



ESTCA

EUROPEAN STANDARD

European Standard for Travel with Canine Animals

Canine Travel Readiness Certification

STANDARD V1.2

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Preamble

The European Standard for Travel with Canine Animals (ESTCA) establishes a transparent and verifiable framework for certifying dogs as behaviourally suitable for travel in commercial aircraft cabins across Europe. The standard is published openly. Any airline, transport operator, trainer or owner may rely on it; airlines are encouraged to make conformity with ESTCA a mandatory condition of carriage.

This standard exists because European aviation policy is shifting. National and EU-level developments through 2025 and 2026 have opened the cabin door to dogs that were previously carried only in the hold or refused entirely — including, for the first time, dogs well beyond the historic weight limits, travelling in a dedicated space rather than in a container stowed beneath a seat. Where a dog now sits beside a paying passenger, the question is no longer whether the animal is permitted, but whether the animal is ready. Trust alone is not a safety standard. ESTCA replaces trust with assessment.

The ESTCA Association is an independent, non-commercial membership association registered in the Netherlands. The standard is developed and maintained by the ESTCA Technical Advisory Board, comprising veterinary behaviourists, professional trainers, and animal welfare specialists. The standard is reviewed annually and may be updated to reflect operational experience and new regulatory context.

Guiding principle

Where any provision of this standard is in tension with the welfare of the individual animal, the welfare of the animal shall prevail. No dog shall be certified if, in the professional judgement of the assessing trainer or veterinarian, travel would compromise the animal's physical or psychological wellbeing — regardless of the owner's wishes, scheduling, or fees paid.

Why a public standard

When every airline writes its own rules, the same dog can be approved by one carrier and refused by another — and dog owners, ground staff and crew are left guessing. A single, publicly available standard removes that guesswork. It also lets the people who actually meet the dog — ESTCA-approved assessors — say no on objective grounds, before a problem reaches the cabin. ESTCA is offered free of license fees; a small administrative fee covers assessor approval and registry operations.

A national aviation authority can authorise carriage within its own airspace. It cannot produce a certification that a second carrier will accept on an interlined itinerary, or that travels with the dog across a border. A dog assessed under one national scheme arrives at a foreign gate as an unassessed animal. Portability is therefore not a convenience of this standard but a reason for it.

Containment and behaviour

Container requirements exist for a reason. Where an airline knows nothing about a dog beyond its weight, physical containment is the only control available to it: the container is a proxy for behavioural control of an unassessed animal.

It follows that as carriage configurations relax — as dogs travel tethered on a mat in a dedicated floor space, or on a purchased adjacent seat, rather than confined in a container under the seat in front — behavioural assessment becomes more important, not less. When the container is removed, behaviour is the only remaining control. ESTCA takes no position on which configuration an airline should offer. It takes the position that whichever configuration is offered, the dog occupying it should be a known quantity.

Relationship to industry operational guidance

Industry operational guidance for in-cabin pet transport maps the passenger journey from booking to disembarkation and tells carriers what to do at each stage. It is a valuable and welcome contribution, and this standard is complementary to it rather than competitive with it.

What such guidance does not do is define behaviour. It instructs check-in staff and gate agents to deny boarding where an animal is distressed or displays unacceptable behaviour, but supplies neither a definition of that threshold nor a method of assessing it, and places the judgement at the airport on the day of departure, in the hands of staff with no behavioural training who are meeting the dog for the first time under departure-time pressure. Operational guidance describes how an airline should handle a dog. ESTCA describes how it is established, in advance and by an accountable professional, that the dog can be handled.

Positive reinforcement as a condition, not a preference

ESTCA certification is a statement about welfare as well as behaviour. A dog made compliant through pain, fear or startle is not a dog that has been made ready; it is a dog whose distress has been suppressed, and suppressed responses reappear under novel stress — which is exactly what a cabin is. This standard therefore prohibits aversive equipment and aversive methods absolutely (§ C.3.2), not merely within the sessions it observes.

How the standard is delivered today

certified-estca.eu is, at the date of this revision, the sole operational platform on which assessors are approved, training records are kept, and certifications are issued. Every ESTCA-approved assessor is listed on certified-estca.eu and operates through it; every certification flows from certified-estca.eu into the public ESTCA Register at estca.eu. A trainer who is not on certified-estca.eu is not an ESTCA-approved assessor, and a certification that did not originate on certified-estca.eu is not an ESTCA certification. ESTCA may admit additional platforms in future revisions of this standard.

Scope, Roles & Definitions

A.1 Scope

§ A.1.1

This standard applies to the behavioural assessment, training and certification of dogs (*Canis familiaris*) intended for travel in the passenger cabin of commercial aircraft operating to, from, or within Europe.

§ A.1.2

The standard is voluntary in law and binding in practice on any trainer, organisation or carrier that declares conformity with it. Declarations of conformity, ESTCA-approved assessors, and certified dogs are all recorded in the public ESTCA Register.

§ A.1.3

This standard does not replace airline-specific pet policies, national veterinary entry requirements, container requirements applied by the carrier, industry operational guidance, or the EU Pet Passport system. It certifies behavioural readiness only. Operational matters — seat allocation, carriage configuration, anchoring, equipment, in-flight protocol, the number of dogs permitted per flight — are decisions for the airline. Part G describes the practices airlines are encouraged to adopt; the standard does not require them.

§ A.1.4 Configuration neutrality

ESTCA certifies the dog. The carrier of record decides the carriage configuration. This standard takes no position on whether a dog should travel in a container stowed under the seat in front, in a carrier secured on a seat, or unconfined in a dedicated floor space on a lead. All three are in operational use in Europe, and the choice between them rests with the airline and its regulator. What the standard requires is that the dog is assessed in the configuration, or configurations, in which it is intended to travel (§ D.2.1), and that a certification is not read as covering a configuration the dog was not assessed in.

§ A.1.5 Exclusions

This standard does not apply to service animals, assistance dogs, guide dogs, or emotional support animals, and ESTCA certification is neither a substitute for, nor a route towards, recognition in any of those categories. Those animals are governed by separate international, national and carrier frameworks, and by disability law. No ESTCA certification shall be represented as conferring any right of access, fee exemption or accommodation available to an assistance animal.

This standard applies to dogs only. This is a deliberate limitation rather than an oversight: the behavioural questions that matter in a cabin — tolerance of confinement, response to handling by unfamiliar persons, recovery from startle, and vocalisation under stress — have materially different profiles across species and require different assessment methods and pass criteria. ESTCA may address other species in a separate standard; it will not do so by extension of this one.

A.2 Roles

ESTCA works because four parties each carry a distinct, complementary role. None of the four can substitute for another.

OWNER	TRAINER	ESTCA	AIRLINE
Custody & responsibility for the dog, incl. liability.	Assesses, trains, and issues (or withholds) certification.	Maintains the standard, register, and accountability.	Decides cabin policy: configuration, seats, anchoring, limits.

The owner is responsible for the dog at all times before, during and after travel, including any liability for damage or injury caused by the dog. The trainer applies professional judgement to the assessment and is accountable, individually, for every certification they issue. ESTCA Association maintains the standard and the public register and operates the accountability process. The airline decides whether to accept ESTCA-certified dogs and on what operational conditions.

A.3 Definitions

Canine animal

Any domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*) aged sixteen weeks or older, regardless of breed, weight or pedigree status.

ESTCA-approved assessor

A professional dog trainer holding a current, unsuspended ESTCA approval, listed in the public ESTCA Register, and bound by the ESTCA Code of Conduct.

Certification

A formal determination, recorded in the ESTCA Register, that an individual dog has been assessed across all five areas in Part D and meets the standard.

ESTCA Register

The publicly accessible database maintained by ESTCA Association at estca.eu, searchable by passport or microchip number, in which all assessor approvals and dog certifications are recorded.

Certified-ESTCA platform

The operational platform at certified-estca.eu on which assessors are approved, training records are held, and certifications are issued. Currently the sole platform recognised by ESTCA Association for these purposes.

Microchip number

The unique 15-digit ISO 11784/11785 compliant transponder number implanted in the dog, used together with the EU Pet Passport as an identifier in the Register.

Welfare baseline

The minimum health and temperament conditions a dog must meet before any assessment may begin, defined in Part B.

Carriage configuration

The physical arrangement in which a dog is carried in the cabin, determined by the carrier of record. Three configurations are recognised for the purposes of assessment: dedicated floor space, carrier on seat, and container under seat (§ D.2.1).

Aversive equipment

Any device or item of equipment whose training function depends on the delivery of pain, fear, startle or physical discomfort to the animal. This includes but is not limited to electric and electronic shock collars (however described, including “e-collars”, “static collars”, “remote trainers” and “stimulation collars”), prong or pinch collars, choke or check chains and slip leads used to apply a tightening correction, spray or citronella collars, ultrasonic or high-frequency aversion devices, and anti-bark devices of any mechanism. A properly fitted basket muzzle, a correctly fitted head collar, a flat collar, a body harness and a fixed-length lead are handling and safety equipment and are not aversive equipment; a head collar used to apply a corrective jerk is.

Aversive method

Any training or handling technique whose intended mechanism is the delivery of pain, fear, startle, intimidation, or physical restraint as punishment, irrespective of whether equipment is involved.

Final assessment

The trainer’s holistic professional judgement, recorded against the Annex I scorecard, that the dog meets the standard across all five areas (§ D.5). It is observed across the trainer’s preparation work and supported by audit footage.

Cabin travel

Carriage of a dog within the passenger cabin of a commercial aircraft, in a carriage configuration determined by the carrier of record.

Carrier of record

The airline operating the flight on which an ESTCA-certified dog travels. The carrier of record sets the operational conditions for the travel of that dog, including the carriage configuration.

PART B

Welfare Baseline

Part B establishes the absolute prerequisites a dog must meet before any ESTCA assessment may begin. These are not performance thresholds — they are gate conditions. No dog may be assessed without meeting every requirement in this Part. The trainer is the gatekeeper for this Part and bears the professional responsibility for refusing enrolment when any requirement is not met.

§ B.1

The dog shall be microchipped with an ISO 11784/11785 compliant transponder and hold a valid EU Pet Passport or equivalent veterinary travel documentation.

§ B.2

The dog shall be aged at least sixteen weeks at the time of enrolment and shall have completed a primary vaccination course including rabies.

§ B.3

The dog shall present in a body condition score of between 3 and 7 on the nine-point WSAVA scale, as assessed by the enrolling trainer or a veterinarian. Dogs that are visibly underweight or obese shall not be enrolled until remediated.

§ B.4

The dog shall not have a documented history of unprovoked aggressive behaviour resulting in a bite causing injury to a person within the preceding 24 months. The trainer shall make reasonable enquiries of the owner at enrolment and may decline to enrol on the basis of those enquiries.

§ B.5

Dogs of brachycephalic breeds listed in Annex II shall not, by default, be enrolled or certified under this standard. The combination of the upper-airway anatomy characteristic of these breeds and the conditions of pressurised cabin travel presents a welfare risk that ESTCA is not in a position to underwrite. The decision to accept such a dog rests with the airline on the airline's own veterinary, operational and risk grounds. A trainer shall enrol a brachycephalic dog only on prior written confirmation from the airline that the dog will be accepted on the intended route, supported by a current veterinary clearance dated within 30 days of enrolment. Trainers should otherwise advise the owner not to fly the dog.

§ B.6 Sedation

- a. The dog shall not be under veterinary sedation, or have received sedative or tranquillising medication within 48 hours, during any assessment activity. A trainer with reason to believe a dog presented for assessment has been sedated shall discontinue the session and record the fact.
- b. ESTCA certification is issued on the basis of the behaviour of an unsedated animal and certifies readiness in that condition only. Travel under sedation, tranquillisation or the influence of any other psychoactive medication falls outside the conditions certified by this standard, and a certification shall not be relied upon in respect of a sedated dog (§ E.5).

- c. The trainer shall inform the owner at enrolment that sedation for travel is discouraged by veterinary and industry consensus, that carriers may require documentary evidence of veterinary administration where sedation has been used, and that a dog presenting as excessively lethargic or unresponsive at check-in may be refused carriage irrespective of certification.
- d. Nothing in this section restricts prescribed medication for a diagnosed condition where that medication is not sedative in effect. Where there is doubt, the trainer shall require written veterinary confirmation before proceeding.

§ B.7

The trainer has a positive duty to refuse or discontinue assessment of any dog where, in their professional judgement, an underlying physical condition, anxiety profile, or general lack of suitability would make cabin travel inappropriate, even where the formal criteria of Part B are not breached. A refusal under § B.7 shall be recorded against the trainer's file but does not count as a fail for the dog.

§ B.8 Aversive equipment

- a. No dog shall be enrolled, assessed or certified while aversive equipment or aversive methods are in use in that dog's training, handling or day-to-day management, whether by the trainer, the owner or any third party, and whether or not during ESTCA sessions.
- b. At enrolment the trainer shall enquire of the owner as to the use of aversive equipment or aversive methods, explain this requirement, and record the response. The owner shall confirm in writing that no aversive equipment is in use and that none will be introduced during the preparation period or subsequently while the certification remains current (§ C.3.3).
- c. Where a dog has previously been trained using aversive equipment or methods, enrolment is not barred, but shall not commence until a minimum of eight weeks has elapsed since such use ceased. This is not a penalty imposed on the dog. Behaviour suppressed by aversive means can present as calm and compliant while the underlying emotional response is unchanged, and can surface without warning under novel stress; a cabin is precisely such an environment. The trainer shall satisfy themselves, over the preparation period, that the dog's settled behaviour reflects genuine acclimatisation rather than learned suppression, and shall record that judgement.
- d. Discovery at any point that aversive equipment or methods are in use shall result in immediate discontinuation of assessment. Where a certification has already been issued, § E.5 and § F.3 apply.

NOTE

If any condition is not met the dog may not begin the programme. The trainer shall advise the owner on remediation where possible and invite re-enrolment at a later date. A welfare refusal is not a fail and does not prejudice future enrolment.

Assessor Approval

ESTCA certification may only be delivered and assessed by trainers holding a current ESTCA approval. The trainer is the human point of accountability for every certification issued. Where dogs that misbehave in flight are traced back to a single trainer, that assessor's approval is at stake (Part F).

C.1 Eligibility Requirements

§ C.1.1

To apply for ESTCA approval, a candidate must demonstrate professional competence by satisfying at least one of the following:

- a. A current professional dog training certification from a recognised body (including but not limited to CPDT-KA, CCAB, IAABC, or a national kennel-club instructor qualification);
- b. A minimum of two years of documented, professional dog training experience with verifiable client references; or
- c. A degree or diploma in animal behaviour, veterinary science, or applied animal welfare from a recognised institution.

§ C.1.2

The candidate shall hold valid professional liability insurance covering dog-training activities in the jurisdiction(s) in which they intend to deliver the ESTCA programme. Specific cover requirements are set out in § C.4.

§ C.1.3

The candidate shall declare, on application and at each re-approval, that they do not use, recommend, supply or sell aversive equipment or aversive methods in any part of their professional practice, including work conducted outside the ESTCA programme. A false declaration is grounds for measures under § F.4 up to and including a ban.

C.2 ESTCA Train-the-Trainer Module

§ C.2.1

All candidates shall pass the ESTCA Train-the-Trainer theoretical examination before assessing any dog. The examination is delivered online via certified-estca.eu and covers the standard, the welfare baseline, the prohibition on aversive equipment and methods, the five areas of assessment, the carriage configurations at § D.2.1, the Code of Conduct, and registry and audit procedures. The pass mark and re-sit policy are published by ESTCA Association.

§ C.2.2

The Train-the-Trainer requirement may evolve. ESTCA Association expects, in time, to introduce additional in-person or video-based components — for example a recorded demonstration of an assessment for review by the Technical Advisory Board. Any such extension will be announced in advance and applied prospectively; trainers approved under the current theoretical examination retain their approval subject to ongoing compliance with this standard.

§ C.2.3

On passing the examination, the trainer is listed in the public ESTCA Register and is onboarded to certified-estca.eu, the operational platform from which the trainer will manage training records, scorecards, audit footage uploads, and the issuance of certifications. A trainer who is not active on certified-estca.eu is not an ESTCA-approved assessor for the purposes of this standard.

C.3 Code of Conduct

§ C.3.1

All ESTCA-approved assessors shall:

- a. Use training methods based on positive reinforcement, in accordance with § C.3.2.
- b. Assess each dog honestly and refuse to certify a dog that does not meet the standard, regardless of the owner's expectations, scheduling pressure, or fees paid.
- c. Decline to enrol or withdraw any dog where, in the trainer's professional judgement, the certification process would cause undue stress or compromise the animal's welfare.
- d. Maintain the confidentiality of owner information and not share registry data except as required for ESTCA audit purposes or as compelled by law.
- e. Report any safety incident involving a dog they have certified, of which they become aware, to ESTCA Association without delay.
- f. Report to the ESTCA Association any knowledge that an ESTCA-certified dog is being handled with aversive equipment, or that another ESTCA-approved assessor is in breach of § C.3.2.
- g. Not represent an ESTCA certification as conferring assistance-animal status, regulatory approval, or any right of carriage (§ A.1.5, § G.1.1).

§ C.3.2 Prohibition on aversive equipment and methods

The use of aversive equipment and aversive methods, as defined in § A.3, is prohibited under this standard. The prohibition is absolute. It is not limited to the sessions in which assessment takes place, and it is not waived by owner request, by prior training history, by claimed effectiveness, by the size or age of the dog, or by any assertion that a device is used only on a low setting, only as a deterrent, or only as a last resort.

- a. A trainer shall not use, fit, demonstrate, recommend, supply, sell, or accept commission on aversive equipment, within the ESTCA programme, in any other part of their professional practice, or in any advice given to an owner.
- b. Where an owner presents a dog in aversive equipment, or discloses its use, the trainer shall require its removal and discontinuation as a condition of enrolment, and shall explain to the owner why the standard takes this position (§ B.8).

- c. A trainer shall not certify a dog that, to the trainer's knowledge, is being concurrently trained or handled with aversive equipment or methods by the owner or any third party, whether or not that work relates to travel preparation. § D.5.4(6) applies.
- d. Nothing in this section prohibits a properly fitted basket muzzle or head collar used as trained travel equipment under § D.4, a correctly fitted harness or flat collar, a standard lead, a crate or carrier used as a positively conditioned resting space, or a barrier, pen or long line used to manage the environment rather than to punish the animal.
- e. Where the ESTCA Association establishes that an ESTCA-approved assessor has used, recommended, supplied or knowingly permitted the use of aversive equipment or methods, measures under § F.4 shall commence at Step 3 (Suspension) or above. Where the use is repeated, concealed, or misrepresented in audit footage or records, § F.4 Step 5 (Ban) is the expected outcome.

§ C.3.3 Owner declaration

At enrolment the owner shall be given a written statement of § C.3.2 and shall declare in writing that no aversive equipment or method is in use with the dog, and that none will be used for the duration of the preparation period or while the certification remains current. The declaration is recorded on certified-estca.eu. A materially false owner declaration, once established, is grounds for the certification to be set to *Under Review* and, on confirmation, *Withdrawn*.

C.4 Insurance & Liability

§ C.4.1

ESTCA-approved assessors are strongly encouraged to hold professional indemnity and public liability insurance covering their training, assessment and certification activities. ESTCA Association does not act as an insurer, does not underwrite trainer activity, and accepts no liability arising from individual certification decisions.

§ C.4.2

Liability for damage or injury caused by a dog rests, by default, with the dog's owner. Nothing in this standard shifts that liability to the trainer, to ESTCA Association, or to the carrier. Airlines may impose additional insurance, indemnity or carriage-condition requirements as they see fit and may make those requirements binding on the owner as a condition of carriage.

§ C.4.3

Trainers shall make their insurance status visible to owners on enrolment and disclose any limitations of cover before payment is taken.

C.5 Annual Re-approval

§ C.5.1

Assessor approval is valid for twelve months. Re-approval requires payment of the annual licensing fee, confirmation of continued compliance with the Code of Conduct including the declaration at § C.1.3, submission of one sample audit recording for quality review (§ D.5.2), and evidence of continued professional

development in dog training or animal behaviour.

§ C.5.2

An approval that lapses for more than 90 days expires; the former trainer must re-apply from § C.1 and re-take the Train-the-Trainer module.

Dog Certification — Five Areas of Behavioural Assessment

Every dog presented for ESTCA certification is assessed across the same five areas. The areas are equally weighted; a single area not met means the dog is not certified. The order of delivery, the number of sessions, and the specific exercises used are matters of professional judgement for the assessing trainer (§ D.6) — the standard prescribes what is assessed, not how the trainer arrives at it.

01

Foundation
behaviour &
temperament

02

Settled in confined
space

03

Environmental
resilience

04

Equipment &
handler interaction

05

Integrated travel
readiness

Five equally-weighted areas. Assessment may be sequential, interleaved, or revisited as the individual dog requires. Final certification is issued only on the basis of a recorded Integrated Travel Simulation (Area 5).

D.1 Area 1 — Foundation Behaviour & Temperament

Purpose. To verify the welfare baseline (Part B), assess starting temperament, and confirm the foundational obedience needed before any travel-specific work begins.

§ D.1.1 What is assessed

The trainer shall verify all welfare-baseline conditions of Part B, including the § B.8 enquiry and owner declaration; observe the dog's response to the training environment, unfamiliar people, and routine handling; and confirm that the dog can reliably perform sit, down, stay (30 seconds minimum) and recall.

§ D.1.2 Standard

PASS

All Part B requirements are met; the dog demonstrates the four foundation behaviours; the dog shows no aggressive response to the trainer or other persons present.

FAIL

Any Part B requirement is not met; OR the dog shows unprovoked aggression; OR the dog cannot perform the foundation behaviours after reasonable, welfare-respecting attempts.

D.2 Area 2 — Settled Behaviour in Confined Space

Purpose. To verify the dog can remain calm, for an extended period, in a space representative of the carriage configuration in which it will travel.

§ D.2.1 What is assessed

The behavioural requirement in this Area is the same regardless of how the dog is carried; what varies is the space in which it is tested. The trainer shall select one or more of the following configurations, guided by the configurations offered by the carrier of record on the owner's intended routes and by what suits the individual dog:

- a. **Dedicated floor space** — the dog settles on a mat or bed in a dedicated floor space adjacent to a seat, on a lead of a length representative of a seat-frame tether, without a container.
- b. **Carrier on seat** — the dog settles inside a travel carrier positioned and secured on a seat.
- c. **Container under seat** — the dog settles inside a closed travel container of the dimensions the carrier of record permits for stowage in the footwell of the seat in front, placed in that position.

In the selected configuration the owner remains seated immediately beside the dog; people pass within one metre at intervals; and the settled period builds to a minimum of 20 minutes of continuous calm behaviour.

Configuration (a) is not, and shall not be treated as, a lesser or more permissive assessment. A dog carried without a container has fewer physical constraints on its behaviour, and correspondingly more of the safety burden falls on the assessment. Trainers shall apply the standard at least as rigorously in configuration (a), with particular regard to lead manners in a confined walkway and the dog's response to a passing beverage cart or comparable moving obstruction.

§ D.2.2 Standard

PASS

The dog settles within 5 minutes of being placed and remains calm for 20 continuous minutes without persistent vocalisation (more than two separate barking or whining episodes) and without persistent attempts to leave the designated space or, in the contained configurations, to escape the container.

FAIL

The dog cannot settle within 10 minutes; OR vocalises persistently; OR repeatedly leaves the designated space or attempts to escape the container despite redirection.

§ D.2.3 Recording of configurations

Where a dog is assessed in more than one configuration, each shall be recorded on the Annex I scorecard.

Where a dog is assessed in only one, the Register entry shall record which. A dog certified in configuration (a) is not thereby certified for the confinement demands of configuration (c), and the reverse also holds. Airlines relying on this standard should read the configuration field alongside the certification status (§ E.2.1).

D.3 Area 3 — Environmental Resilience

Purpose. To verify the dog's resilience to the unfamiliar sensory environment of air travel — noise, crowds, movement and unexpected stimuli.

§ D.3.1 What is assessed

The trainer exposes the dog to a graded set of stimuli representative of travel conditions: sudden loud sounds at a volume the trainer judges representative of airport and cabin noise; rolling luggage passing within two metres; at least three unfamiliar people moving around the dog simultaneously; another calm dog at a distance of no less than three metres; and an unfamiliar indoor environment different from the dog's usual training location. Where the dog is assessed in configuration (a) at § D.2.1, the trainer shall additionally expose the dog, while settled and tethered, to a person stepping over or immediately past it in a confined walkway.

§ D.3.2 Standard

PASS

No panic response to any stimulus. Mild alertness (ears forward, oriented to the stimulus) is acceptable provided the dog returns to a calm state within 30 seconds with at most a single verbal reassurance from the owner.

FAIL

A panic response (bolting, cowering, persistent trembling, or aggressive lunging) that does not self-resolve within 60 seconds; OR aggressive behaviour toward any person or animal.

D.4 Area 4 — Equipment Tolerance & Handler Interaction

Purpose. To verify the dog's acceptance of wearing a muzzle or head collar for an extended period and its composure when approached and handled by an unfamiliar person.

§ D.4.1 What is assessed

The dog wears a properly fitted basket muzzle or head collar — chosen so that the dog can pant and drink freely — for a continuous period of at least 30 minutes while settled in the configuration from Area 2. Equipment shall be introduced by gradual, positive-reinforcement conditioning; a dog that tolerates equipment only because it has learned that resistance is punished does not meet this Area (§ B.8). During this period an unfamiliar person (not the trainer or owner) shall approach the dog, speak to the owner, and briefly touch the dog's head and shoulder area, simulating a cabin-crew welfare check. The owner shall also leave the dog's line of sight for three minutes while the dog remains settled.

§ D.4.2 Standard

PASS

The dog wears the muzzle for 30 minutes without persistent pawing (≤ 3 attempts to remove); accepts handling by the unfamiliar person without aggression or excessive fear response; and remains settled during the 3-minute owner absence without persistent vocalisation.

FAIL

Cannot tolerate the muzzle for the required duration; OR shows aggression when handled; OR shows severe distress during owner absence (continuous barking, howling, or destructive behaviour).

D.5 Area 5 – Integrated Travel Readiness (Final Assessment)

Purpose. To form, and record, the trainer's holistic professional judgement that the dog meets the standard across all four preceding areas reliably and concurrently. Certification is issued on the basis of this judgement.

§ D.5.1 What is assessed

The trainer shall confirm — by direct observation across the preparation work — that the dog can be relied upon to demonstrate the elements of Areas 1 to 4 together, in conditions the trainer judges representative of cabin travel in the assessed configuration. The trainer chooses how to compose this assessment: a discrete travel-simulation session, or cumulative observation across normal training sessions, or a combination of the two. The standard does not prescribe a fixed duration, sequence or location.

What the trainer must satisfy themselves of, before issuing certification, is that each element of the Annex I scorecard has been observed reliably — not once or in ideal conditions, but consistently enough that the trainer is willing to put their approval behind it (Part F).

§ D.5.2 Audit recording

The trainer shall upload at least one video clip — drawn from any part of the preparation work or from any travel-simulation session — to certified-estca.eu within 48 hours of issuing the certification, for quality-review audit. There is no fixed length: a single representative minute may be sufficient for one dog, a full forty-minute simulation may be appropriate for another. The trainer chooses the footage that best evidences the dog's readiness against the standard, applying their professional judgement. Where the dog has been assessed in more than one configuration, the footage should evidence the least contained configuration certified.

ESTCA Association may, at any time, request additional footage or supporting records from the trainer in connection with a quality review (Part F). Where the footage submitted is in ESTCA's view insufficient to evidence the standard, the certification may be set to *Under Review* until the trainer remedies the gap. Persistent failure to provide adequate audit footage is grounds for measures under § F.4.

§ D.5.3 Pass criteria

Each element of the Annex I scorecard must be marked *Meets Standard* on the basis of observation across the preparation. There is no averaging — a single *Does Not Meet Standard* on any element means certification is not issued.

§ D.5.4 Automatic fail conditions

The following, observed at any point during the preparation work, prevent certification regardless of other scores:

1. Any aggressive behaviour (growling, snapping, biting or lunging) directed at any person or animal under conditions representative of cabin travel.
2. Persistent vocalisation when settled — defined as repeated barking or whining episodes that the dog does not learn to self-manage over the course of preparation.
3. A panic response that does not self-resolve within 60 seconds and does not extinguish over preparation.
4. Persistent attempts to remove the muzzle, or to escape the container, that do not extinguish over preparation.
5. Repeated defecating or urinating in confined-space practice (excluding marking behaviour in arrival exercises).
6. Any use of aversive equipment or aversive methods on the dog during the preparation period, by the trainer, the owner, or any third party of which the trainer becomes aware.

D.6 Delivery & Professional Judgement

The standard does not prescribe a number of sessions. The number of sessions, the time spent on each area, the order in which areas are introduced, and the choice of training methods within the Code of Conduct (§ C.3) are matters of professional judgement for the assessing trainer.

A confident adult dog with prior travel exposure may be ready in a small number of sessions; a young or sensitive dog may need many. A trainer may interleave areas, return to earlier work as the dog progresses, or pause assessment if the dog regresses. The elements of Annex I may be ticked off across the trainer's normal sessions rather than in a single staged event. What the trainer may not do is sign off elements they have not actually observed, or certify a dog whose performance across the preparation does not support the standard (§ D.5).

The trainer shall maintain a brief preparation log for each dog recording the dates and broad content of preparation work, the carriage configuration(s) assessed under § D.2.1, and the § B.8 enquiry and owner declaration. The log is not submitted with the certification but must be available on request to ESTCA Association in the event of a quality review.

D.7 Withholding Certification & Re-enrolment

§ D.7.1

Where, at the conclusion of preparation, the trainer is not able to mark every element of Annex I as *Meets Standard*, the trainer shall withhold certification, explain the outstanding elements to the owner, and either continue preparation work or recommend re-enrolment at a later date. Withholding is not appealable; the trainer's professional judgement is the basis of the standard.

§ D.7.2

Where preparation is discontinued and the owner wishes to try again — whether with the same trainer or a different ESTCA-approved assessor — a minimum interval of eight weeks shall pass before fresh enrolment, to allow remediation work to take effect. The new preparation period is at the receiving trainer's discretion. Where preparation was discontinued under § D.5.4(6), the receiving trainer shall be informed of the reason and § B.8(c) applies.

Certification, Registry & Verification

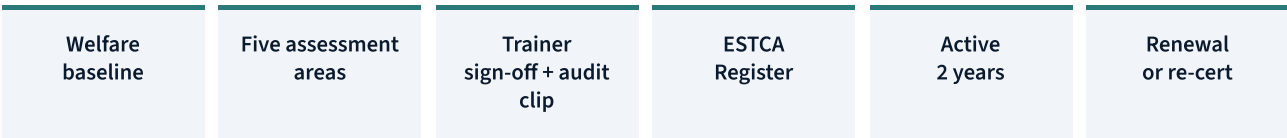
E.1 Certification Issuance

§ E.1.1

When a dog has met the standard in all five areas, the trainer shall issue the certification on certified-estca.eu within 48 hours of the final assessment. The platform records the dog's ISO microchip number, the dog's name, breed and date of birth; the owner's name and contact details; the date of the final assessment; the carriage configuration(s) assessed under § D.2.1; the owner declaration under § C.3.3; the trainer's ESTCA approval number; and the audit recording (§ D.5.2). The certification is then pushed automatically into the public ESTCA Register at estca.eu.

§ E.1.2

The Register shall generate a unique public certification number linked to the dog's passport. The owner shall receive a physical ESTCA certification card and a digital pass containing a QR code that resolves to the dog's public registry entry. The owner shall be issued, with the certification, a written statement of the conditions of reliance in § E.5, and shall acknowledge those conditions.



Certification lifecycle. Repeated failure routes back to re-enrolment after eight weeks. A reported safety incident moves a dog into Under Review in the Register pending investigation.

E.2 The ESTCA Register

§ E.2.1

The ESTCA Register is a publicly accessible online database maintained by ESTCA Association. Any person or organisation may query the Register using a dog's pet passport number. The Register shall return: certification status (Certified, Expired, Under Review, Suspended, Withdrawn, or Not Found), the public certification number, the dog's registered name, the carriage configuration(s) assessed, the date of certification, the expiry date, and the name and approval number of the certifying trainer.

§ E.2.2

Owner personal data is not displayed in public queries. Airlines and transport operators requiring owner verification may use the QR code on the owner's digital pass; access to full details requires the owner's consent at the point of carriage.

E.3 Programmatic Verification (API)

§ E.3.1

ESTCA Association operates a verification API for airlines, ground handlers, and ESTCA-approved assessors. The API allows real-time, programmatic confirmation of certification status at booking, at check-in, at the gate, or at any other operational checkpoint. Access requires registration and acceptance of the ESTCA data-use terms; keys are scoped — an airline-verify key cannot ingest data, and an ingest key cannot be used to enumerate the Register.

§ E.3.2

Two integration patterns are supported:

- a. **Verification** — a stateless lookup by passport number returning the same fields available in the public Register, suitable for inclusion in airline reservation and check-in flows. Rate-limited per key.
- b. **Ingest** — used by trainer organisations to write certifications back to the Register from their own training systems. Idempotent on a content-fingerprint key so that re-pushes apply corrections instead of being silently dropped.

§ E.3.3

The API is documented in Annex III. ESTCA publishes status pages, change-logs, and breaking-change notices at least 60 days in advance of any incompatible release.

E.4 Validity & Renewal

§ E.4.1

ESTCA certification is valid for two years from the date of the final assessment.

§ E.4.2

Renewal requires the dog to be re-assessed against the Annex I scorecard by any ESTCA-approved assessor, with at least one new audit clip uploaded to certified-estca.eu. The same pass criteria and automatic fail conditions apply. The trainer may compose the renewal assessment as a discrete travel-simulation session or across normal sessions, on the same professional-judgement basis as the first assessment (§ D.5).

§ E.4.3

Where an owner requires certification in a carriage configuration not previously assessed (§ D.2.3), an ESTCA-approved assessor may assess the additional configuration and update the record without restarting the programme, provided the certification is current. The expiry date is not extended.

§ E.4.4

If a certification expires without renewal, the dog's status changes to *Expired*. The owner may re-certify by repeating the full assessment programme; there is no penalty period.

E.5 Conditions of Reliance

An ESTCA certification is a statement about a dog assessed under stated conditions. It may be relied upon by a carrier only where those conditions continue to hold. This section exists so that airlines, owners and trainers all read the certification the same way.

§ E.5.1

A certification is valid for reliance only where, at the time of travel:

- a. the status returned by the Register or the verification API is *Certified*;
- b. the dog travels in a carriage configuration assessed and recorded under § D.2.3, or one the carrier judges no more demanding;
- c. the dog is not under sedation and has not received sedative, tranquillising or other psychoactive medication within 48 hours of departure, save where a veterinarian has prescribed medication for a diagnosed condition and the owner holds the corresponding documentation, which shall be disclosed to the carrier at check-in;
- d. the dog is not wearing, and is not handled with, aversive equipment at any point in the airport or the cabin; and
- e. no material change in the dog's health or behaviour has occurred since the final assessment that the owner knows, or ought reasonably to know, of.

§ E.5.2

The owner shall not present a dog for carriage in reliance on an ESTCA certification where any condition in § E.5.1 is not met. Presenting a sedated dog, or a dog in aversive equipment, as ESTCA-certified is a misrepresentation of the certification and shall be reported by the carrier to the ESTCA Association, which may set the certification to *Under Review* or *Withdrawn*.

§ E.5.3

Where a carrier observes an ESTCA-certified dog in aversive equipment, the appropriate response is to require its removal, not to refuse carriage on that ground alone; refusal remains available on the carrier's own assessment of the animal on the day (§ G.1.1(d)).

Quality Assurance, Complaints & Trainer Accountability

ESTCA's credibility depends on its ability to remove poor-quality trainers from the system. This Part describes the quality programme, complaints process, and the formal accountability ladder that applies when a trainer's certifications repeatedly produce dogs that misbehave in flight.

F.1 Routine Video Review

§ F.1.1

ESTCA Association shall review at least 10% of all audit recordings submitted to certified-estca.eu each quarter. Reviews are conducted by a member of the Technical Advisory Board or a designated quality reviewer. Recordings may also be sampled non-randomly when a complaint or incident report identifies a specific trainer, and ESTCA may at any time request additional footage from a trainer in connection with a review (§ D.5.2).

§ F.1.2

Reviewers shall have regard, among other things, to any indication in the footage of aversive equipment on the dog or aversive handling by the trainer or owner, and to behavioural presentation consistent with suppression rather than settled confidence. Any such indication opens a case under § F.4 at not less than Step 3.

§ F.1.3

Where a review finds that a trainer has certified a dog that did not meet the standard, or that the audit footage is insufficient to evidence the standard, ESTCA Association shall notify the trainer in writing and open a case under § F.4. The case may close with no further action; with mandatory remediation; or by escalation up the accountability ladder.

F.2 Public Complaints

§ F.2.1

Any person — owner, fellow passenger, ground staff, or member of the public — may lodge a complaint regarding an ESTCA-certified dog or an ESTCA-approved assessor by writing to contact@estca.eu with the subject "Complaint". ESTCA Association shall acknowledge receipt within ten working days and shall provide a substantive response within thirty working days.

F.3 Incidents Involving Certified Dogs

§ F.3.1

Where an ESTCA-certified dog is involved in a safety incident during air travel — biting, uncontrolled disturbance, escape from carrier or restraint, or refusal to settle resulting in operational impact — the certification shall be set to *Under Review* in the Register pending investigation.

§ F.3.2

ESTCA Association shall review the audit footage on file, request additional preparation or simulation footage from the certifying trainer where needed, consult with the trainer, and where available consider the airline's incident report. The investigation shall establish, among other things, whether the conditions of reliance in § E.5.1 held at the time of travel. The investigation closes with one of the following outcomes: reinstatement (*Certified*), *Suspended* pending remediation, or *Withdrawn*.

F.4 Trainer Accountability Ladder

Where investigation establishes that a trainer's certification fell below the standard, ESTCA Association may apply one or more of the following measures, in escalating order:

MEASURE	EFFECT
Notice	Written record placed on the trainer's file. Future certifications by the same trainer are subject to mandatory audit review.
Mandatory review	Every audit recording from this trainer is reviewed by ESTCA before any subsequent certification takes effect, for a minimum period (typically six months).
Suspension	Approval paused. The trainer may not assess or certify any new dog. Existing certifications remain valid unless individually withdrawn.
Withdrawal	Approval cancelled. The trainer is removed from the public Register. Existing certifications by the trainer are reviewed individually; some may be set to <i>Under Review</i> or <i>Withdrawn</i> .
Ban	Reserved for serious or repeated misconduct. The trainer may not re-apply for ESTCA approval. The decision is published in the public Register.

A trainer subject to a measure under § F.4 has a right to written notice of the grounds, twenty working days to respond in writing, and an internal appeal to a panel of the Technical Advisory Board not previously involved in the case.

§ F.4.1

Established use of aversive equipment or aversive methods (§ C.3.2(e)) enters the ladder at Suspension or above and is not subject to the ordinary escalation sequence.

F.5 Reinstatement

§ F.5.1

A suspended trainer may apply for reinstatement on completion of any remediation specified, including, where appropriate, retaking the Train-the-Trainer module. A withdrawn trainer may apply for re-approval no earlier than 18 months after the date of withdrawal, and only where the original grounds did not include a ban under § F.4.

Airline Implementation Guidance

This Part is advisory. ESTCA certifies a dog's behavioural readiness for cabin travel. The operational arrangements that surround that travel — where the dog sits, whether and how it is contained or anchored, how many dogs travel per flight, what the cabin crew does with them, how spills or accidents are handled — are matters for the airline and its regulator. Airlines that adopt ESTCA are encouraged to publish their own operational policy alongside it.

G.1 What ESTCA Certifies (and What It Doesn't)

§ G.1.1

An ESTCA certification is a statement that, on the date of the final assessment, the dog met the behavioural standard for cabin travel in the carriage configuration(s) recorded, under the conditions tested. It is not:

- a. A guarantee of behaviour on any specific flight.
- b. A statement about the dog's suitability for a carriage configuration other than those recorded under § D.2.3.
- c. A medical or veterinary clearance beyond the welfare baseline (Part B).
- d. A waiver of the airline's right to refuse carriage. The check-in and gate authority to refuse an animal presenting in distress, sickness or aggression on the day is absolute and unaffected by certification. ESTCA regards that authority as a necessary complement to the standard, not a redundancy.
- e. A statement about behaviour under sedation, or where any other condition of reliance in § E.5.1 is not met.
- f. A grant of assistance-animal status, or of any right of access or fee treatment attaching to such status (§ A.1.5).

§ G.1.2 Irregular operations

The Area 2 settled period and the Area 4 equipment period are proportionate to a normal short- to medium-haul sector. They are not a demonstration of tolerance for the prolonged confinement that can follow a lengthy tarmac delay, diversion or extended layover. Certification should be understood as evidence of behavioural readiness under normal operating conditions. Where an operation becomes irregular, a certified dog requires the same active management, relief opportunity and crew attention as any other animal on board, and airlines are encouraged to include certified dogs expressly in their irregular-operations procedures rather than treating certification as a reason to deprioritise them.

§ G.1.3 Certification and containment

Where a carrier permits carriage outside a container, behavioural assessment is not an optional enhancement — it is the substitute for the control the container was providing (see Preamble, *Containment and behaviour*). Carriers operating such programmes are strongly encouraged to make ESTCA certification, or an equivalent independently audited behavioural standard, a mandatory pre-condition of booking.

G.2 Operational Practices Airlines Are Encouraged To Adopt

Airlines have, in practice, converged on a similar set of operational practices for in-cabin canine travel. The standard does not require any of the following, but airlines adopting ESTCA may wish to set out their own equivalents in their conditions of carriage:

- **Dedicated seat.** Where the dog travels uncontained, the owner purchases a dedicated seat or floor space adjacent to their own.
- **Window seat placement.** The dog space is placed at the window, with the owner in the adjacent seat, to minimise contact with other passengers and aisle traffic.
- **Anchoring, carrier on seat, or container under seat.** The dog is secured to a seat-frame anchoring point on a short lead with a mat in front of it, carried in a ventilated carrier secured to the seat by an approved system, or carried in a compliant container stowed in the permitted under-seat position.
- **Absorbent mat.** An absorbent travel mat is placed under the dog to manage any accidents.
- **Capacity per flight.** A maximum number of certified dogs per aircraft, distributed to maintain separation between travelling dogs (a few rows between any two dogs is typical practice).
- **In-flight muzzle policy.** The muzzle is applied during boarding, taxi, take-off and landing, and may be removed during cruise where the dog remains settled. All ESTCA-certified dogs are assessed for muzzle tolerance under § D.4.
- **Crew notification before boarding.** Certified dogs identified on the passenger information list provided to cabin crew, so that seating compliance, welfare monitoring and passenger sensitivities can be managed from the outset.
- **Crew welfare check.** A discreet check on each dog at fixed points during the flight.
- **No aversive equipment in the cabin.** Aversive equipment as defined in § A.3 prohibited by conditions of carriage, both airside and onboard. A dog that requires such equipment to be managed is not a dog that should be in the cabin.
- **Adjacent-passenger consent.** Allergic or otherwise sensitive passengers may request to be reseated.
- **Refusal at the gate.** The cabin-crew or gate agent retains the right to refuse a specific dog if the animal presents in obvious distress, sickness or aggression on the day, regardless of certification.

The standard's view is that an ESTCA-certified dog plus a clearly published airline policy is, in combination, what makes travel safe. Either alone is insufficient.

§ G.2.1 Verification points in the passenger journey

Airlines are encouraged to verify rather than inspect, and to verify early. A lookup against the Register at the point the reservation is confirmed — alongside the health and vaccination documentation the airline already collects, and within the advance-booking window that pet reservations already require — moves refusal from the airport to the booking screen, which is the whole operational argument for this standard. A second lookup at check-in confirms the status has not changed to *Under Review*, *Suspended* or *Withdrawn* since booking. Any value other than *Certified* should be routed to the airline's existing boarding-refusal procedure.

§ G.2.2 Cross-border and interline travel

Multi-carrier itineraries require each participating carrier to accept the animal and apply consistent handling. An airline-specific behavioural policy cannot travel across an interline boundary; a portable certification recorded in a public register, verifiable by any carrier by API, can. Where large-dog cabin programmes extend beyond domestic operations, a common behavioural standard is not a convenience but a precondition. ESTCA is designed for exactly this case, and carriers are encouraged to treat it as the common behavioural currency between them.

G.3 Size, Weight & Breed Considerations

§ G.3.1

ESTCA does not impose a fixed weight limit. A 12-kg dog can be unfit for cabin travel and a 30-kg dog can be entirely suitable; the certification is based on behaviour, not on the scale. Airlines may set their own weight, size or breed restrictions and ESTCA defers to those entirely.

§ G.3.2

The standard does, however, acknowledge a practical reality: very large or very heavy breeds may simply not fit safely in a single floor space adjacent to a seat. Trainers are expected to apply the welfare-trumps duty under § B.7 and decline assessment where, in their professional judgement, the physical proportions of the dog are inconsistent with cabin travel under any reasonable airline configuration. Airlines, in turn, are encouraged to publish a clear maximum size for their cabin programme rather than assess this case-by-case at the gate.

§ G.3.3

Brachycephalic breeds (Annex II) require veterinary clearance under § B.5 regardless of size. This is a welfare requirement, not a behavioural one.

§ G.3.4

Where an airline's programme uses configuration (c) at § D.2.1, the container must permit the dog to stand, sit erect, lie in a natural position and turn about normally. A trainer shall not assess a dog in a container that does not meet that description, and shall advise the owner that the dog is too large for that configuration rather than assess it in an inadequate one.

G.4 Liability & Insurance

§ G.4.1

By default, liability for any damage or injury caused by a dog rests with the dog's owner. ESTCA approves assessors but does not act as an insurer; trainers are encouraged to hold professional indemnity but their cover does not run to the airline or to other passengers. Airlines wishing to allocate liability differently may do so through their conditions of carriage.

§ G.4.2

Airlines are encouraged to require, as a condition of carriage, that the owner holds appropriate third-party liability cover for the dog. This is a familiar mechanism and places the financial risk where the legal responsibility already lies.

§ G.4.3

Industry practice places responsibility for compliance with pet travel requirements on the passenger. Nothing in this standard alters that allocation. An ESTCA certification is a professional opinion recorded on a date, on the basis of observed behaviour, in stated conditions. It is not a warranty, guarantee or indemnity, and it is not given for the benefit of any third party. The ESTCA Association gives no undertaking to any carrier, passenger or third party in respect of the conduct of a certified animal.

§ G.4.4

Carriers relying on this standard should incorporate the conditions of reliance (§ E.5) into their conditions of carriage, so that an owner presenting a sedated dog, or a dog in aversive equipment, as ESTCA-certified is in breach of the contract of carriage rather than merely in breach of this standard. Airlines are encouraged to take their own legal advice on the drafting; this standard is not legal advice.

G.5 The Case for Mandatory Adoption

Airlines that accept dogs in the cabin without an objective behavioural standard are, in effect, relying on the owner's self-assessment. That is an unusual posture in aviation. Mandatory adoption of ESTCA replaces self-assessment with an independent professional judgement, made by someone who has met the dog and watched it work, against a published standard that they will lose their approval for ignoring.

Industry operational guidance instructs carriers to deny boarding where an animal is distressed or displays unacceptable behaviour. It is right to do so. But it defines neither term, supplies no method of assessment, and places the decision at the check-in desk and the boarding gate — on the day, under departure pressure, by staff with no behavioural training who are meeting the animal for the first time. That is the least favourable set of conditions under which such a judgement could be made, and it is the only point in the journey at which the industry currently makes it.

For owners, mandatory adoption is also a benefit, not a barrier. A dog that should not fly is far better stopped during preparation by a trainer who can advise, than at the gate by ground staff who cannot. ESTCA is designed to make refusal a routine, professional decision early in the journey rather than an adversarial one at the airport.

ESTCA accordingly recommends that airlines operating in-cabin canine programmes treat ESTCA certification as a mandatory pre-condition of booking, communicated as such on the booking surface and verified at check-in via the API in § E.3.

Final Assessment Scorecard

This scorecard is completed by the assessing ESTCA-approved assessor on the basis of observation across the preparation work (§ D.5). The trainer marks each element when it has been reliably observed — not in a one-off best-case attempt, but consistently enough that the trainer is willing to put their approval behind it. All elements must receive *Meets Standard* for the dog to be certified.

Carriage configuration(s) assessed (§ D.2.1) — tick all that apply:

☐ (a) Dedicated floor space ☐ (b) Carrier on seat ☐ (c) Container under seat

AREA	ELEMENT	MEETS STANDARD	DOES NOT MEET
Area 1 — Foundation	Reliable sit, down, stay (30 s) and recall	☐	☐
Area 1 — Foundation	No aggressive response toward trainer or unfamiliar persons	☐	☐
Area 1 — Foundation	No aversive equipment in use; § B.8 enquiry made and owner declaration held	☐	☐
Area 2 — Settled	Settles within 5 minutes in the assessed configuration	☐	☐
Area 2 — Settled	Remains calm for 20 continuous minutes	☐	☐
Area 2 — Settled	No persistent vocalisation when settled	☐	☐
Area 2 — Settled	No persistent attempt to leave the space or escape the container	☐	☐
Area 3 — Environmental	Walks loose-lead in busy, unfamiliar environment	☐	☐
Area 3 — Environmental	Calm response to sudden loud noise	☐	☐
Area 3 — Environmental	No reactive behaviour to passing people or rolling luggage	☐	☐
Area 4 — Equipment & handler	Tolerates positively conditioned muzzle or head collar without persistent pawing	☐	☐

AREA	ELEMENT	MEETS STANDARD	DOES NOT MEET
Area 4 — Equipment & handler	Accepts handling by unfamiliar person	☐	☐
Area 4 — Equipment & handler	Remains settled during a brief owner absence	☐	☐
Area 5 — Integrated readiness	Holistic professional judgement: dog is travel-ready in the configuration(s) marked above	☐	☐
OVERALL RESULT		☐	☐

☐ Conditions of reliance (§ E.5) explained to owner

Trainer name: _____ Approval no.: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Dog name: _____ Passport no.: _____

Microchip no.: _____

Brachycephalic Breed Advisory List

Dogs of the following breeds, or crosses thereof, are not, by default, certified under this standard (see § B.5). Cabin pressure combined with the upper-airway anatomy characteristic of these breeds presents a welfare risk that ESTCA does not underwrite. An airline may, on its own veterinary, operational and risk grounds, choose to accept such a dog on a specific route notwithstanding; in that case the trainer shall enrol only on prior written confirmation from the carrier of record and a current veterinary clearance dated within 30 days of enrolment. This list is non-exhaustive and may be updated by the ESTCA Technical Advisory Board.

BREED	ANATOMICAL RISK	ESTCA POSITION
Pug (Mops)	High	Not certified by default; airline discretion only
English Bulldog	High	Not certified by default; airline discretion only
French Bulldog	High	Not certified by default; airline discretion only
Boston Terrier	High	Not certified by default; airline discretion only
Pekingese	High	Not certified by default; airline discretion only
Shih Tzu	Moderate	Not certified by default; airline discretion only
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel	Moderate	Not certified by default; airline discretion only
Boxer	Moderate	Not certified by default; airline discretion only
Dogue de Bordeaux	Moderate	Not certified by default; airline discretion only
Bullmastiff	Moderate	Not certified by default; airline discretion only

Verification API Reference

The ESTCA verification API is documented in full at estca.eu/api. This Annex sets out the externally guaranteed surface — endpoints, identifiers and outcomes — so that airlines and integrators can scope a programme of work and review their own pet-travel flow against the registry without leaving the standard.

Authentication

All requests carry an `X-Ingest-API-Key` or `X-Verify-API-Key` header issued by ESTCA Association. Keys are scoped: a verify key cannot ingest data, an ingest key cannot enumerate the Register. Keys are rotated on request and revoked immediately on suspected compromise.

Endpoints

PATH	USED BY	PURPOSE
GET <code>/api/v1/verify</code>	Airlines, gate agents, partners	Public lookup by passport number; returns certification status, assessed carriage configuration(s) and headline metadata only. Rate-limited per key.
POST <code>/api/v1/ingest/certifications/upsert</code>	certified-estca.eu	Create or update a certification record for a dog. Idempotent on a content fingerprint key.
POST <code>/api/v1/ingest/certifications/status</code>	certified-estca.eu	Status-only update (e.g. expired, withdrawn) without re-sending the full record.
POST <code>/api/v1/ingest/trainers/upsert</code>	certified-estca.eu	Sync a trainer's registered name and active status.

Today, the only ingest source recognised by ESTCA Association is certified-estca.eu. Verification (read) keys are issued to airlines and ground handlers on application.

Status values

VALUE	MEANING
Certified	The dog has a current, valid ESTCA certification.

VALUE	MEANING
Expired	The certification has lapsed; renewal required.
Under Review	Certification temporarily paused pending an open investigation.
Suspended	Certification paused by ESTCA action; not valid for travel.
Withdrawn	Certification cancelled; not valid for travel.
Not Found	No certification exists in the Register for the supplied identifier.

Configuration values

VALUE	MEANING
<code>floor_space</code>	Dedicated floor space, tethered, no container (§ D.2.1(a))
<code>carrier_on_seat</code>	Carrier secured to a passenger seat (§ D.2.1(b))
<code>container_under_seat</code>	Compliant container stowed under the seat in front (§ D.2.1(c))

Airlines should treat any value other than *Certified* as a non-pass for the purpose of carriage decisions, and route the case to their own boarding-refusal procedure. Airlines should additionally confirm that the configuration returned matches the configuration in which the dog is booked to travel (§ E.5.1(b)).

Trainer Accountability Ladder

This Annex restates the accountability measures of § F.4 in tabular form. It is referenced in the Train-the-Trainer module and forms part of the Code of Conduct each ESTCA-approved assessor agrees to on approval and re-approval.

STEP	MEASURE	TRIGGER (TYPICAL)	EFFECT ON EXISTING CERTIFICATIONS
1	Notice	Single quality review failure or minor procedural breach.	No effect on existing certifications; future assessments subject to mandatory audit review.
2	Mandatory review	Repeat notice, or first material concern about assessment quality.	No effect; the trainer's subsequent assessments are individually reviewed.
3	Suspension	Material concern unresolved by remediation; single serious incident; or any established use of aversive equipment or aversive methods (§ C.3.2(e)).	No automatic effect; existing certifications remain unless individually reviewed.
4	Withdrawal	Pattern of failed reviews, or repeated incidents traceable to the trainer.	Each existing certification individually reviewed; some moved to <i>Under Review</i> or <i>Withdrawn</i> .
5	Ban	Serious misconduct, falsified records, false declaration under § C.1.3, concealment or misrepresentation of aversive-equipment use, or repeated wilful breaches of the Code of Conduct.	All existing certifications by the trainer reviewed; trainer permanently delisted.

— End of ESTCA Standard v1.2 —

This standard is maintained by the ESTCA Association, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
For enquiries: contact@estca.eu | estca.eu