

UNDERSTANDING VACCINATION RECORDS

Vaccination Records

If you are offering Home Boarding, Day Care or running Boarding Kennels, understanding vaccination records is an essential part of business. Note that dogs on the premises other than paying guests are subject to the same guidance requirements.

The
Pet Care
Partnership

Whilst it is not essential for Dog Walkers, Pet Sitters and those running group training to ask to see vaccinations, businesses are affected if a contagious illness is passed between your client's dogs, and it is therefore wise to understand the role that vaccinations play for the industry in general.

Minimum Legal Requirements

Business	Mandatory
Dog Walkers	None
Home Boarders	Canine Distemper, Hepatitis (Adenovirus), Parvovirus, and Leptospirosis
Day Care	Canine Distemper, Hepatitis (Adenovirus), Parvovirus, and Leptospirosis
Kennels	Canine Distemper, Hepatitis (Adenovirus), Parvovirus, and Leptospirosis
Pet Sitters	None

DHP Vaccine

Stickers and references to 'DHP' refer to the core (mandatory) vaccine covering canine Distemper, Hepatitis (adenovirus), and Parvovirus.

This is typically a 3-yearly vaccine, but do not assume that all DHP vaccines are given on this basis. The length of validity is determined by the drug manufacturer through rigorous testing, and not all brands of DHP will have a 3-yearly repeat requirement, some may be more frequent.

For this reason, it is important to be aware of the brand of DHP vaccine given:

Brand	Repeat
Nobviac (MSD)	3-yearly
Canigen (Virbac)	3-yearly
Versican (Zoetis)	3-yearly

On occasion a customer may decide to titre test their dog instead of giving this vaccine. Titre tests are discussed later in this Help Sheet.

UNDERSTANDING VACCINATION RECORDS

Kennel Cough Vaccine

If a council is following the DEFRA guidance properly, **it is up to the Licence Holder whether they make Kennel Cough vaccine mandatory for their business or not.**

This is typically an annual vaccination. There are two types of vaccine, intranasal (up the nose) and subcutaneous (injection into the skin).

They cover a specific form of viral illness in dogs called bordetella bronchiseptica. This is one of many viral and bacterial infections that can contribute to canine infectious respiratory disease (CIRD), which are all known as kennel cough in dogs. Kennel cough is not caused by one virus or bacteria but is an umbrella term used to describe many infectious respiratory infections in dogs.

For the purposes of this Help Sheet, we will consider this vaccine as the 'Kennel Cough' vaccine, however this is not strictly the case, and to fully understand vaccines to protect against contagious viral illnesses, also read the section in this document "Parainfluenza Vaccine".

Like the human flu vaccine, there is no hard guarantee that the vaccine will prevent a dog from catching a strain of Kennel Cough that is not covered in the vaccine, and with the movement of dogs from other countries there are more strains of 'dog flu' than ever before. It does however reduce the risk of an outbreak within a business, and the need to close for a period.

The intranasal vaccine is a set dosage for all dogs. Excess vaccine sheds through the skin and can trigger mild symptoms in dogs that are not vaccinated for Kennel Cough, as well as some people that are immunocompromised. The vaccine can shed for up to 6 weeks but is most prevalent in the first 2 weeks after vaccination.

The subcutaneous version of the vaccine has no shedding period.

Licence Holders that make the vaccine mandatory for all dogs have a low risk of problems from shedding as all dogs are vaccinated.

Licence Holders that allow a dog to visit with and without Kennel Cough vaccination must prevent shedding dogs from mixing with those that are not protected. This is difficult to achieve within a home or open plan day care and generally means that dogs are prevented from booking services for the two weeks after their annual Kennel Cough vaccination. This becomes more difficult when a Home Boarder chooses to vaccinate their resident dogs, at which point no dogs without the Kennel Cough vaccine may attend for 2 weeks.

Leptospirosis Vaccine

Stickers and references to 'L4' refer to the core (mandatory) vaccine covering the zoonotic illness called leptospirosis. Occasionally the sticker will present as L2 or L7. These are older and newer vaccines, and the number refers to the number of strains covered.

UNDERSTANDING VACCINATION RECORDS

This is a mandatory, core vaccination for those accepting dogs under a licence, and there is no titre test for leptospirosis in the UK currently.

This is a vaccine that is given annually, regardless of the brand used.

Parainfluenza Vaccine

Stickers and references to 'Pi' refer to parainfluenza being covered (normally) as part of another vaccine, often paired with DHP in the same vial (DHPPi).

Parainfluenza is one of many viral and bacterial infections that can contribute to canine infectious respiratory disease (CIRD), which are all known as kennel cough in dogs. Kennel cough is not caused by one virus or bacteria but is an umbrella term used to describe many infectious respiratory infections in dogs.

The vaccine is subcutaneous (injection into the skin) and is often given as part of a larger vaccine pack in the same bottle. The problem with this is that the DHP element is typically repeated every 3 years, and yet the parainfluenza element is recommended for repeat annually. As the vet only has one space on the card to mark the next vaccination date, they put 3 years and the Pi annual repeat is forgotten.

Methods of Proof

Typically, customers will have a vaccination card that they can send a photo of before arranging an initial Meet & Greet at a licensed premises or property. Alternatively, if no card is available the customer can ask their vet practice to email over a medical history that shows the dog's vaccinations and when they were given. At a last resort, the customer can ask the vet practice to email and confirm which vaccinations that dog has been given, and when.

When proof other than a vaccine card is supplied, it is common for proof to be sent of just the last set of vaccinations rather than a full history. This means that a DHP vaccination given before last year may be missing and you may need to ask for additional records or proof before agreeing to next steps.

UNDERSTANDING VACCINATION RECORDS

Reading Stickers

Stickers generally conform to a common standard. If they are not obscured, you should be able to work out what the dog is currently protected against. Canigen and Nobviac (pictured above) are two of the



most common vaccine brands in the UK. It is clear to see what is covered in the vaccine, which manufacturing batch was used (in case of a recall or adverse event warning), and when the vaccine expires. The expiry date is for the vaccine on the shelf or in the fridge, it **does not** tell you when the dog needs their next vaccination.

Customers sending a snapshot of the last vaccines their dog received may not tell you the full picture, as DHP is often a 3-yearly vaccine, meaning that you will need to ask to see earlier stickers on the card to get their full history.

Date	Vaccine(s) and Batch number(s)	Signature and Practice Details	Vaccination due
29/11/24	Nobivac L4 Lot: A396A03 Exp: 07-2025	ARL YL	24 mcs
	Nobivac DHP Lot: A188B01 Exp: 06-2026	2.5kg	4 wks
9/10	DRONTAL		
9/11	ORAL		4 wks
10/11	SUSPENSION		
13/10	FRONTLINE SPRAY		
1/11	FLEAS, TICK + LICE		4 wks
2/12	Nobivac DHP Lot: A752A01 Exp: 07-2025	20/11	dec
24/12	Nobivac L4 Lot: A394A01 Exp: 07-2025	4.26kg	2025
S.	Nobivac KC Lot: A166 J1 Exp: 09-2026	James. 8.6kg	KC - June 2026.

In this example we can see the stickers and the next due dates, however we cannot clearly see the dates they were given and would need to ask for another photo including that column.

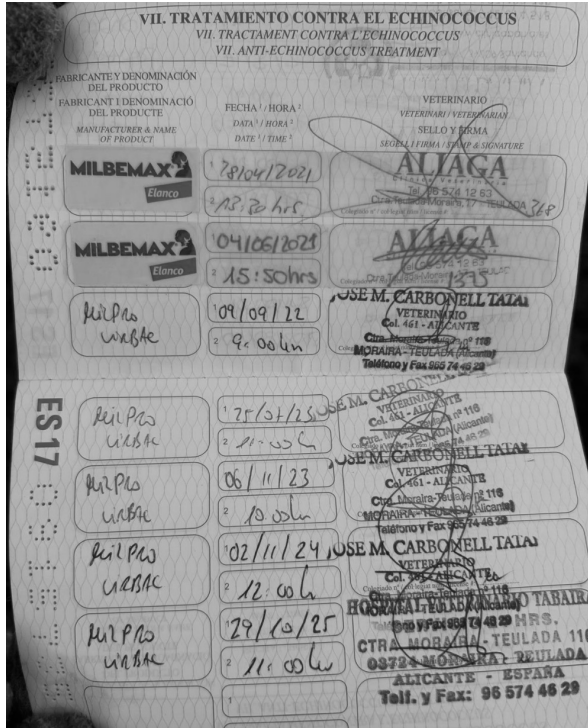
It is unusual to see worm and flea products listed on a card (Drontal and Frontline) however this is quite helpful if the process is carried out at each visit.

This appears to be a puppy card.

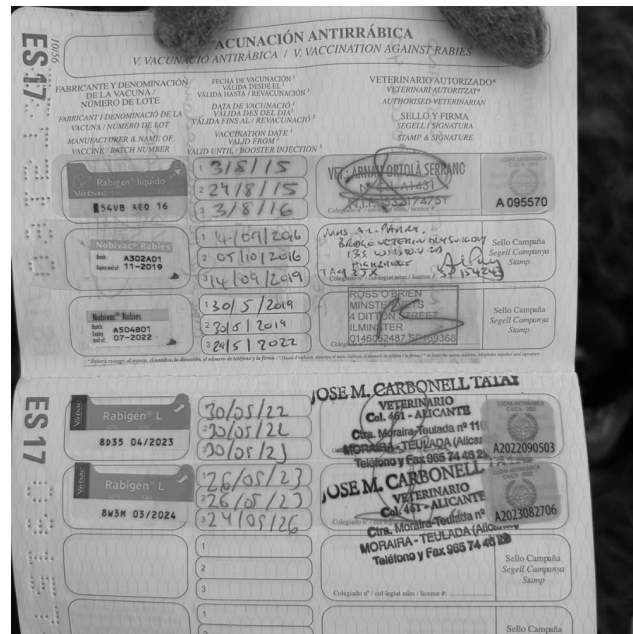
Born in August / September, their initial vaccinations were in November 2024 (only 2.5kg in weight) and the dog came back in December 2024 for their second DHP and Lepto vaccinations to complete their puppy set. Leptospirosis is next due in December 2025, and DHP is next due in December 2028. The dog then had a Kennel Cough intranasal vaccine in June 2025, which will need to be renewed in June 2026.

UNDERSTANDING VACCINATION RECORDS

A less popular brand, Virbac Canixin (GB use only) puts DHP, Pi and Lepto vaccine in a single vial. The DHP element lasts 3 years, but the Pi and Lepto elements must be renewed annually. The annual booster elements can often be overlooked on vaccine cards.



This photo was sent as a vaccine record for a rescue dog from a Spain; however, this is a record of wormer doses. The customer was asked to send further information before booking boarding dates.



The next page sent contained rabies vaccinations which are not needed for boarding in the UK. The customer was asked to send further information before booking boarding dates.



Finally, the page containing core vaccinations.

Versican DHPi and L4 in November 2021. The Versican DHP is repeated every 3 years, however the Pi must be repeated annually to remain effective. The Versican L4 must be repeated annually to remain effective.

Canigen MH_PL is licensed in Spain alone. The vaccine covers DHP and Leptospirosis. It lasts for just one year and is required annually. This means that the dog requires a full set of vaccinations in October 2026.

Help sheets provided by The Pet Care Partnership are offered for general guidance purposes only and are not designed to supersede any instructions or advice given by a veterinary professional, or a licencing inspector.

UNDERSTANDING VACCINATION RECORDS

You can find information about UK products in the NOAH Product Database online (National Office for Animal Health). The time between vaccinations will be shown in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC). Vaccines approved outside of the UK may be found on the EMEA Medicines Database.

Medical Records

The benefit of a full medical history is that you have a full picture of the services provided to the owner for the dog in question, however you can see below that the records can be difficult to interpret.

In addition to the vaccine records, the worm and flea products can also be seen. Whilst this tells you when they were purchased, it does not tell you when they were administered, which is normally at home and not in the practice.

This dog was given Nobviac Lepto 4 and Nobviac KC vaccines on 11 December 2024, and requires next vaccinations in December 2025. The last DHP vaccine is not shown on this page. History for earlier visits is required to determine when DHP was last given, and therefore when it is next required.

Date	Clinical History
11/12/2024	Weight Recorded: 8.40 kgs 1.00 * simparica trio tabs 12mg (5-10kg)(6pk) per pack (p) ← Dosage Line 1: Dose ONE tablet ONCE a month Prescribed By: [REDACTED] Repeat Prescription for 1.00 x simparica trio tabs 12mg (5-10kg)(6pk) per pack (p), 1 repeats, expires 11/12/2025, prescribed by [REDACTED]. Dosage Line 1: Dose ONE tablet ONCE a month Dosage Line 2: Repeat Prescription Issued - Product: simparica trio tabs 12mg (5-10kg)(6pk) per pack (p) 1.00 * simparica trio tabs 12mg (5-10kg)(6pk) per pack (p) ← Dosage Line 1: Dose ONE tablet ONCE a month Prescribed By: [REDACTED] HR RR check over fine. BCS 3/5 teeth too wiggly to check. L4 - A394A03 KC - A160A01/A557A01 1.00 * vac booster dog + kc vac including health check Prescribed By: [REDACTED] 1.00 * nobivac lepto 4 (50d) (p) Prescribed By: [REDACTED] 1.00 * nobivac kc (25d) (p) Prescribed By: [REDACTED] Clinical History Emailed: 07/07/2017 to 11/12/2024, All, vac Emailed [REDACTED] Subject: [REDACTED] vaccination history [REDACTED] please find attached the full vaccination history for [REDACTED] Kind regards, [REDACTED]

UNDERSTANDING VACCINATION RECORDS

Titre Testing

Blood is drawn and tested to check the immune response against three of the core diseases they are vaccinated against, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, and Distemper (which are found in the DHP vaccine).

There is no titre test for Leptospirosis in the UK currently. The duration of immunity after the Leptospirosis vaccine is shorter than the core diseases (DHP) so revaccination each year is mandatory for Leptospirosis.

A negative result indicates your pet is not adequately protected and would need a booster for that disease (DHP for dogs). A positive result indicates that your pet is adequately protected and does not require a booster at that time. However, please note that these results only show immunity for the specific point in time (on the day the blood was taken) so immunity can still decrease over the following days, weeks or months.

Animal welfare licences require 'proof' of immunity for the period that the dog is booked in for care, and as the result only shows immunity on the day of testing it can be difficult to obtain a letter or statement from a vet stating that the dog is covered for the booking period. For Day Care the letter or statement needs to cover a much longer period, and at expiry of the covering letter the dog must be titre tested again before booking in.

Keeping Evidence

Whichever way you decide to keep the evidence of vaccinations for your business, ensure that you keep GDPR in mind if the document or photo contains the customer's name and address on it. If you choose to crop or obscure the customer details on the record, make sure that the dog's name (and surname) remains visible, or you may not know who the record belongs to later.

There is no right or wrong way to keep evidence for a licensed business. If you can quickly and easily locate a vaccination record and show it to an inspector, all options are acceptable. Vaccine records form part of the dog's registration and booking, so the evidence needs to be kept for 3 years from the last date that the dog visited the property or premises.

Foreign Vaccines

Vaccines given outside of the UK but within the EU are generally acceptable for licensed services. This is because the EU maintain high standards of medicine quality throughout the countries, and this allows them to be accepted in other EU countries under a mutual recognition arrangement. This also applies to products from Switzerland. Whilst no longer part of the EU, the UK has equally high medicine standards and in the most part, the mutual recognition standpoint remains.

UNDERSTANDING VACCINATION RECORDS

You can find information about EU products in the EMEA Product Database online. The time between vaccinations will be shown in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC).

Outside the EU it is likely that a vaccine may not stand up to the rigorous quality testing in the EU and the UK, and the vet may choose to restart the vaccinations with a known and UK tested brand. There are always exceptions, Norway has excellent medicine standards, and the vet may decide not to restart if the dog has come from Norway and they can obtain a matching vaccination from UK stock. Vaccine restarts appear on records like puppy vaccinations, often with two DHP vaccinations and two Leptospirosis vaccinations several weeks apart.

Stickers from international companies can sometimes look similar but are not the same, and a branded (recognised) product in Spain may not have the same repeating cycle as the same brand in the UK, as each product is tested and passed against the medicine laws in the country of origin. It goes without saying that if you are in any doubt whatsoever, contact the customer's vet (or your own registered vet) and ask for guidance.

The final point to mention on foreign vaccinations is that some product leaflets and information is only in the language of the origin country. It is common to find the Summary of Product Characteristics for an obscure product on a medical database, but as the vaccine was only approved for use in Spain, the leaflet with the information that you need is only available in Spanish. If this is the case, contact the customer's vet (or your own registered vet) and ask for guidance.

Words of Caution

The world of vaccines is an ever changing landscape, with scientific breakthroughs and new products being released to market. You may first hear about a new product or changes to an existing product through professional groups on social media. Social media is a great tool to help keep you up to date with changes, but the information is not fact-checked or validated in any way, and it is important that you research statements made in social media forums before taking them as true or accurate.

The saying 'a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing' is very true in the case of medicine and vaccines. If you are in any doubt that a vaccine record is incorrect, out of date, or even a fake (puppy farm imports) then please speak to a vet or other qualified person and share your questions and concerns.

Further Information

Further information and mentoring on subjects relevant to Animal Welfare Licenses is available through www.support4petbusiness.co.uk.

UNDERSTANDING VACCINATION RECORDS

Sources

<https://www.petmd.com/dog/conditions/respiratory/canine-parainfluenza>

https://www.noahcompendium.co.uk/?id=-464598&template=template_printview

<https://www.noahcompendium.co.uk/?id=-460094>

<https://medicines.health.europa.eu/veterinary/en/600000001965>

<https://mulberryhousevets.co.uk/titre-testing/>