of animals within the state during one year's time. Specifically, RSA 437:1, IV states that a license to transfer animals is required anytime a "person, firm, corporation, or other entity...transfers 25 or more dogs, 25 or more cats, 30 or more ferrets, or 50 or more birds customarily used as household pets to the public, with or without a fee or donation required, and whether or not a physical facility is owned by the licensee in New Hampshire, when transfer to the final owner occurs in New Hampshire, between July 1 and June 30 of each year." It is important to note that a license is required by anyone who transfers a certain number of amphibians, reptiles, fish, or small mammals customarily used as household pets. The specific numbers for those species are still being determined through rulemaking.

**5. I operate out of my home as a rescue, shelter, breeder, etc. Do I need to be licensed?**

Yes, if you transfer enough animals to require licensing per statute or rule (see #4 above). The requirement for licensure is linked to the number of animals transferred, not the location.

**6. I'm a "foster", do I need to be licensed and if so, what license?**

"Foster" is a protected term under state regulation, Agr 1702.01 (d); "'Foster facilities' means premises which are not in the business of transferring animals because they house animals solely for medical or behavioral rehabilitation when the animals are owned by a license-holder for another premises."

Requirements and limitations for operation of a foster facility are described in Agr 1704.10. A foster can only operate in association with a currently licensed premises – either as a licensed facility itself, or as a foster for an entity that holds a license for a facility in NH. Brokers without a licensed facility in New Hampshire cannot use fosters. Fosters are only for animals requiring medical or behavioral rehabilitation; they are not to be used as an extension of space for housing the general population of a licensee. Animals held in foster are owned by the license holder, not by the foster.

**7. How do I determine when an animal requires medical or behavioral rehabilitation?**

Every license holder must have written health programs "established and maintained under the supervision and assistance of a doctor of veterinary medicine". The supervising veterinarian will determine when an animal is suitable for foster.

**8. What do I need to do to be licensed?**

In order to be licensed with this department a completed application must be submitted. A completed application consists of the application, a "Program of Disease Control and Prevention" document signed by the NH licensed supervising veterinarian that will be working with you, and a signed completed form certifying proof of approval by the local zoning official. The application is accompanied by a non-refundable \$200 fee. Once a completed application has been received, a member of the department will contact you to schedule a pre-license inspection. Upon satisfactory inspection, a license will be issued.

**9. What are the requirements to bring animals in from out of state?**

A certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) issued in the state of origin is required to accompany "dogs, cats, and ferrets brought or shipped into the state of New Hampshire for purposes of transferring ownership". Such animals must have been "inoculated against common canine or feline viral diseases within one year, but not less than 7 days, before entry." No cat or dog less than 8 weeks of age may be imported into New Hampshire. Birds customarily used as household pets must be accompanied by a CVI and a permit issued by the department prior to importation.

All other species regulated pursuant to RSA 437 must be imported with a current CVI per Agr 2101.02.

Details can be found at: [http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rules/state\\_agencies/agr2100.html](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rules/state_agencies/agr2100.html).

**10. Why do animals have to be quarantined?**

Animals are quarantined (i.e. separated from other animals) for a period of time to allow observation for signs of contagious disease, and to reduce the risk of spreading contagious disease. Per RSA 437:8, IV, “Once a dog, cat, or ferret intended for transfer has entered the state, it shall be held at least 48 hours at a facility licensed under RSA 437 or at a facility operated by a licensed veterinarian separated from other animals on the premises before being offered for transfer.”

**11. If a dog tests positive for heartworm, can I bring it into NH?**

Any dog that tests positive for heartworm must undergo an American Heartworm Society (AHS) approved treatment protocol that is expected to effectively treat the heartworm infection before the dog enters New Hampshire. The treatment must be prescribed and documented by a licensed veterinarian, and must be written on the dog’s certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) before importation into New Hampshire. Since most treatment protocols for heartworm can take several months to complete, this means a dog that tests positive for heartworm will likely have to wait for a significant period of time before it can enter New Hampshire.

**12. Can I bring in a litter of puppies less than 8 weeks of age if they are still with their mother?**

No. Per state statute (RSA 437:8, III) and state regulation (Agr 2112.01 (c)), no cat, dog, or ferret less than 8 weeks of age may be imported.