

VEHCS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Helpful information for USDA Accredited Veterinarians and their support staff

Q. How do I get started with VEHCS?

A. New users must create an eAuthentication account at: <https://pcit.aphis.usda.gov/pcit>. Step by step instructions for the process are available here: https://pcit-training.aphis.usda.gov/VEHCSHelp/PCIT_Initial_Access_Guide.pdf

When you then log into VEHCS, click “Continue to VEHCS.” You want to export live animals, not plants.

If you need additional help, contact the APHIS eAuthentication Helpdesk at: 1-866-794-2827 or aeht@usda.gov

Q. What do I need to do first in VEHCS after completing my registration?

A. Before you can create health certificates in VEHCS, you first need to set-up your profile and enter your account information. After logging into VEHCS, click “Manage Account” in the upper right hand corner. You will then arrive at a screen to enter information for your organization/clinic profile or manage your own individual profile.

Don’t forget, USDA Accredited Veterinarian's are responsible for maintaining current License and Accreditation information in VEHCS. VEHCS will not permit Accredited Veterinarians to issue a health certificate if License and Accreditation information entered in VEHCS expires.

Additional information is available in the following documents:

https://pcit-training.aphis.usda.gov/VEHCSHelp/PCIT_Initial_Access_Guide.pdf

https://pcit-training.aphis.usda.gov/VEHCSHelp/VEHCS_Manage_Account_AV_Organization.pdf

Q. Do I have to use VEHCS?

A. With a few exceptions, it is not mandatory to use VEHCS. Those exceptions will be noted in the [USDA APHIS Pet Travel Website \(PTW\)](#) and [USDA APHIS International Regulations \(IRegs\) web page](#).

While in most situations you may still issue a traditional paper health certificate, the advantage to using VEHCS is it eliminates the time and expense of mailing the health certificate to and from, or traveling to, your USDA Endorsement Office. It also allows for a fast method to correct mistakes made in the health certificate, thereby avoiding the need for you to overnight a new health certificate, or your client to travel to your USDA Endorsement Office.

Regardless of how you issue the health certificate, **never issue both a VEHCS and paper health certificate!**

Q. How will I know when I can use VEHCS?

A. All export health certificates for live animals eligible to enter their destination country can be issued by the Accredited Veterinarian in VEHCS and submitted to the USDA Endorsement Office.

Not every destination country accepts your USDA Endorsement Office's digital endorsement in VEHCS. To determine if the destination country accepts USDA's digital endorsement in VEHCS, refer to the colored banner system in place on the [USDA APHIS Pet Travel Website \(PTW\)](#) and [USDA APHIS International Regulations \(IRegs\) web page](#).

Q. What is the colored banner system all about?

A. Each country listed in the PTW and IRegs has a color coded banner to indicate the destination country's level of acceptance of VEHCS. The various colors indicate which countries accept digital endorsement, and which do not. Additionally, it will indicate if digital endorsement is acceptable for all animals to that country or just certain commodities of animals.

RED: VEHCS use not allowed. The Accredited Veterinarian must issue a hardcopy health certificate (wet ink signature) and overnight ship or hand deliver to the USDA Endorsement Office for review and endorsement.

ORANGE: The Accredited Veterinarian may issue the health certificate in VEHCS, but USDA endorsement requires an original ink signature and application of physically embossed raised seal.

GREEN: VEHCS may be used to electronically issue and digitally endorse the health certificate for all commodities. USDA's digital seal will be applied (no embossed seal).

YELLOW: Both the Accredited Veterinarian's ability to issue the certificate through VEHCS and USDA's ability to endorse digitally is commodity-specific (i.e., allowed for some commodities but not all; applicable commodities will be identified in the PTW and IRegs).

PURPLE: The Accredited Veterinarian may issue the health certificate in VEHCS, but USDA's digital endorsement is commodity-specific (applicable commodities will be identified in the PTW and IRegs).

Q. How do I begin creating a certificate?

A. From the VEHCS Welcome page, select either "New Certificate" or "From Saved Template" (see the next question for more information) under the "Create Certificate" tab. Follow the prompts to enter the destination country, commodity type, and type of admission. Based on the information you provided, VEHCS determines if you will create the health certificate in the VEHCS Defined or AV PDF Health Certificate Upload format, based on the available certificate option in VEHCS. The VEHCS Defined certificate walks you through entering information into all required fields of the health certificate. The AV PDF Health Certificate Upload is similar to hardcopy health certificate issuance, except instead of signing and submitting a paper hardcopy of the health certificate, these steps are completed electronically, using Adobe and VEHCS, respectively.

VEHCS defaults to the Defined certificate when it is available. If it is not available, you will need to upload a PDF health certificate into VEHCS.

For more information, see:

https://pcit-training.aphis.usda.gov/VEHCSHelp/VEHCS_Create_Certificate.pdf

https://pcit-training.aphis.usda.gov/VEHCSHelp/AV_Health_Certificate_Upload.pdf

Q. What is the difference between creating a certificate as a “New Certificate” versus “From Saved Template”?

A. In most situations, you will create a certificate as a “New Certificate.” For this type of certificate, you will input all of the required information into the document (nothing is auto-populated). When the Accredited Veterinarian submits the health certificate for endorsement, the system gives the option to save the document as a template. If you elect to do this, the information recorded within the certificate is saved for future use. This can be helpful if you have an exporter/owner with recurrent exports; it saves you from having to enter Consignor, Consignee, and Commodity Table information in again with each subsequent certificate you issue in VEHCS. To utilize a certificate you have saved previously as a template, you would choose to create a certificate “From Saved Template,” and choose the applicable information.

Q. The commodity type I need to select is not listed. What does that mean?

A. If, after selecting the country of destination in VEHCS, the commodity for export is not listed, this means a VEHCS Defined certificate is not available. You will need to submit a PDF uploaded certificate.

Q. How do I upload a PDF health certificate into VEHCS? How do I sign the uploaded health certificate?

A. Start by visiting the USDA APHIS [PTW](#) or [IRegs](#) and complete the certificate as you normally would (N.B., it is most preferable for the certificate to be completed within Adobe, not handwritten). The Accredited Veterinarian will need to sign and date this certificate. Acceptable methods of signature include a digital signature (Adobe), or typing “Electronically signed” in the signature box. *A handwritten signature (print hardcopy, sign/date and then scan it to your computer) is also acceptable. However, this is not a preferred method of signing, as the quality of the scan may be too low for use, or USDA may encounter significant formatting errors during the endorsement process that will result in the need for resubmission by the issuing Accredited Veterinarian.*

Please refer to the following document for additional guidance on completing your submission: https://pcit-training.aphis.usda.gov/VEHCSHelp/AV_Health_Certificate_Upload.pdf

Q. Besides the health certificate, what additional information do I provide in the VEHCS submission?

A. Prior to submitting the health certificate for endorsement in VEHCS, you will need to ensure that you have attached all pertinent supporting documentation, and that **payment is provided**. Any necessary supporting documentation will vary based on the requirements of the destination country, but may include some or all of the following:

- Rabies vaccination certificate(s)

- Laboratory report(s)
- Import permit
- Addendum page(s)
- Pre-paid return shipping label (for orange banner countries and some commodities for yellow and purple banner countries)

The endorsement fee will vary depending on how many (if any) tests are required by the destination country. The fee for endorsement of pet health certificates is available on the USDA APHIS PTW: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/pet-travel-info-and-guidance-document/pet-travel-endorsement>. For non-pet exports, please contact your local USDA Endorsement Office: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/service-centers-endorsement-offices>.

Q. How do I provide payment?

A. Payment may be provided by depositing money into your VEHCS account under the "Financial Management" tab, or by entering your USDA APHIS User Fee Credit Account number into the "Payment Method" step of the VEHCS submission. For additional information on Credit Accounts, please contact your USDA Endorsement Office:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/service-centers-endorsement-offices>

Payment must be provided before USDA can endorse the VEHCS health certificate.

Q. How do I provide a pre-paid return shipping label?

A. For destination countries that do **not** accept USDA's digital endorsement, your USDA Endorsement Office will print the certificate from VEHCS for physical endorsement. That printed, paper hardcopy of the endorsed health certificate must then accompany the animal(s) when traveling to the destination country. To receive the hardcopy endorsed health certificate from USDA, you must provide a pre-paid return shipping label to send the endorsed health certificate from your USDA Endorsement Office to you or your client.

When you create the health certificate in VEHCS, you will upload the pre-paid return shipping label in the certificate's "Shipping Label" step.

The shipping label must be pre-paid. The USDA Endorsement Office's address cannot appear in the "Sent From" address; the "To" and "From" name and address should be your own. Return shipping labels that contain a USDA Endorsement Office's address may be rejected.

Q. How do I print the health certificate?

A. For destination countries that accept USDA's digital endorsement, you must print the certificate from VEHCS once it is endorsed by USDA APHIS. **A printed, paper hardcopy of the endorsed health certificate must accompany the animal(s) when traveling to the destination country.**

For VEHCS Defined certificates, from the VEHCS Welcome page, click the "View Certificates" tab. Once you've searched for and located the certificate, click "Manage." In the Process dropdown menu, select "View Certificate," then click "Generate Certificate." The certificate will open in a new tab for printing.

For VEHCS AV PDF Upload Health Certificates, the steps are the same as above, except after selecting "View Certificate" from the Process dropdown menu, you will click "View Certificate."

Step by step instructions are available here:

https://pcit-training.aphis.usda.gov/VEHCSHelp/Printing_a_Completed_Health_Certificate.pdf

Q. Where can I find help if I run into issues?

A. If you run into technical issues along the way, contact the PCIT Help Desk at pcithelpdesk@usda.gov or 1-866-HLP-PCIT (1-866-457-7248).

There are also numerous step by step and numbered instructional guides on the use of VEHCS available at the VEHCS Help Page: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/vehcs-info>.

When you are logged into VEHCS, an Online Help manual is available by clicking on the "Need Help" link in the upper right hand corner of the home screen.

For all other questions, please contact your USDA Endorsement Office:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/service-centers-endorsement-offices>