



September 27, 2023

**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

Veterinary Services

Veterinary Export Trade  
Services (VETS), Service  
Center, Tumwater

1550 Irving St SW,  
Suite 100,  
Tumwater, WA 98512  
P: 360-753-9430, Opt 1  
[wa.export.animals@usda.gov](mailto:wa.export.animals@usda.gov)

Subject: Endorsement of Paper Live Animal Export Health Certificates Originating from Alaska

Dear Alaska Accredited Veterinarians and Animal Exporters,

Physical endorsement of paper international health certificates for the export of live animals from Alaska has been transitioned to the USDA Service Center in Tumwater, WA. This change does not affect electronic submission of health certificates for endorsement through [Veterinary Export Health Certification System \(VEHCS\)](#). Veterinarians submitting paper certificates for endorsement will need to submit paper certificates to the Tumwater Service Center at the below address. It is recommended that certificates are sent using UPS or Fedex to allow shipment tracking. It is also recommended that return labels included with the submission be created using Fedex or UPS. Note: please do not include the USDA address anywhere on the RETURN shipping label, and we recommend utilizing a shipping label that is deliverable on Saturday.

Currently, most animal export certificates originating from Alaska are submitted electronically using [Veterinary Export Health Certification System \(VEHCS\)](#). [VEHCS](#) allows for faster correction of errors and certificate issuance, and lower shipping costs. Local USDA personnel are available to assist veterinarians who would like to learn more about [VEHCS](#) or get assistance in learning to use VEHCS.

Questions regarding live animal export certificate endorsement and [VEHCS](#) can be directed to the Tumwater Office by email at [wa.export.animals@usda.gov](mailto:wa.export.animals@usda.gov) (preferred) or alternatively by phone at 360-753-9430, Option 1. Unusual, emergency, or extremely time-sensitive endorsements can also be coordinated by contacting the Tumwater Service Center prior to certificate submission.

Paper Health certificates and supporting documents should be submitted for processing by express mail (FedEx or UPS) at:

**USDA, APHIS, VS, Veterinary Export Trade Services  
1550 Irving Street, SW, Suite 100  
Tumwater, WA 98512**

**Processing times can take upwards of 3 business days not including shipping time**, so please plan accordingly. Certificates received by the Tumwater Service Center after 11 AM Pacific Time will likely be processed the following business day.

Respectfully,

Stephanie M. Burch, BVMS MSc  
Acting Assistant Veterinarian-in-Charge, Tumwater Office