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Bring a Pet Hedgehog or Tenrec into the United States

Last Modified:

This page will guide you through the requirements for bringing pet hedgehogs or tenrecs into the United States from another country.

Carefully read ALL requirements on this page.

- Failure to meet these import requirements will result in problems upon arrival in the United States, and the pet may be refused entry.
- Multiple U.S. agencies regulate pets imported into the United States. It's important that you notify and coordinate with all responsible Government agencies.

Prohibited Hedgehogs and Tenrecs

Hedgehogs that have been in countries affected by foot-and-mouth disease are not allowed entry into the United States. Additionally, hedgehogs and tenrecs from New Zealand are prohibited from entering the United States. View a list of countries free of (not affected with) foot-and-mouth disease.

Some States and municipalities prohibit the import of these animals, including Georgia; California; Hawaii; Pennsylvania; Washington, D.C.; and all five boroughs of New York City. It's the responsibility of the importer or their representative to contact local authorities to ensure all laws are followed.

Pet hedgehogs and tenrecs imported into the United States and not prohibited per the above conditions must meet various requirements, including:

- A Veterinary Services (VS) import permit
- An original health certificate issued or endorsed by a veterinary officer of the government in the foreign country your pet hedgehog or tenrec is traveling from
- An examination at the first U.S. port of entry

There are fees associated with all VS services. In general, you can expect to pay a minimum of $216.00 for these services.

Use the Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant (VSPA) to confirm your pet import permit requirements. Click on the "Live Animals" tab. The VSPA will provide you with a summary of required import documents, including permit applications, certificates, informational letters, and more.

Expand All

Step 1: Make Travel Plans

Suggested timeframe: 30–60 days before scheduled arrival to the United States

Hedgehogs and tenrecs may only enter the United States at certain designated ports and must be inspected at the first port of entry. For additional details, choose the appropriate option below.

If the airport you want to enter through isn't listed below, or if you need contact information for the ports, contact either the VS Port Services office or the VS Live Animal Import and Export staff in Riverdale, MD.

For general questions related to the import of a live animal:

Live Animal Import and Export

Email: laie@usda.gov

Phone: 301-851-3300

Expand All

If your pet will be flying to the United States

Your hedgehog or tenrec must fly into the United States at a designated airport. APHIS veterinarians aren't available at all airport locations. See our list of VS Port Services (by State) for individual airport contact information.

Once you have identified a potential port of entry, contact that port using the contact information above to verify APHIS staff availability before making travel arrangements.

If you have a connecting flight to another city, make sure you'll have a **minimum** of 4 hours between your flights to ensure there's enough time for all activities related to your pet’s arrival in the United States. The time required may vary by port; you can contact APHIS personnel at the port to discuss logistics.

If your pet will enter the United States at a sea port

Contact the VS Port Services office with the details of your proposed travel plans so we can determine whether a veterinarian will be available for inspection.

If your pet will enter the United States at a Canadian border port

Eligible Canada Border Ports:

- Eastport, ID
- Houlton, ME
- Detroit, MI
- Port Huron, MI
- Raymond, MT
- Sweetgrass, MT
- Alexandria Bay, NY
- Niagara Falls, NY
- Dunseith, ND
- Pembina, ND
- Portal, ND
- Highgate Springs, VT
- Sumas, WA

If your pet will be entering the United States at a Mexican border port

Eligible Mexico Border Ports:

- Douglas, AZ
- Naco, AZ
- Nogales, AZ
- Sasabe, AZ
- San Luis, AZ
- Calexico, CA
- San Ysidro, CA
- Antelope Wells, NM
- Columbus, NM
- Brownsville, TX
- Hidalgo, TX
- Laredo, TX
- Eagle Pass, TX

- Del Rio, TX
- Presidio, TX
- El Paso, TX

Step 2: Contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Suggested timeframe: 30–60 days before scheduled departure

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) regulates the entry into the United States of various exotic animals. FWS may require you to declare your pet hedgehog or tenrec to them for entry into the United States. To determine if your specific pet hedgehog or tenrec is regulated by FWS, visit the FWS website or call them directly at 703-358-2104 or 800-358-2104. You may need to provide the scientific name (genus and species) of your hedgehog or tenrec when speaking with FWS.

Step 3: Apply for an import permit

Suggested timeframe: 30 days before scheduled departure

All pet hedgehogs and tenrecs entering the United States must have an APHIS Veterinary Services import permit. To obtain an import permit for hedgehogs you submit a permit application to our Live Animal Import and Export staff in Riverdale, MD.

You'll need to apply for an APHIS Veterinary Services import permit approximately 30 days before departure. You'll need to know your route of travel and specify an arrival date before applying. The import permit is valid for 30 days from your specified arrival date. If your travel plans change and your pet hedgehog or tenrec will be arriving in the United States more than 30 days after the arrival date specified on the import permit, you must apply for an amended permit or a new permit. Permits can only be amended (for an additional fee) before they expire. Once your permit expires, you'll need to submit a new import permit application.

Apply for an import permit by completing and submitting an Application for Import or In Transit Permit, called the APHIS Veterinary Services Form 17-129. You can complete and submit this form entirely online via the eFile system **or** manually via email, standard mail, or fax. Please allow 7–10 business days from the time your import permit application is received for it to be issued.

- For online submission:
  - Visit APHIS eFile.
  - See Guidance for Submitting a VS 17-129 Permit Application (2.72 MB).
- For manual submission:
  - Complete the fillable APHIS Veterinary Services 17-129 (106.94 KB) (General Instructions (266.52 KB))
  - Submit via one of the following methods:
    - Email: laipermits@usda.gov
    - Fax: 301-734-4704
    - Mail:
      Live Animal Import and Export
      APHIS Veterinary Services
      4700 River Rd., Unit 40
      Riverdale, MD 20737

Note: *You can find more information about permit and user fees in 9 CFR 130.4.*

Step 4: Have your pet treated for external parasites

Suggested timeframe: 14 days before travel

All pet hedgehogs and tenrecs entering the United States from any country must be treated for external parasites (ectoparasites) 3–14 days before travel. This treatment must be administered by a veterinarian and documented on the required health certificate from the country of origin (see step 5 below).

Step 5: Obtain health certificate from country of origin

Suggested timeframe: within 72 hours of travel

All pet hedgehogs and tenrecs entering the United States from any country must have a health certificate issued within 72 hours of travel by a veterinarian in the country from which your pet hedgehog is traveling to the United States.

Your pet hedgehog or tenrec will need to be examined by a veterinarian and have a veterinary health certificate issued within 3 days (72 hours) of travel. You should also check with the veterinary authorities of the country you are leaving to make sure they don’t have additional export requirements. Some countries may require testing or treatments for hedgehogs and tenrecs in order to leave the country, even

though the specific testing or treatment isn’t required by the United States when entering.

The United States can accept any health certificate template, as long as it meets the following guidelines:

- The health certificate is issued or endorsed by a full-time salaried veterinarian of the national government within the agency responsible for animal health in the foreign (exporting) country of origin.
- It's dated within 3 days of the date the hedgehog or tenrec leaves the foreign country.
- It's in English or contains a complete written English translation within the document.
- It clearly identifies the hedgehog or tenrec, and the identity matches the import permit.
- The animal is exported per the laws of the exporting country. *Note: Some countries require the APHIS Veterinary Services import permit before they will issue a health certificate.*
- The import health requirements defined by APHIS Veterinary Services are met. The health certificate must specifically contain the following statements:
    - The hedgehog or tenrec originated in a region that has been recognized as free of foot-and-mouth disease by the USDA.
    - The hedgehog or tenrec has never been in a region where foot-and-mouth disease exists.
    - The hedgehog or tenrec has not been commingled with any other hedgehog that originated in or has ever been in a region where foot-and-mouth disease exists.
    - The hedgehog or tenrec was inspected by the individual issuing the health certificate and was found free of any ectoparasites not more than 72 hours before being loaded on the means of conveyance which transported the animal to the United States.
    - All body surfaces of the hedgehog or tenrec were treated for ectoparasites under the supervision of the veterinarian issuing the health certificate at least 3 days but not more than 14 days before being loaded on the means of conveyance that transported the animal to the United States.
    - The pesticide and the concentration used would kill the types of ectoparasites that may infest the animal to be imported.

- The hedgehog or tenrec, after being treated for ectoparasites in accordance with statements (5) and (6) of this section, had physical contact only with, or shared a pen or bedding materials only with, treated hedgehogs or tenrecs in the same shipment to the United States.
- The name and concentration of the pesticide used to treat the hedgehog or tenrec.

Additionally, you should carefully review your APHIS Veterinary Services import permit to make sure there are no other requirements or certification statements listed. If you see requirements on your import permit that are different from what is listed above, please check with the office that issued your permit to be sure you understand all of the requirements.

View APHIS' Protocol for the Importation of Hedgehogs and Tenrecs (496.08 KB) for more information, including a model health certificate.

View the UK health certificate *(to be used for any hedgehog or tenrec imported into the United States from the United Kingdom).*

View the list of countries considered by USDA to be free of foot-and-mouth disease

Step 6: Consult airline carrier (if flying)

Suggested timeframe: when flight is scheduled

You'll need to discuss with your airline carrier any specific requirements they have related to your pet's travel. Airlines may have their own requirements for the travel of pet hedgehogs or tenrecs.

For instance, airlines may require the health certificate be dated sooner than 72 hours, require that the pet hedgehog or tenrec travel as manifested cargo, or have additional health requirements that must be met for the pet to travel on the plane.

The airline can also provide information on the requirements they may have for carriers or cages, food and water, and documentation.

Step 7: Contact port veterinarian to arrange inspection

Suggested timeframe: minimum of 72 hours before arrival, but preferably as soon as flight is scheduled

You must contact the VS Port Services office at least 72 hours before arrival to schedule an inspection on arrival.

Your APHIS Veterinary Services import permit will list contact information for the first port of arrival. You should call or email the port as soon as possible to make arrangements for inspection. The port veterinarian can give you more information about the specific process at that airport and what you should expect on arrival. If you're flying, make sure to tell the veterinarian whether your hedgehog or tenrec is traveling in the cabin with you, as excess baggage, or as unaccompanied cargo, since that will alter where the inspection occurs. The port veterinarian will review your import permit and discuss any additional requirements that might be listed; they can also discuss fees and payment options.

Based on your earlier contact with FWS (see step 3), you should know whether your hedgehog or tenrec is subject to any additional requirements by FWS. You'll need to coordinate with FWS port personnel to arrange for any inspection or document review FWS may need.

You may contact FWS directly at 703-358-2104 or 800-358-2104.

Step 8: Departing for the United States

Suggested timeframe: variable, to be done day of departure

Make sure to send all of the required documents with your pet hedgehog or tenrec.

You'll need to have the following items:

- The original health certificate issued in the country your pet hedgehog or tenrec is leaving
- The original APHIS Veterinary Services import permit
- Any FWS-required documents (if FWS indicated they require additional documentation)

The documents should accompany the pet hedgehog or tenrec during travel.

Step 9: U.S. Arrival, declare hedgehog or tenrec to U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Suggested timeframe: on arrival

You'll need to clear your pet hedgehog or tenrec with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) when you arrive in the United States.

If you're entering at an eligible U.S. land border port from Canada or Mexico

You'll need to declare your hedgehog or tenrec to CBP when you reach the customs checkpoint. Typically, you'll then be directed to a secondary CBP agriculture inspection, which is most likely where the APHIS Veterinary Services port veterinarian (and FWS inspector, if required) will examine your hedgehog or tenrec and all of the paperwork.

If you're flying to the United States

If your hedgehog or tenrec is flying with you and is not manifested as cargo (that is, you do not have an airway bill), you'll need to declare your hedgehog or tenrec to CBP when you pass through customs. Typically, you'll then be directed to a secondary CBP agriculture inspection, which is most likely where the APHIS Veterinary Services port veterinarian (and FWS inspector, if required) will examine your hedgehog or tenrec and all of the paperwork.

If your hedgehog or tenrec is flying as cargo, you'll need to talk to the airline cargo company to find out where your hedgehog or tenrec and its accompanying documentation will be transported to after it is unloaded from the plane. Please be aware that you'll need to clear your hedgehog or tenrec through customs, which may require traveling to and from the warehouse and customs.

You should have discussed specifics with the APHIS Veterinary Services port personnel before your arrival so you know what to expect and where to meet inspection personnel on arrival.

Step 10: Veterinary inspection

Suggested timeframe: on arrival

The APHIS Veterinary Services port veterinarian will examine your hedgehog or tenrec and review your paperwork.

The port veterinarian will examine your hedgehog or tenrec to make sure it appears healthy and is not carrying any parasites. The port veterinarian will also review your paperwork to make sure you have all of the required documents. If there are any discrepancies in the paperwork, or if the hedgehog or tenrec does not appear healthy and free of external parasites, the port veterinarian will discuss options with you at that time.

Once your pet hedgehog or tenrec has been inspected by APHIS Veterinary Services and has cleared customs, you'll be free to continue your travel.

Fees for inspection

There will be standard fees for veterinary import inspection and any associated compliance assistance. APHIS port personnel can provide more information.

Noncompliance charges

- **9 CFR 130.4 “import compliance assistance – simple or complicated”**

This fee may be charged per shipment. You may be required to pay an import compliance assistance fee if there are any discrepancies in your paperwork or if you arrive in the United States without appropriate notification to the port veterinarian.

You'll have to pay for the inspection services and overtime or noncompliance charges (if incurred) at the time of arrival. Make sure you verify with port personnel what type of payment will be accepted.

U.S. State and Territory Requirements

Domestic movement requirements are set by the receiving State or Territory.

Some States and municipalities, including Georgia, California, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and all five boroughs of New York City, prohibit the import of hedgehogs or tenrecs. It's the responsibility of the importer or their representative to contact local authorities and ensure compliance with all relevant laws.

Visit the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture to find your destination's agriculture department and check its website for requirements.

For questions or clarification on any of the requirements, contact the State or Territorial veterinarian's office.

Airline Requirements

Check with your airline to determine whether they have any additional requirements.

Need Help?

For general questions related to the import of a live animal:

Live Animal Import and Export

Email: laie@usda.gov

Phone: 301-851-3300

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