

United States → Switzerland

Dog Import Checklist & Quick Guide | TailHarbor | Updated April 2026

KEY INFORMATION

EFTA ROUTE: Veterinary certificate + ownership declaration required (not AHC)

Preparation Time:	4-6 weeks
Microchip:	ISO 11784/11785 (must be implanted BEFORE rabies vaccination)
Rabies Vaccination:	Required. Minimum 21 days before travel (primary). Keep boosters current.
Titer Test:	Not required (EU-listed/equivalent origin)
Documentation:	Veterinary certificate + ownership declaration (not AHC). Issued by Official Veterinarian.
USDA Endorsement:	USDA APHIS endorsement required on health certificate before departure
PROHIBITED:	Dogs with cropped ears or docked tails cannot be imported
Entry:	Basel, Geneva, or Zurich airports only (for third-country arrivals)
Registration:	AMICUS database within 10 days of arrival
Breed Restrictions:	Varies by canton; some cantons ban Pit Bulls and similar breeds (e.g., Zurich, Valais)
Registration:	AMICUS registration within 2 weeks of arrival
Local Currency:	CHF
Dog Tax:	CHF 100-200/year typical

USEFUL TIPS

- Start the process as early as possible. Delays with lab results or vet appointments can push back your timeline significantly.
- You need a veterinary certificate AND ownership declaration -- NOT an Animal Health Certificate (AHC). This is different from standard EU documentation.
- Dogs with cropped ears or docked tails CANNOT be imported. This is an absolute prohibition with no exceptions (medical exemption requires 3-week advance FSVO notification for Switzerland).
- USDA APHIS endorsement is required on your health certificate before departure from the US. Allow extra time for this step.
- If your dog is a restricted or mixed breed, get a breed DNA test and official documentation before traveling. Border officials in Switzerland can refuse entry for banned breeds.

PRE-TRAVEL CHECKLIST

EARLY PREPARATION

- Confirm your dog's breed is permitted in Switzerland
- Book airline to Basel, Geneva, or Zurich (third-country entry points only)
- Purchase IATA-approved travel crate (correct size for your dog)
- Begin crate training

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Microchip implanted (ISO 11784/11785) -- BEFORE vaccination
- Rabies vaccination administered (min. 21 days before travel)

DOCUMENTATION

- Veterinary certificate obtained from Official Veterinarian
- Ownership declaration completed and signed
- USDA APHIS endorsement obtained on health certificate
- All vaccination records compiled
- Copies of all documents made (2 sets)
- Airline booking confirmation printed

TRAVEL DAY

- All original documents in carry-on bag
- Crate labeled with your name, phone, destination, and 'Live Animal'
- Water dish filled and attached inside crate
- Arrive at airport early (3+ hours for international with pet)

AFTER ARRIVAL IN SWITZERLAND

- Declare pet at red customs exit
- Register in AMICUS database within 10 days
- Register with local veterinarian
- Check canton-level breed restrictions and insurance requirements