



Animal welfare information

Questions and answers on cropped and docked dogs

Cropping of the ears means clipping the ear to a given shape. It has been banned since 1 July 1981. Docking of the tail means shortening the tail by removing caudal vertebrae together with surrounding soft tissue. It has been banned since 1 July 1997. The importing of cropped or docked dogs is also prohibited.

1. Is it actually still possible to bring cropped or docked dogs into Switzerland?

Cropped or docked dogs may not be imported into Switzerland. However, owners resident abroad may bring their cropped or docked dogs into Switzerland for holidays or other short stays, and anyone moving to Switzerland from abroad may bring such dogs with them. Ask the customs office whether your case meets the criteria in good time before moving, to ensure that your dog is considered part of your “household effects” (www.bazg.admin.ch). The dog must not be advertised, sold or given away, or exhibited at a show in Switzerland.

2. Can I travel abroad with a cropped or docked dog?

If you want to travel with your cropped or docked dog, you must get the veterinary office in the canton where you live (www.blv.admin.ch) to confirm in the pet passport and in the AMICUS dog database that the animal meets the animal welfare requirements for a return to Switzerland. Otherwise, travel abroad is not possible. However, such confirmation in the pet passport is only granted if evidence can be provided that the dog was imported as part of your household effects or that the cropping or docking procedure was carried out for medical reasons (see n° 5).

3. Can I travel abroad with a cropped or docked dog for which a penalty has already been paid because it was illegally imported?

No. You paid a fine for breaking a law. The fine is the penalty for importing a cropped or docked dog on a particular day. The dog is always only “tolerated” in Switzerland – even after legal proceedings have been settled – and it retains its status as an “illegally imported dog”. Legalisation is thus not possible, despite the fine paid. If you travel abroad with such a dog, then on your return to Switzerland the animal will either be refused entry at the border or, if you smuggle the animal through customs, new legal proceedings will be brought against you.

4. What if I want to travel with a cropped or docked dog to a country where urban rabies exists and for this reason I need a re-import permit from the FSVO?

The Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office can only issue a re-import permit for cropped or docked dogs if the cantonal veterinary office has confirmed in the pet passport that the animal meets the animal welfare requirements for a return to Switzerland. So please first contact the veterinary office of the canton where you live (www.blv.admin.ch). If this office refuses to include the relevant entry in the pet passport, a re-import permit cannot be issued.

5. Do the same bans that apply to cropped or docked dogs also apply to dogs with congenital short tails or with amputated tails or ears?

If you want to import a dog with a congenital short tail or an amputated tail or ear, first contact the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO (info@blv.admin.ch or BLV, Postfach, 3003 Bern), which will assess whether the animal concerned may enter the country.

You must be able to present plausible documentation to show that the dog has not been cropped or docked. The following documentation must be submitted to the FSVO for assessment at least three weeks before the planned arrival of the dog (please do not submit any videos or information that are not required for the assessment):

- A picture of the dog in which the dog is visible from head to tail or, in the absence of the tail, to the base of the tail;
- A copy of the dog's EU pet passport (or a comparable ID for an animal of non-European origin) (at least the pages bearing the description, microchip number and rabies vaccinations);
- Confirmation from the competent veterinary authority that the veterinary certificate (see below) has been issued by a veterinarian with a licence to practise. Certificates that have not been issued in one of the national languages of Switzerland or in English must be submitted with a certified translation;
- X-rays or the result of a genetic test for congenital stumpy tail, as follows:
 - for dogs of unknown pedigree and for dogs of the breeds Boston Terrier, English Bulldog, King Charles Spaniel, Miniature Schnauzer, Parson Russell Terrier and Rottweiler, and for any other breeds for which genetic testing is not offered, the following X-rays of assessable quality must be submitted: a lateral and a dorsoventral x-ray of the animal, each bearing the microchip number, in which the caudal vertebrae or terminal vertebrae are clearly visible (lateral = from the side, dorsoventral = from the back to the abdomen);
 - for all breeds of dog known to carry the testable genetic mutation for congenital stumpy tail (brachyury) or taillessness (anury), the congenital short tail must be demonstrated by genetic testing. The sample material must be taken by a veterinarian with a licence to practise. A copy of the licence must be submitted together with the copies of the laboratory order and the result of the genetic test. It must be possible to assign this to the dog via the microchip number. Documents not in one of the national languages of Switzerland or in English must be accompanied by a certified translation.
 - The genetic test also works for crossbreeds that carry the responsible genetic mutation. For these dogs, therefore, instead of or in addition to X-rays (e.g. if the findings were inconclusive), the documents required to demonstrate congenital stumpy tail by means of genetic testing may be submitted.
 - for French Bulldogs, no documents need to be submitted because all dogs of this breed have congenitally short tails.
- In the case of a medically indicated amputation, we require the clinical history with a photo in which the injury or disease before amputation is visible;
- A veterinary certificate stating that the dog has a congenital defect or has undergone a medically indicated amputation;
- If the application to import the dog is submitted not by the future keeper but, for example, by an animal welfare organisation, then the name and address of the person who will keep the dog after it enters the country must be given.
- Animal welfare organisations must have a cantonal commercial licence for the import, which must be submitted with the application.
- Dogs that are not imported by their future owners must be imported commercially using a TRACES/health certificate from the country of origin.

6. How do you know that a cropped, docked or short-tailed dog is in Switzerland legally?

In the case of dogs imported as household effects or with an FSVO import recommendation (see point 5) and properly cleared by customs, the cantonal animal welfare office makes an entry in the Swiss pet passport and in the AMICUS dog database. This entry in the pet passport confirms for future border crossings that the dog was not imported in violation of Swiss animal welfare legislation.

Only after such an entry has been made in the pet passport by the veterinary office of the canton where you live are such animals regarded as legal (www.blv.admin.ch).

7. Can I take part in shows in Switzerland with dogs that have been cropped or docked?

Cropped or docked dogs are not permitted to take part in shows. This applies regardless of whether the dogs were illegally cropped/docked and imported, or legally imported as household effects. The ban on shows also applies to foreign owners who want to exhibit their cropped or docked dogs in Switzerland.

Legislation: Animal Protection Ordinance (AniPO)

Art. 22 Prohibited actions in dogs

¹ In dogs, the following are also prohibited:

- a. cropping or docking of the tail and ears, as well as surgical procedures to create drop ears;
- b. the importing of dogs with cropped ears or docked tails;
- e. the promotion, sale, gifting or exhibition of dogs with cropped ears or docked tails if they suffered the cropping/docking procedure in violation of Swiss animal welfare legislation.

² Dogs with cropped ears or docked tails may be brought into Switzerland by their foreign keepers on a temporary basis for holidays or other short stays and also imported as part of the household effects. Such dogs shall not be promoted, sold, given away or shown at exhibitions in Switzerland.

³ Keepers must inform the cantonal authority if their dogs have the following characteristics:

- a. cropped ears or docked tails, in dogs imported as household effects;
- b. ears or tails cropped or docked on medical grounds;
- c. congenital short tails.

⁴ The cantonal authority records these characteristics in the database in accordance with Article 30 para. 2 of the Epizootic Diseases Act of 1 July 1966 (EzDA).