

# WISCONSIN'S DOG SELLER AND DOG FACILITY LAW

## Certificates of Veterinary Inspection



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Wisconsin has a new law requiring licensing and inspection for many dog-related operations. Under this law, a certificate of veterinary inspection, or CVI, must accompany each dog that is sold – and that includes dogs that are adopted out “for consideration” – whether that is a donation, covering expenses for spaying and neutering, or any other thing of value.

Below are the answers to some frequently asked questions about CVIs. Please use this information only as a guide, and contact us if you have any question about your requirements.

**Q. What is a CVI?**

A. A certificate of veterinary inspection, or CVI, is a form completed by an accredited veterinarian and used to verify the general good health of an animal. It may also be called a health certificate.

**Q. What information does it contain?**

- A.
- The consigner’s (owner or seller) name
  - The consignee’s (buyer or adopter) name
  - Animal description or identification number
  - Vaccination record, including rabies vaccine
  - Statement of health based on physical examination
  - Veterinarian’s signature

**Q. Is this something new?**

A. The *intrastate* CVIs required under the dog sellers and facilities law are new, but CVIs in general are not new. We have always required CVIs for all animals imported into Wisconsin, including dogs. In some cases, there have been CVIs required for movement of livestock within Wisconsin, and sometimes fairs and shows have required them for animals to be entered in competition.

**Q. Is it a guarantee that a dog is healthy?**

A. No, a CVI is NOT a guarantee. In fact, the document includes a statement that “No warranty is made or implied.”

A current CVI simply verifies that the dog has been seen recently by a veterinarian and is not showing any signs of communicable diseases and that its vaccination status is up to date. It may record any exceptions to general well-being, but does NOT guarantee against genetic defects or diseases that may not be obvious, such as early stage heartworm disease.

**Q. What’s the difference between *interstate* and *intrastate* CVIs?**

A. *Interstate* CVIs are issued in the state of origin for an animal going to a different state. Each state has its own *interstate* forms, but all contain the same information. *Intrastate* CVIs are for animals sold within Wisconsin.

**Q. What does the dog sellers and facilities law require concerning CVIs?**

A. All dogs sold by license holders must be accompanied by a CVI. If the dogs come from out of state, the *interstate* CVI from the state of origin is adequate as long as it is still valid when the dog is sold. If the dog is sold by a Wisconsin seller to a Wisconsin buyer, the new *intrastate* CVI is required. If the dog is sold by a Wisconsin seller to an out-of-state buyer, it needs the *interstate* CVI.

**Q. Do I need a CVI to sell dogs if I’m not required to be licensed under the dog sellers and facilities law?**

- A.** You do not need a CVI to sell dogs within Wisconsin if you are not required to be licensed. However, most other states will require you to provide a CVI for dogs you sell to parties in other states. Be sure to check with the State Veterinarian's office in the state of destination for requirements. If you bring dogs into Wisconsin from other states, they must arrive with a valid CVI.
- Q. We're a shelter, and we don't sell animals. People adopt them. Do we need to provide CVIs?**
- A.** The law defines selling dogs as any transfer of ownership for money or other consideration. So adoption fees, donations, covering the costs of spaying and neutering, and other similar arrangements all count as sales. These dogs are required to have CVIs.
- Q. How much will it cost?**
- A.** The CVI forms cost 60 cents each, paid by the veterinarian who buys them. The veterinarian fee will vary depending on your arrangements with your veterinarian.
- Q. Where do I get the forms?**
- A.** Only veterinarians can buy the forms. They can buy them online at <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> (look under "online services"), or they can call 608-224-4872 between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays.
- Q. How long is the CVI valid after the veterinarian examines the dog?**
- A.** The veterinarian must complete the CVI within 10 days after examining the dog. It is valid for 30 days after the date of examination.
- Q. What if it expires before the dog is sold or adopted?**
- A.** In that case, the dog would need to be re-examined and another CVI issued.
- Q. What if I bring dogs in from another state and sell them here?**
- A.** The seller in the other state needs to provide you with valid *interstate* CVIs, but you are responsible for seeing that the CVI accompanies the dogs when they arrive. If the *interstate* CVI is still valid when you sell the dog, then you can provide the buyer with a copy of that CVI. If it has expired, you would need to have the dog examined by a Wisconsin accredited veterinarian, who will complete an *intrastate* CVI.
- Q. What if I sell animals to someone in another state?**
- A.** You will need to provide an *interstate* CVI completed by a Wisconsin licensed and accredited veterinarian.
- Q. Can there be more than one dog listed on a CVI?**
- A.** Yes, there are spaces for up to 10 dogs to be listed.
- Q. If a CVI that I received with a dog I bought is still valid, can I change the seller's name to mine and use the same CVI when I sell the dog?**
- A.** You can still use the CVI as long as it is still valid. However, you cannot obliterate or change information on it – including the original seller's name. You can add your name and address as a re-consignment, but cannot erase or black out the original information. You must provide a readable copy to the buyer as well.
- Q. Who gets copies of the CVI?**
- A.** The form is a three-part form. One copy is for the veterinarian. One is for the owner/seller. One is for the buyer.

- Q. What if it's for more than one dog, but the dogs go to different owners? There aren't enough copies.**  
**A.** You may photocopy the buyer's copy to give to each buyer, and circle or highlight which dog or dogs that buyer purchased. Be sure to keep a copy in your files that includes this information.
- Q. Can a CVI be issued as part of the pre-surgical exam when we have dogs spayed or neutered?**  
**A.** Yes.
- Q. If the veterinarian completes the CVI before we know who's buying the dog, how do we handle listing a buyer's name?**  
**A.** For *intrastate* CVIs, the buyer (consignee) information is not required. However, the license holder is required to keep a record of the location that received the dog and the person who took custody or control, if anyone. For an *interstate* CVI, check with the state veterinarian's office in the destination state to see what the requirements are.
- Q. Can any veterinarian complete the CVI?**  
**A.** The veterinarian must be licensed in the state issuing the CVI. The veterinarian must also be accredited. Accreditation is an additional credential granted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the state that allows veterinarians to do official regulatory work -- such as signing CVIs.
- Q. Can I complete the CVI and just have my veterinarian sign it?**  
**A.** You can fill in the animal identification and owner/shelter name at the time of the examination. However, the veterinarian must personally examine the dogs listed on the CVI, complete any medical information and statements, and verify that the other information completed by you or your staff before signing the CVI. To do otherwise would endanger the veterinarian's accreditation and license.
- Q. What tests and vaccinations are required to get a CVI?**  
**A.** For dogs, there are no required tests. If the dog is 5 months or older, it must be vaccinated for rabies before receiving a CVI, with the date of vaccination and the veterinarian who administered it indicated. Vaccination by owners is not acceptable for these purposes.
- Q. Does a dog have to be vaccinated for rabies to get a CVI?**  
**A.** Dogs 5 months or older must have current rabies vaccinations to get a CVI.
- Q. What if a dog has a medical condition that is not contagious or infectious, or a genetic defect?**  
**A.** That does not have to be listed on the certificate, but a veterinarian may choose to include this information. While there is no "lemon law" for dogs in Wisconsin, consumers are free to file lawsuits if they are unhappy with a dog they buy from a breeder. If you disclose any known conditions, such a lawsuit is less likely to be filed or to be successful if it is filed.
- Q. We rescue dogs, and sometimes send them to other groups' shelters. Do they need CVIs?**  
**A.** No, transfers between shelters are not considered sales, so do not require CVIs.
- Q. If there is an error or omission on the CVI, can the buyer sue the vet and/or the seller?**  
**A.** There is nothing in the law to prevent a person from suing. However, accurate paperwork reduces the likelihood of a lawsuit and the likelihood of a successful lawsuit if one is filed. Shelters should include a "hold harmless" clause in their release and adoption documents to help avoid lawsuits.

**Q. What happens if I sell a dog without a CVI?**

**A.** Penalties may range from a warning letter up to charges filed in court, with resulting fines. This information would be a public record, available to the media and potential buyers.

**Q. Where can I get more information?**

**A.** Online: <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> (look under “Animals” tab)

Email: [DATCPanimals@wi.gov](mailto:DATCPanimals@wi.gov)

Phone: 608-224-4872