

For Immediate Release

27 November 2019, BAF Headquarters, Suva

## BRINGING CATS AND DOGS INTO FIJI ON VESSELS

*“Vessels”, as per the BAF Act 2008, includes a ship, hovercraft, boat, ferry, raft, yacht, canoe or pontoon that is used as a conveyance in or on water, whether or not it is self-propelled.*

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (“BAF”) allows cats and dogs into Fiji via vessels, which is subject to certain terms and conditions. The reason for this, in particular cats and dogs onboard vessels, is that they may have come into contact with other animals carrying exotic animal pests and diseases, whilst in those countries, including zoonotic diseases such as rabies which may pose a biosecurity threat as well as compromise human health risks.

Fiji is recognized as a rabies-free country and BAF endeavors to maintain the country’s status of freedom from this fatal zoonotic disease. Cats and dogs are easily susceptible to the rabies disease.

Before cats and dogs are allowed into Fiji, they need to meet BAF’s import requirements which may vary depending on the country of origin and species of the animal. BAF has set import requirements for cats and dogs to prevent exotic pests and diseases from entering Fiji.

## PLANNING TO BRING CATS AND DOGS INTO FIJI VIA VESSELS

### A. IMPORTING CATS AND DOGS INTO FIJI

1. Ensure all import permit requirements are fulfilled prior to the cat(s) and/or dog(s) leaving the exporting country.
2. Obtain an export health certificate with a valid import permit and relevant documents to accompany the cat(s) and/or dog(s), as per BAF’s import permit requirement.
3. If you are importing from a Rabies country, please contact BAF officials for information and requirements which may include the following:
  - a) All cat(s) and/or dog(s) from rabies countries must be tested with Rabies Neutralizing Antibody Titer Test (“RNATT”) between 60 days and 360 days prior to export. The minimum antibody titer should be 0.5 IU/ml.
  - b) All cat(s) and/or dog(s) from rabies countries must be vaccinated against rabies between 30 days and 360 days prior to export.
4. Owner / importer / authorized agent of the cat(s) and/or dog(s) must apply for an import permit at least 28 working days in advance of the date that your cat and/or dog is scheduled to arrive into Fiji.
5. Notify a Biosecurity Officer (“BSO”) at the relevant wharf or Station Officer at Post Entry Quarantine (PEQ), at least 10 working days before the arrival of the cat and/or dog and arrange / confirm the kennel reservation /space at PEQ for your pet. NB: Booking confirmation will be subject to the availability of the kennel space.

6. The cat and/or dog, upon arrival into Fiji, will be subjected to mandatory veterinary inspections onboard the vessel(s) upon arrival at the first port of entry into Fiji and medications taken by your cat and/or dog must be declared.

7. Original documentation pertaining to the cat and/or dog will be verified by a BAF veterinarian and a BSO at the first port of entry. These documents include, but may not be limited to, the updated vaccination record, laboratory test results, other treatment records as per the import permit requirement(s) and health certificate from the competent authority of exporting country.

8. All of the cat(s) and/or dog(s) waste must be disposed in a manner approved by BAF or otherwise advised. These arrangements may change on a port-by-port basis; therefore, you are advised to contact BAF and make the necessary arrangements.

9. If you require your animal to come ashore then it is mandatory for verification of documents and inspection onboard the vessel upon its arrival at the first port of entry and then to be quarantined

- a) At the **PEQ** Facility at Koronivia, Nausori: A BSO will escort the cat(s) and/or dog(s) from the first port of entry to PEQ with the applicable BAF fees and charges: OR
- b) Animal can be quarantined on the vessel and **MUST** strictly remain on the vessel throughout the quarantine period with the applicable BAF fees and charges.

10. Routine inspection and monitoring of the cat(s) and/or dog(s) will be carried out by BAF Veterinarians and BSOs and the animals will be released to the importer/owner once the quarantine period is over.

11. Duration of quarantine will vary based on the animal's country of origin.

***Note:** The ports of entry are Suva (Kings) Wharf, Lautoka (Queens) Wharf, Vuda Marina, Denarau Marina and Savusavu Port. Upon arrival of the animals at the above mentioned ports, the cat and/or dog can be quarantined on vessel OR conveyed to the PEQ Facility in Koronivia, Nausori via a domestic flight or by approved vehicle via road under supervision of BSOs. The arrangement for transport and fees incurred over this course will be borne by the owner/importer.*

## B. CATS AND DOGS UNDER BOND

1. An on-board Bonding form/ certificate must be obtained from BAF for bonding of any cat(s) and/or dog(s) in Fiji's territorial waters. Cat(s) and/or dog(s) will be required to remain secured on-board the vessel at all times while in Fiji's territorial waters and will not be permitted to come ashore.

2. Cat(s) and/or dog(s) coming from rabies free countries will only be allowed to cruise during the bonding period. Cat(s) and/or dog(s) origin of Pacific Island Countries (PICs) coming from PICs need to provide country of origin certificate with other documents. However, Cat(s) and/or dog(s) origin of other rabies free countries require vaccination certificate against rabies and Rabies Neutralizing Antibody Titer Test ("RNATT") results with other necessary documents to provide assurance. BAF Veterinary team will assess the document and will approve cruising if provided documents are satisfactory. The

Importer/owner has to provide their location status through the yacht surveillance notification system.

3. Cat(s) and/or dog(s) coming from rabies countries will not be allowed to cruise during the bonding period.
4. BAF approved bond fee must be paid which serves as a security (bond) against the live animals on board and will be refunded upon departure from Fiji if bond conditions are not breached. If the importer fails to meet bond requirements, the cat(s) and/or dog(s) will be euthanized or the vessel will be ordered to leave Fiji waters immediately. Further, the importer/owner will be fined according to the Biosecurity Act 2008.
5. BAF's Veterinarian, or BSO at station level, will undertake inspections and monitoring of the cat(s) and/or dog(s). Duration of monitoring will vary based on the animal's country of origin. The vessel will only be allowed to stay in Fiji for a maximum of **three months**.
6. All bonded cat(s) and/or dog(s) will be monitored daily by a BSO if the cat(s) and/or dog(s) are imported from a rabies country and weekly monitoring will be done if the cat(s) and/or dog(s) are from a rabies free country. BAF fees and charges are applicable for the monitoring and inspection of bonded animals. If the cat(s) and/or dog(s) are found not to have a Biosecurity Bonding Certificate during inspection, the cats and/or dogs will be euthanized or the vessel will be ordered to depart from Fiji immediately.

#### C. CRUISE SHIPS IN FIJI

1. No Bonding fees will be applicable for cruise ships in Fiji due to the presence of BSO in cruise ship all the time while in Fiji waters.
2. A travel plan must be submitted to the BSO in charge at the border through prior notification of arrival.
3. Cat(s) and/or dog(s) must remain on the vessel at ALL times.
  - *All costs associated with inspection, monitoring, treatment and Veterinarian consultation will be borne by the owner/importer. Applications for bringing cat(s) and dog(s) into Fiji will be assessed by BAF on a case by case basis.*
  - *If cat(s) and/or dog(s) show symptoms of having rabies at any point of time, the cat(s) and/or dog(s) will be euthanized or reshipped to the exporting country at the owner's/importer's cost. It is advisable for travelers to obtain a BAF permit for import of cats and/or dogs via vessels.*

*Note: BAF is mandated by the Biosecurity Act 2008 and will issue penalties or prosecute the alleged perpetrator for any breach of conditions or requirements. This alert is subject to changes on case by case basis upon discretion of the BAF Chief Executive Officer (CEO).*

*For further clarifications do not hesitate to contact BAF Veterinary team at BAF Headquarters on 3312512 or alternatively, on email: [animalimports@baf.com.fj](mailto:animalimports@baf.com.fj)*



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