

CT IMPORTATION LAW FACT SHEET

Importer Defined

An "animal importer" is a person who brings a cat or dog into Connecticut from another state or country for the purpose of offering the animal for adoption, sale, or transfer in exchange for some form of consideration (e.g., fee, voluntary contribution, service).

Key elements generally:

- The cat or dog is brought into Connecticut.
- The owner of the cat or dog at the time the animal is brought into Connecticut does not intend to keep the animal as a personal companion but instead intends to offer the animal for adoption, sale, or transfer to a third party.

Neither a source shelter or rescue organization, nor an adopter who intends to keep a cat or dog as a personal companion, is an animal importer if the adopter owns the cat or dog at the time the animal is brought into Connecticut (e.g., the cat or dog is offered on Petfinder and adopted prior to arriving in Connecticut).

A humane relocation or delivery service provider is not an animal importer if the provider is paid by the source shelter or rescue organization, not by the adopter to whom a cat or dog is being delivered.

The law's drafters intended that pet shops be exempt from this law as they are subject to other, more stringent regulation by the Department of Agriculture. Also, a person is not an animal importer if he/she brings a cat or dog into Connecticut for the purpose of offering to sell the animal to a pet shop if the animal is delivered directly to the pet shop. The person will not be exempt and will be considered an animal importer if he/she shops the animals around at multiple pet stores.

Annual Registration Required

Animal importers must register annually with the state Department of Agriculture. A registration is valid only until the following December 31st.

In order to register with the Department of Agriculture, the registrant must pay a \$100 registration fee and submit the following information on a form provided by the department: (1) name, mailing address, business address, telephone number, and internet address; (2) if the registrant is domiciled out-of-state, the name, Connecticut address, and phone number of a Connecticut-based agent for service of process (i.e., notification of legal action), and (3) the number of animals brought into Connecticut during the prior year by the registrant and the state or country of origin for each animal.

Registration is contingent on compliance with any departmental requirements intended to ensure the health, safety, and humane treatment of animals.

Failure to register shall result in a fine of not more than \$500.

An employee of or volunteer with a registered animal importer need not register provided the employee or volunteer is not acting on his/her own as an animal importer.

In addition, to ensure one's regulation under the new importation law, and not under more stringent, pet

shop regulations, rescuers should register as a charitable organization with the Public Charities Unit of the state Department of Consumer Protection.

Notice of Public Adoption Events

Registered animal importers must provide no less than ten days notice of any dog or cat adoption event held in an area that is open to the public and/or in an outdoor location (e.g., parking lot, shopping center) to both the Department of Agriculture and also the municipal zoning enforcement officer of the town where the adoption event will occur.

Failure to provide the required notice shall result in a fine of not more than \$100 per animal offered for adoption at the event

No notice is required prior to the transfer of a cat or dog to a foster home even if transfer occurs in an area open to the public and/or an outdoor location.

In addition, no notice is required prior to transfer of a cat or dog to an adopter who already owns the animal at the time the animal is brought into Connecticut.

Inspections

The Department of Agriculture may inspect, without a warrant, any animal imported by an animal importer or any record required to be kept by an animal importer.

The Department of Agriculture may not inspect, without a warrant, an animal importer's private residence.

Veterinary Examinations

[Prior law: An imported cat or dog must be accompanied by a certificate of health issued within 30 days of importation into Connecticut by a licensed veterinarian. The certificate must state that the cat or dog is free from symptoms of any infectious, contagious, or communicable disease, and that the cat or dog, if 3 months of age or older, is currently vaccinated for rabies by a licensed veterinarian. The "livestock sanitary official" in the cat or dog's state of origin must forward the health certificate to the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. A cat or dog originating from a rabies quarantine area must have the permission of the Connecticut State Veterinarian to enter Connecticut. Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements shall result in a fine of not more than \$500 and/or a term of imprisonment of not more than 30 days.]

Within 48 hours of a cat or dog's arrival in Connecticut, and prior to the animal's adoption, sale, or transfer, an animal importer must arrange for the examination of the animal by a veterinarian licensed in Connecticut. That is, the examination itself may occur after the 48 hour period.

Also, within 90 days of the initial in-state veterinary examination – and every 90 days thereafter until adoption, sale, or transfer – an animal importer must arrange for the examination of the animal by a veterinarian licensed in Connecticut. Again, the examination itself may occur after the 90 day period.

An examination by a Connecticut-licensed veterinarian must occur no more than 15 days prior to the adoption, sale, or transfer of an imported cat or dog. In addition, an adoption, sale, or transfer may not proceed unless the examining veterinarian provides the animal importer with a written certificate stating that the cat or dog is

free of any symptoms of any illness, infectious, contagious, or communicable disease. The certificate must list the animal importer's name, address, and contact information.

Failure to comply with the foregoing veterinary examination requirements shall result in a fine of not more than \$500 for each animal who is the subject of the violation.

Recordkeeping

Animal importers must retain for 3 years a record of veterinary services provided to each imported cat and dog.

Failure to maintain these required records shall result in a fine of not more than \$500.

Prohibited Acts

No person, firm, or corporation may import or export a cat or dog under the age of 8 weeks for the purpose of adoption, sale, or transfer unless the animal is transported with his/her dam.

No person, firm, or corporation may sell or offer for adoption or transfer within Connecticut any cat or dog under the age of 8 weeks.

Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements shall result in a fine of not more than \$500 and/or a term of imprisonment of not more than 30 days.