

WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: What rescue groups and pet adopters need to know before moving pets from an out-of-state disaster to Wisconsin

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MADISON – With animal rescues underway as a result of Hurricane Florence, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) reminds anyone planning to transport or adopt a pet from a disaster area that there are requirements for bringing animals to Wisconsin from another state.

“We know people want to help these animals by adopting them, but we must also protect pets and owners in our state from any disease,” said Dr. Yvonne Bellay, DATCP humane program veterinarian. “These pets may be picked up off the street or removed from flooded homes, so it is impossible to know what disease may be present.”

Federal and state legal requirements for moving animals into Wisconsin helps prevent the spread of disease. One of the requirements is that you must have a certificate of veterinary inspection from the state of origin. The certificate must have been issued within 30 days of bringing the animal into Wisconsin. A certificate provides documentation of the animal’s health at a particular point in time, but is not a guarantee of the animal’s health.

Another requirement is that you may not bring in any dog that has been found positive for heartworm disease in the state of origin until the appropriate heartworm treatment protocol has been completed as recommended by the [American Heartworm Society](#). The dog should be tested for heartworm disease as soon as possible, which can usually be one during a routine veterinarian visit.

“Heartworm disease is more common in southern states so it is a disease of particular concern that veterinarians should be prepared to treat,” said Bellay.

Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease caused by foot-long worms that live in the heart, lungs, and associated blood vessels of affected pets. It can lead to severe lung disease, heart failure, and damage to other organs in the body. Heartworm disease affects dogs, cats and ferrets, as well as wild animals such as foxes, wolves, and coyotes. Mosquitos transmit heartworm disease, putting other animals at risk. Treatment involves injections and possible hospitalization with costs between \$400 and \$1,000 on average, according to the American Animal Hospital Association.

DATCP’s Division of Animal Health monitors animal health and disease threats, promotes humane treatment of animals, and provides licensing and registration regulation for animals in Wisconsin. For more information about animal movement requirements in Wisconsin visit [DATCP’s website](#)