



Department of
Agriculture and Fisheries

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Biosecurity risk due to the movement of dogs from areas where *Ehrlichia canis* is known to be active

Ehrlichiosis is a serious tick-borne disease of dogs. Dogs become infected with the bacteria *Ehrlichia canis* (*E. canis*) after being bitten by an infected tick, primarily the brown dog tick. Infection with *E. canis* is nationally notifiable. If you suspect the presence of this disease in any dog in Queensland, you must report it to Biosecurity Queensland.

Until May 2020, *E. canis* had not been detected in dogs of Australian origin. Since that time, infected dogs have been found throughout the Northern Territory and in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of northern Western Australia. Infected ticks have also been found in far northern regions of South Australia. These areas are a potential source of infection for dogs.

Human-assisted movement of dogs is considered the most likely means of introducing *E. canis* to Queensland.

People in charge of dogs including dog owners, rescuers, carers and pounds need to be aware of and manage risks associated with moving dogs into Queensland from areas where *E. canis* is known to be active. Anyone moving a dog from an area where *E. canis* is known to be active into Queensland has a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* to minimise the risk associated with the movement. Dogs being rescued and/or rehomed and where their health status and history is unknown may pose a greater biosecurity risk.

People moving dogs within Queensland need to assess the likelihood that dogs are infected with *E. canis*. In making this assessment, consideration needs to be given to the dog's health, whether the dog has been to an area where *E. canis* is known to be active, whether the dog has been on effective tick control preventative and whether it has shared the same environment with known infected dogs or ticks. This information will allow any risks to be identified and appropriately managed.

Ways to manage this risk include:

- assessing the dog's health status and history, including the use of an effective external tick prevention and control program. Seek veterinary advice on effective tick prevention and control options
- a thorough clinical examination by a veterinarian prior to movement
- testing dogs for *E. canis* and obtaining negative results prior to movement
- isolating the travelling dogs from other dogs and tick vectors at the start of the testing regime so they do not become infected while awaiting transport
- inspecting travelling dogs and cohorts for ticks regularly with removal of any ticks
- maintaining the dogs on an effective external tick control therapy that kills ticks on contact and stops them attaching to the dog at the origin and destination. You should seek veterinary advice on effective tick prevention and control options.
- isolating the dogs at their destination for the nominated period, depending on the testing regime
- seeking veterinary advice promptly if the dog becomes unwell.

If reasonable measures to minimise the spread of *E. canis* are not taken, you could be in breach of the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Not complying with the general biosecurity obligation is an offence.

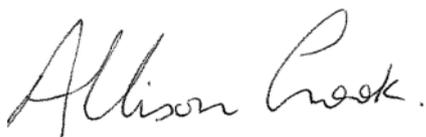
In Queensland, a person in charge of an animal has a duty of care to provide for the treatment of disease under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

For more information on canine ehrlichiosis please visit:

[Canine ehrlichiosis | Business Queensland.](#)

If you have any further queries, please contact the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries by phone on 13 25 23 or email info@daf.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



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