Siam Legal International Issues 2026 Guide on Bringing Pets to Thailand

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Siam Legal International, a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience assisting foreign nationals in Thailand, is advising expatriates and families relocating to Thailand to begin pet import preparations well in advance, following the introduction of Bangkok's new pet ownership ordinance in January 2026 and ongoing strict enforcement of the Department of Livestock Development's veterinary import requirements.

Thailand permits the import of domestic dogs and cats through the Department of Livestock Development, provided owners complete a specific sequence of veterinary and administrative steps before departure. The microchip must be implanted before the rabies vaccination is administered. If the vaccination is given before microchipping, it will not be accepted for import purposes and the animal will need to be revaccinated after the chip is in place, potentially adding weeks to the preparation timeline. The rabies primary vaccination must be administered when the animal is at least 12 weeks old and at least 21 days before departure. Dogs additionally require vaccinations against leptospirosis, canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, and canine parvovirus. Cats require rabies and feline panleukopenia, typically given as part of the combined FVRCP vaccine. Within seven days of travel, a licensed veterinarian must treat the animal for internal and

external parasites, with the product name, batch details, and treatment date recorded clearly in the pet's health documentation.

An import permit from the Animal Quarantine Station at the port of entry must be obtained before travel by applying to the Department of Livestock Development between seven and sixty days in advance, with thirty days recommended. The final pre-departure step is an International Health Certificate completed by a licensed veterinarian and endorsed by the relevant government authority in the owner's home country, generally within ten days of travel. On arrival at Suvarnabhumi Airport, owners present the animal at the Animal Quarantine Station with all original documents and pay an entry fee of 500 baht per animal in cash. If documentation is complete and consistent, the animal is typically cleared on arrival. The quarantine officer does retain discretionary authority to impose a thirty-day quarantine where documentation is incomplete or health concerns are identified.

"The most common reason pets are detained on arrival in Thailand is documentation inconsistency, not a health problem with the animal itself," said Rex Baay, Operations Manager at Siam Legal International. "A microchip number that does not match the health certificate, or a vaccination given before the chip was implanted, can stop an otherwise healthy pet from entering the country. Families planning a relocation with pets need to start this process at least two to three months before their intended travel date to allow enough time to correct any issues before departure." A full step-by-step guide to the 2026 import requirements, breed restrictions, and Bangkok pet ownership rules is available in Siam Legal's How to Bring Your Pet to Thailand guide.

Several animal categories are prohibited or restricted from entry. Wolf hybrids are not permitted. First-generation exotic cats including Savannah and Bengal cats are not accepted unless at least five generations removed from their wild ancestors, supported by certified lineage documentation. Animals protected under CITES require specialized permits. Most airlines also restrict or refuse brachycephalic breeds due to in-flight respiratory risks, so owners of flat-faced breeds should confirm carrier policy before making travel arrangements.

Families settling in Bangkok also need to be aware of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's Ordinance on Animal Keeping and Release Control, which took effect on January 10, 2026. Under the ordinance, all dogs and cats must be microchipped and registered with the local district office within thirty days of arriving in Bangkok. Condominium units of twenty to eighty square metres are permitted a maximum of one dog or cat, while units larger than eighty square metres may keep two. Designated breeds including Pit Bull Terriers, Bull Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Rottweilers, and Fila Brasileiros are subject to additional handling rules in public areas, including mandatory muzzling and a lead no longer than fifty centimetres. Failure to register or breaches of the handling rules can result in fines of up to 25,000 baht under the Public Health Act.

Siam Legal International is a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience assisting foreign nationals in Thailand, with offices in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm provides comprehensive legal and immigration support across visa planning, relocation assistance, property transactions, business law, and litigation.

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Siam Legal International

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